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Your file

Votre référence

March 3, 2020

Our file

Notre référence
20-HNFL-00060

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 Project Description and Draft Scoping Document - BP Canada Ephesus Prospect Controlled Source Electromagnetic Survey 2020

I am writing further to your February 17, 2020 correspondence requesting review of the Project Description and draft Scoping Document for the above noted CSEM survey planned for 2020 by BP Canada Energy Group ULC in Exploration Licence (EL) areas EL1145 and EL1146

Please be advised that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is in possession of expert knowledge and advice related to fish, fish habitat, marine mammals, species at risk, sensitive marine areas, and commercial fisheries that may inform the project environmental assessment (EA).

Based on review of the draft Scoping Document, the following comments are offered for consideration in terms of focusing the project EA report.

- Section 3.1 Scope of Project (page 1) – The total anticipated number of CSEM seabed receivers should be described and provided in the project EA.
- Section 5.1.2 Temporal Boundaries (page 4) – The scheduling of project activities should also consider the timing (and location) of active commercial fishing activities and other marine users.
- Section 5.2.2 Biological Environment (page 5) – This section of the Scoping Document should indicate that the project EA will acknowledge data gaps identified in the Eastern NL Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA; 2014) relative to marine fish/fish habitat, species at risk, sensitive areas, and commercial fisheries, as well as how the project EA will describe the relevance of such gaps to the project.



- Section 5.2.8 “Sensitive” Areas (page 7) – EL1145 and EL1146 are located in the Northeast Newfoundland Slope Closure. Prohibitions for this marine refuge include all bottom contact fishing activities. Other considerations include: no human activities that are incompatible with the conservation of the ecological components of interest may occur or be foreseeable within the area. The ecological components of interest for this refuge are cold-water corals and sponges. The project EA should include specific mitigation measures for the placement of receiver anchors within the Northeast Newfoundland Slope Closure to protect cold-water corals and sponges.
- Section 5.2.14 Biological and Follow-up Monitoring (page 9) - It is not clear how (or if) monitoring and/or auditing of adherence to applicable mitigations committed to by the Proponent in the project EA will be undertaken. This section of the Scoping Document should be clarified to indicate how such monitoring will be accomplished either as part of or separate from the project EA.

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,

Original signed by Kim Keats

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