



March 28, 2011

Re: Response to Corridor Resources Inc. Drilling of an Exploration Well on the Old Harry Prospect - EL 1105 (CEAR # 11-01-60633)

To whom it may concern:

Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition, Sierra Club Atlantic, and Ecology Action Centre do not recognize the authority of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (CNLOPB) to assess and approve oil and gas exploration and development in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence is too precious to be placed at risk by oil and gas development. It is a unique, semi-enclosed ecosystem, home to thousands of species, including endangered fish, marine mammals, and migratory birds. Bounded by five provinces, the Gulf supports massive income from fishing and tourism industries. Damage caused by a catastrophic spill in the region would impact all provinces around the Gulf. Cumulative impacts from habitat disruption, smaller spills, release of produced water, and drilling muds in addition to increased shipping traffic and potential pipelines will impact the entire region, not just NL waters.

The CNLOPB refuses to acknowledge that oil development impacts the environment and stakeholders both inside and outside NL's jurisdiction. We are calling for an immediate halt to the CNLOPB assessment of Corridor Resources Inc. intent to drill an exploration well on the Old Harry prospect.

The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board does not have the mandate to determine impacts that could extend to the waters of four other provinces, affecting the environment and economies of these provinces.

In addition, we consider the CNLOPB to be in a conflict of interest as both promoter of the industry and protector of the environment. The Wells Commission has found that the CNLOPB does not have the expertise to regulate safety and environment in the offshore. Indeed, this conflict of interest position was also highlighted by Canada's Senate review report, commissioned in the wake of the BP's Deepwater Horizon incident. The Senate Committee on the Environment, Energy, and Natural resources recommended: "exploring in greater detail the structure and role of the offshore petroleum Boards to determine whether there may be in fact a material conflict between regulatory roles." Such an exploration has not been initiated, yet

CNLOPB wishes to continue to act as sole regulator of safety and environment in the offshore.

An assessment performed by EcoJustice, Canada's leading environmental law organization, revealed that the CNLOPB does not have environmental protection in its core Purpose, nor is it featured prominently throughout its enabling legislation. Board members are not selected for any expertise in environmental protection or scientific background. Under the CNLOPB rules, the liability of an oil company in the case of a blowout such as the one that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico is as low as \$30 million. Given the uncoordinated and unilateral approach taken by the CNLOPB the remaining of the billions in dollars in damage (estimates are \$40 billion in the case of the BP spill, and counting) would be carried by the people of NL. Not only is this an injustice to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, it is an injustice to those other communities around the Gulf who have had no say in allowing this development to proceed.

We call for an immediate halt to the proposed assessment for Corridor Resources Inc. Drilling of an Exploration Well on the Old Harry Prospect - EL 1105 (CEAR # 11-01-60633) until such time as the knowledge gaps and risks to the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence are fully assessed and until there is a coordinated approach to managing this shared ecosystem. We call on our federal and provincial leaders to stop abandoning the public interest of all Canadians when it comes to protection of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Such an integrated approach would reveal that the Gulf is not the place for oil and gas to proceed.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Fitzgerald
Director, Sierra Club Canada – Atlantic Canada Chapter

Mary Gorman
Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition

Mark Butler
Policy Director, Ecology Action Centre

CC:
Prime Minister Stephen Harper
Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff

NDP Leader Jack Layton

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May

PQ Premier Jean Charest

NL Premier Kathy Dunderdale

NS Premier Darrell Dexter

PEI Premier Robert Ghiz

NB Premier David Alward