

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
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St. Johns, NL, A1C 6M1

SUBJECT: Qalipu First Nation Comments on the Draft GIS Decision-Support Tool

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to provide comments on the Draft GIS Decision-Support Tool for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Qalipu First Nation (QFN) represents approximately 24,000 registered members in Newfoundland and abroad and is made up of 67 traditional Mi'kmaq communities across Newfoundland. As a band, we provide core programs and service to our members, including Natural Resources Management.

It is essential with the level of development in exploratory drilling offshore Newfoundland and Labrador that a more efficient and effective approach is taken to the Impact Assessment (IA) process. Specific environmental protection requirements for future exploratory drilling in the region should include proactive maintenance of tools for decision-making and public involvement. QFN supports the development of a maintained and publicly accessible GIS decision-support tool.

It is essential that this tool is maintained for all levels of drilling (exploration and production), and consistently updated as new data becomes available. To facilitate this, the addition of any new projects should include a review of available data to ensure data gaps are not present. We would also like to see the inclusion of project-specific spill modelling data within the tool, as well as shared results of follow up monitoring programs.

To promote more comprehensive use the tool could benefit from offering downloadable data for use in GIS software. Information could then be used for analysis within the organization. Lastly, the inclusion of a search function would allow greater access within the document.

Transparency and continued engagement with Indigenous groups, regulators, industry and other stakeholders is crucial to maintain good data sharing and to ensure better regulatory requirements for all current and future drilling.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Chief Brendan Mitchell