

GX Technology Canada Ltd.'s GrandSPAN 2D-3D Seismic, Gravity and Magnetic Survey,
2014-2019: 2019 Environmental Assessment Amendment (Stantec April 2019)

GENERAL COMMENTS

Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW)

The FFAW would like to reiterate concerns from last year's program with respect to mitigations proposed by the proponent. There were several close calls in terms of avoiding active fishing areas as well as seismic work conducted very close to crab stations being actively-fished during the post-season crab survey last year. Avoidance by seismic operators of active fishing areas and research surveys cannot be only a mitigation written in an Environmental Assessment document. The mitigations and importance of them needs to be effectively communicated to all individuals involved in the at-sea program. FFAW-Unifor will work with the proponent to communicate as much information as available in advance of the program starting as well as throughout during weekly (or more frequent) conference calls but the commitment needs to carry through on the operator's end to mitigate conflict at sea as well.

GX Technology Canada Ltd.'s GrandSPAN 2D-3D Seismic, Gravity and Magnetic Survey, 2014-2019: 2019 Environmental Assessment Amendment (Stantec April 2019)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB)

Figure 4-34 and Section 4.4.1.3 Laurentian Channel EBSA₂, on April 25, 2019 Fisheries and Oceans Canada designated this area as a Marine Protected Area which prohibits all oil and gas activities. Relevant sections and figures should be updated accordingly.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

Section 2.4 Project Area, page 2.3: Regarding the statement, "...the amended (extended) portion of the Project Area is more than 400 km from Newfoundland or Labrador mainland and outside Canada's EEZ...", it appears from Figure 2-1 that the extended area lies "within" Canada's EEZ. Is this a typo?

Section 4.1.1.1 Significant Benthic Areas (page 4.1) and Section 4.4.1.3 DFO EBSAs on the Maritimes Bioregion, page 4.48: There is mention of a large significant benthic area for sea pens located in the Laurentian Channel, which overlaps with the Original and Amended Study Area. The Laurentian Channel AOI was recently designated as an Oceans Act Marine Protected Area (MPA). The Laurentian Channel MPA Regulations (currently accessible on Canada Gazette II) prohibits carrying out "any activity in the Marine Protected Area that disturbs, damages, destroys or removes from the Marine Protected Area any living marine organism or any part of its habitat or is likely to do so". This prohibition includes all Oil & Gas Activities and seismic surveys. Updated information on this newly designated MPA should be included in the EA Amendment.

Section 4.1.1.3 Species at Risk, page 4.5: Regarding reference to the Recovery Strategy for Northern and Spotted Wolffish (DFO 2018) and implementation of critical habitat, it should be clarified that the recovery strategy and critical habitat are "proposed" as they are not finalized.

Section 4.4.2 Environmental Effects Assessment, page 4.51: Regarding the statement, "There are no known prohibitions of marine activities, such as those being proposed as part of the Project, within the protected and sensitive areas described in the original EA Report, 2018 EA Update, and above in section 4.4.1.". Updated information on the Laurentian Channel MPA's prohibitions on oil and gas activities, including seismic activities, should be discussed.

Section 4.3 Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles, page 4.42: With respect to new or updated information, in addition to the David Strait - Baffin Bay - Labrador Sea

GX Technology Canada Ltd.'s GrandSPAN 2D-3D Seismic, Gravity and Magnetic Survey, 2014-2019: 2019 Environmental Assessment Amendment (Stantec April 2019)

population of Northern Bottlenose Whale in the project area, the Project EA Amendment should note that recent work in the Flemish Pass area has highlighted the potential presence of the Scotian Shelf population of Northern Bottlenose whale listed in the Species at Risk Act public registry as endangered, and the implications of such relative to mitigation measures set out in the Statement of Canadian Practice. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended that seismic surveys be shut-down if Northern Bottlenose Whales are encountered within the safety zone due to the uncertainty of the exact range of these populations.