



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

PO Box 5667
St. John's NL A1C 5X1

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BAB 3990- 15

March 5, 2014

Darren Hicks
Environmental Analyst
Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board
140 Water St., 4th Floor
St. John's, NL A1C 6H6

Dear Mr. Hicks

Subject: Fisheries and Oceans Canada Review Suncor Eastern NL 2D/3D/4D Seismic 2014-2024 EA Report

As requested, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has completed a review of the document entitled "*Environmental Assessment of Suncor Energy's Eastern Newfoundland Offshore Area 2D/3D/4D Seismic Program, 2014-2024*" dated December 2013 and offers the following comments:

General

- **Section 1.1:** The proponent states in the environmental assessment report that the project will be guided by the "Statement of Canadian Practice with respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment" (SOCP). The requirements in the SOCP are minimum standards to be implemented during the planning and conduct of seismic programs. The proponent should be required to adhere to all relevant minimum mitigations outlined in the SOCP including the Planning Seismic Surveys, Safety Zone and Start-up, Shut-down of Air Source Array(s), Line Changes and Maintenance Shut-downs, Operations in Low Visibility and Additional Mitigative Measures and Modifications sections of the SOCP.
- **Section 4.3:** The environmental assessment report quantifies the average landings of commercial species in the Project and Study Area in Newfoundland and Labrador from 2005 -2010. Please note that some of the fisheries in the study area are managed by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) with landings in countries other than Canada that should be included in this report.
- **Section 4.3:** Updated catch information since 2010, for all species are available from the DFO NL Commercial Fishery Landings Database and should be included in the environmental assessment report.



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- **Section 4.3:** There have been significant changes in a number of fisheries in recent years including:
 - A decline in the landings of shrimp in recent years. Page 63 refers to a possible future decline in TAC for Northern shrimp which has now occurred. The TAC for 3L shrimp has declined from 30,000t in 2010 to 19,200 in 2011, to 12,000 in 2012 to 8600 in 2013 and to 4300t in 2014.
 - The TAC for 3M Cod, primarily fished by other NAFO Contracting Parties and re-opened in 2010 and has increased to ~15,000t.
 - 3LN Redfish re-opened in 2010 with a TAC of 3500t and is now at 7000t.
- **Section 4.3:** A description of Bluefin Tuna fishery should be included. Historically, there has been significant catch of Bluefin tuna in portions of 3L (r).
- **Section 4.7:** The boundaries of several areas closed to fishing for the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems were changed by NAFO in September 2013. The current boundaries of these areas should be reflected in the report. The NAFO website <http://www.nafo.int/data/frames/data.html> provides maps and the boundaries of closed areas.

Specific

- **Section 4.6 Pg. 117:** It is the "Atlantic and Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence" population or DU of White Hake that is recommended as Threatened.
- **Section 4.6 Pg. 118:** DFO emphasizes the importance of complying with relevant regulations pertaining to SARA Recovery Strategies and Action Plan including the identification of critical habitat during the life of the project.
- **Section 4.6.1 Pg. 118:** For White Shark, the second sentence should read "*captured in inshore waters as well as offshore waters over the continental shelves...*". Reference to offshore waters is missing.
- **Section 4.6.1 Pg. 119-120:** Future EA updates should include recently published papers on Northern Wolffish and Spotted Wolffish (see Simpson *et al.* 2011, 2013).
- **Table 4.13:** The title of this table should be revised to read "*SARA-listed and COSEWIC-assessed Marine Species that May Occur in the Study Area*" as species are assessed by COSEWIC, not listed. Also, the row containing Atlantic Cod listed on Schedule 3 of SARA should be removed from the table.



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- **Section 5.6.5:** The document, "*Recovery Strategy for Northern Wolffish (Anarhichas denticulatus) and Spotted Wolffish (Anarhichas minor), and Management Plan for Atlantic Wolffish (Anarhichas lupus) in Canada*" should have been considered during the effects assessment in this section.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the above, you can contact me [REDACTED]

Regards [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Senior Fisheries Protection Biologist
Mining, Oil and Gas