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Your file Votre référence

February 20, 2015

Our file Notre référence
PATH #15-HNFL-00023

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

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Darren:

**Re: Review of Project Description and Draft Scoping Document Exxon Mobil Eastern
Newfoundland Offshore Geophysical, Geochemical, Environmental and
Geotechnical Programs 2015-2024**

I am writing further to your February 5, 2015 email requesting review of the project description and draft scoping document for the above noted survey (including seismic) programs proposed for offshore areas of Newfoundland proposed by Exxon Mobil for 2015 to 2024.

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 and fisheries that may inform the project related environmental assessment.

Based on review of the above noted Draft project Scoping Document I offer the following comment for clarification. With respect to Sections 5.2.2, 5.2.4, 5.3.5, 5.2.6, 5.2.7 and 5.2.10 (page 5-6) it is felt that more than a restating of information presented within the Eastern NL Strategic Environmental Assessment (CNLOPB 2014) and other project environmental assessments is required. While the Strategic Environmental Assessment can be used to set the stage it is felt that the project environmental assessment should be an assessment of environmental effects on selected VEC's related to the specific project area and specific projects being proposed, thereby, providing a comprehensive assessment of potential environmental effects and mitigations applicable to the project (and VECs) being proposed and assessed.

Given the wording for each VEC (page 5-6) that "*The EA shall provide only new or updated information where applicable to address any changes to the following:*" it is not clear if this will be the case. This should be clarified accordingly.

If you have any questions in this regard please do not hesitate to contact me by phone ([REDACTED]) or email ([REDACTED]).

Yours sincerely,

Senior Fisheries Protection Biologist – Marine, Coastal, Oil and Gas Development
Fisheries Protection and Regulatory Reviews
Ecosystems Management Branch