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Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador  
Offshore Petroleum Board

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

January 12, 2009

MD-39984

Ms. Elizabeth Young – Environmental Analyst  
Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board  
Fifth Floor, TD Place, 140 Water Street  
St. John’s, NL A1C 6H6

Dear Ms. Young:

I am writing in response to your request for review of the Environmental Assessment (CEAR 08-01-42400) of the Petro-Canada exploration drilling program for the Jeanne d’Arc Basin area 2009-2017. We have reviewed the consultants report and other relevant information, and are pleased to see most of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture’s issues addressed.

The Department is pleased to see the consideration of invertebrates and associated habitat, marine fish and fish habitat, and commercial fisheries as valued ecosystem components (VECs) in the EA. The consideration of species at risk, sensitive areas, cumulative environmental effects and mitigation measures associated with various aspects of the drilling project add value to this EA report.

In particular, we are pleased that mitigation measures are proposed to minimize conflict with commercial harvesting activities such as impacts on fishing gear and access to fishing grounds. Additionally, it is positive that Petro-Canada will submit documentation to the C-NLOPB each year during exploration drilling activity in order to confirm: the scope and nature of activities planned and assessed under the environmental assessment have not changed; the nature of the Species at Risk in the project/study areas have been validated and have not changed; and the mitigation measures defined are still valid and will continue to be implemented.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on your proposal and are pleased to be part of this process in support of offshore oil and gas exploration and development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Sincerely,

Bobbi Smith  
Coastal and Oceans Policy Analyst  
Sustainable Fisheries and Oceans Policy Division  
Tom Dooley  
Director  
Sustainable Fisheries and Oceans Policy Division