

Remarks for 2022 Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Environmental Forum Scott Tessier, C-NLOPB, March 8, 2022

- Thank you Rob and I'll add my best wishes to everyone for a happy International Women's Day.
- I'd also like to thank the forum organizers, our presenters and everyone for participating today and tomorrow.
- I'd also like to extend a special thanks to our regulatory counterparts from Australia regulator, who've kindly agreed to present their perspectives and are a valued resource for the C-NLOPB and organizations like ours worldwide.
- We've just handed over the Chair role of the International Regulators Forum to Australia. They are a valued partner.
- While we are obviously all seized with the events that are happening in Ukraine, and our thoughts are with Ukrainians, we have an excellent agenda for the next two days.
- Responsible and reliable sources of energy are incredibly important. The Ukraine invasion has put another lens on the important and ongoing debate about the place of Canada's oil and gas in our global energy mix, now and in the future.
- Oil exploration and production have become increasingly politicized and at times shockingly polarized in recent years, and it seems oil and gas are never far removed from world events.
- For over 35 years, the C-NLOPB has regulated in the public interest – a sometimes complicated concept with a lot of inputs coming at us, some of which are competing in the eyes of our various stakeholders.
- We act within a legislative, regulatory and policy framework that is established by the federal and provincial governments, as we serve as the product and agent of joint management of the Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area.
- Like democracy and Canada itself, sometimes joint management can be messy. The governments aren't always completely aligned in what the public interest demands. The Atlantic Accord was established and continues to exist for this very reason.
- While we as the regulator are independent and act at arm's length from the two governments, decisions in areas such as land tenure and development plans require ministerial ratification.
- As does environmental assessment, as we are seeing play out in recent headlines, and as has been the case for many years.
- The best regulators identify difficult problems and work with others in an effort to help solve them. The worst create policy or act without proper authorities, or refuse to acknowledge the realities of the authorizing environment, which is comprised of governments and the public on whose behalf we regulate.

- Today, there are plenty of difficult problems for us all to work on. Even beyond the crisis in Ukraine, our society faces no less than three overarching, interrelated and incredibly important problems – pandemic response and recovery; reliable and responsible energy supply; and climate change.
- Each of those is daunting on their own. But they do not exist in isolation from one another and they are unmistakable, fundamental components of today’s public interest.
- The local offshore petroleum sector has responded admirably to the challenges of COVID-19, maintaining production and continuing exploration safely and in an environmentally responsible way, while meeting (and very often exceeding) the expectations and requirements of our amazing public health authorities in order to protect offshore workers.
- And I’m very proud of the efforts of the staff at the C-NLOPB, who have admirably navigated the dual responsibilities of keeping themselves and their families safe and ensuring effective regulatory oversight of offshore operations throughout the pandemic.
- As a result, production from our offshore hasn’t been dramatically impaired by COVID-19. There have been disruptions, delays and deferrals without question, but it’s important to recognize that almost 200 million barrels of oil have been safely produced from our offshore since the pandemic began, along with multiple offshore drilling campaigns, seismic data acquisition programs, and other activities.
- However, reliability has evolved beyond avoiding operational disruptions and lapses that threaten exploration, production and the bottom line.
- In our offshore, we saw multiple events in 2018 and 2019 related to unauthorized discharges or safety incidents. They had direct and immediate impacts on reliability, as well as public confidence, and required individual operators and the industry to collectively place concerted efforts on improvement, which has occurred but we can never lose sight of the need for operational excellence.
- Reliability now requires more than keeping the drill bits turning and oil flowing, and even more than ensuring that safety and environmental protection are kept at the forefront of all operations.
- Reliability is now increasingly being linked with responsibility. In our offshore, responsibility has for many years meant due respect for others who make a living in and from the ocean, and prioritization of those who make their living supporting the exploration and development of our public resources from our local supply and service community.
- Those imperatives of course continue, but today responsible energy supply also means a commitment to fight climate change by lowering emissions and leaning into the transition towards lower carbon and renewable energy sources.
- It means meaningful engagement with stakeholders like those from the fishing sector as well as with Indigenous communities in support of environmental protection and economic opportunities that help to advance reconciliation.

- Oil company boards, shareholders and the public interest are aligned like never before when it comes to responsibility for environmental, social and governance imperatives. That's a good thing for regulators, and for the public interest.
- It is leading to more focus on safety, environmental protection, compliance, transparency, engagement and innovation than ever before in boardrooms in St. John's, Calgary, Houston, and overseas.
- It also empowers and drives enhanced cooperation and partnerships with the fisheries sector, the local supply and service community, and Indigenous groups.
- Not to mention respect for human rights, democracy, sovereignty and peace.
- And I think all of that will help underscore the difference between desirable and undesirable energy sources, while we finally and collectively make real progress in addressing climate change through reduced emissions, lower carbon energy sources and the transition to renewable energy.
- The public interest in the next 35 years will probably look a lot different than the past 35 years. This week's forum is part of an unmistakable shift that is well underway.
- I look forward to listening, learning and participating.
- The C-NLOPB is committed to the public interest, first and foremost, as always. And we look forward to working with all of you to help Newfoundland and Labrador and the entire country solve our difficult problems.
- Thanks again. Back to you, Rob.