



March 22, 2006

Ms. Francine Wight  
Senior Advisor, Environment & Emergencies  
Petro-Canada  
Scotia Centre, 235 Water Street  
St. John's, NL A1C 1B6

Dear Ms. Wight:

**Re: Petro-Canada 3D Marine Seismic Program  
CEA Act Environmental Assessment**

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In accordance with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), based on the information presented in the project description “*3-D Marine Seismic Program in and near EL 1092 Project Description*” (LGL 2006), the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) has determined that a screening level of environmental assessment is required for the proposed 3D marine seismic program.

The C-NLOPB, in consultation with other federal and provincial departments, has determined the scope of the project, the factors to be assessed and the scope of those factors (the Scoping Document). A copy of the Scoping Document is attached for your information and use in preparation of the environmental assessment report. Please note, as stated on page 1 of the Scoping Document,

***The C-NLOPB intends that the environmental impact statement submitted with any supporting documents as may be necessary, will fulfill the requirements for a Screening. The C-NLOPB, therefore, pursuant to Section 17 (1) of the CEA Act, formally delegate the responsibility for preparation of an acceptable Screening environmental assessment Petro-Canada, the project proponent. The C-NLOPB will prepare the Screening Report, which will include the determination of significance.***

During the review of the draft Scoping Document, comments were received from federal and provincial environmental and fishery departments. The following comments are offered for your consideration in the preparation of the environmental assessment.

1. The EA report should include a description of any under-utilized species commonly found in the study area as determined from analyses of past DFO R/V and Industry (e.g. GEAC) survey data, with emphasis given to those being considered for future potential fisheries.
2. The Proponent should consult with DFO to determine if under-utilized species, especially those under consideration for future fisheries, are likely to be in the study area. If under-utilized species are likely in the study area, a the EA report should provide a general description, with a discussion of potential effects from project activities.
3. On page 5, para. 4 of the Project Description, it is stated that "...the use of dedicated Marine Mammal Observer(s) to implement shut downs of the surveys when appropriate..." Please provide details regarding the circumstances under which shut downs will be appropriate.
4. On page 10 of the Project Description – Environmental Monitoring: The Project overview (page 5) makes reference to dedicated marine mammal observer(s) (MMOs) while this section uses environmental observer(s). The duties associated with each of these traditionally have not been similar and the terms are not considered to be interchangeable. Please clarify whether MMOs or environmental observers are to be used.
5. With regard to seismic surveys, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans requests that a temporal and spatial buffer be established in order to reduce potential interference with gear and fish behaviour and /or distribution prior to and during research surveys. Details regarding this buffer should be discussed with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
6. Section 5.0 of the scope states "the time required for recovery from an effect and/or return to pre-effect condition, including the estimated proportion, level and amount of recovery" will be considered. Please ensure that this factor is considered for marine and/or migratory birds and species at risk. Recovery times need to be considered for those species that would most likely be impacted by a large oil spill. Many species that would likely be impacted have slow generation times (e.g. murres do not begin breeding until 5-7 years old and lay one egg per year). It is likely that most seabird populations would recover from the impacts of oil spill, but if the impact was large enough, it could take decades for the population to recover. In the case of murres, a population recovery time of decades could reduce or eliminate hunting for a generation of murre hunters.
7. Environment Canada provided a number of references pertaining to migratory birds. The list of these references is attached for your consideration.

If you have any questions regarding the CEEA environmental assessment process, or wish to discuss the Scope of Project or the attached comments, I may be reached at 709-778-1431 or via email at [kcoady@cnlopb.nl.ca](mailto:kcoady@cnlopb.nl.ca)

Yours truly,

***Original Signed by K. Coady***

Kim Coady  
Environmental Assessment Officer

Attachments

cc D. Burley