

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my firm opposition to oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence now and in the future. There are many important reasons why oil and gas development should not occur in the Gulf at any time. First among these is that in order to avoid severe impacts to our communities and renewable resources from climate change, Canada must stop expanding its development of fossil fuels and instead pursue the abundant possibilities for creating clean, renewable energy. Studies show that the production of renewable energy creates many more jobs than that of fossil fuels per unit of energy produced without the potential for devastating environmental impacts such as oil spills. Since renewable energy opportunities can now produce the energy we need with much fewer environmental impacts and more job creation than fossil fuels, why do we continue to pursue fossil fuel development in fragile ecosystems like the Gulf of Saint Lawrence?

Apart from its significant contribution to climate change, drilling for oil and gas in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence WILL create other unacceptable environmental impacts to this ecosystem. The Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board has recorded 337 oil spills from just three oil rigs operating in the province since 1997. During this time, these oil rigs have dumped an estimated 430,000 litres of synthetic drilling fluids and other hydrocarbons into the ocean, polluting the marine life that we consume as well as the greater ecosystem. These statistics demonstrate that despite the best intentions of environmental assessments, significant environmental impacts from oil and gas exploration and extraction are unavoidable. It should be noted as well that oil drilling in the "Old Harry" block would take place in much deeper water than that surrounding the Hibernia platform for example. Drilling in deeper water greatly increases the chance of a blowout and a major oil spill. Finally, it is generally accepted that in the event of an oil spill, even under ideal weather conditions (i.e. low winds), only 15% of the oil spilled can be recovered. The other 85% would be dispersed with chemicals and be left to contaminate our environment for decades. Given the high winds present during much of the year in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, clean-up operations would most likely be completely ineffective if a spill occurred outside of the summer months.

There are other reasons as well why I am firmly opposed to fossil fuel development in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. The marine environment of this region is extremely important to the economies of all provinces that border the Gulf. Economic activities related to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, such as fishing, aquaculture and tourism represent nearly two-thirds of Canada's GDP related to all maritime activities, according to a recent analysis by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Offshore oil drilling and the accompanying threat of an oil spill pose a very real threat to the economic well being of coastal communities in the five provinces bordering the Gulf. While fossil fuel development creates great wealth, most of the money generated will go to fossil fuel companies and their shareholders, not the coastal communities

who will bear the negative impacts of this development. Even if the resultant wealth was more fairly distributed, it should be generated instead by clean, renewable energy development which has many fewer environmental impacts. A final reason for my opposition is the fact that current Canadian regulations cap the liability of a company involved with offshore fossil fuel development at \$30 million. Considering that the costs of cleaning up the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico now total \$37 billion, a cap of \$30 million is ridiculously inadequate and simply allows oil companies to avoid assuming the financial risk of deep water drilling.

In conclusion, further fossil fuel development in Canada is unnecessary and aggravates the growing problem of global warming. Meanwhile, oil and gas development in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence will create significant environmental impacts and brings with it the very real risk of a major oil spill. Such a spill would devastate our marine environment and have a strong negative impact on the economies of all five provinces bordering the Gulf. I strongly urge you to follow the lead of the government of Quebec and realize that the impacts of fossil fuel development within the Gulf of Saint Lawrence greatly outweigh the costs.

Most Sincerely,

Colin Jeffrey

