



P.O. Box 5667
St. John's, NL A1C 5X1

Your file

Votre référence

FEB 06 2020

Our file

Notre référence
19-HNFL-00757

Ian Murphy
Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board
140 Water St., 4th Floor
St. John's, NL A1C 6H6

Dear Mr. Murphy:

**Re: Review of BHP Canada Exploration Drilling Project EL 1157 and 1158 Seabed Survey
Environmental Assessment**

I am writing further to your January 10, 2020 correspondence requesting review of the environmental assessment (EA) report for the above noted visual seabed survey at potential drilling locations on ELs 1157 and 1158 proposed by BHP Canada.

Based on our review of the EA report, the following comments are offered for your review and consideration.


General Comments

- In the past for similar projects, the ROV survey and video data have been acquired under the supervision of an experienced marine biologist. Please advise as to whether this is the case for BHP's visual seabed survey.
- The scientific name should be included along with the common name the first time a species is mentioned in the EA report.

Specific Comments

- Section 2.4.1 Operation of a Survey Vessel, page 6: *The survey vessel has the potential to interact with the environment through the following pathways*: Interactions with marine mammals, e.g. collisions, should be listed here as well.
- Section 4.1.3 Weather Conditions, Table 4.2, page 11: Recommend removing Thunderstorms from table title as the table does not mention thunderstorms.



- 
- Section 4.2 Marine Fish and Shellfish, Table 4.4, page 14: Recommend removing the footnote, "Taxonomic group: F – family", if it is not used.
 - Section 4.2 Marine Fish and Shellfish, Table 4.5, page 16: Recommend listing the common names and scientific names of species where possible.
 - Section 4.4 Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles, Table 4.7, pages 24-25: Recommend listing the common names and scientific names of species where possible.
 - Section 4.5 Species at Risk, Table 4.8, pages 30-31: If there are multiple designations for a species, the name of the population or sub-population should be included. Also, as noted above, both the common names and scientific names of species should be stated.
 - Section 5.4 Mitigation, page 46: Mitigation measures should indicate that an experienced Marine Mammal and Seabird Observer (MMSO) will be onboard during the survey.
 - Section 5.4 Mitigation, page 46: In the past for similar projects, there has been a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) onboard the survey vessel to mitigate potential interactions with fishing activities in the area. Please advise as to whether an FLO will be onboard for BHP's visual seabed survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (709) 772-2583 or by email at Kimberley.Keats@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Sincerely,



Kimberley Keats
A/Senior Biologist – Coastal, Marine, Oil & Gas Development
Project Reviews – Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program
Ecosystems Management Branch, NL Region