

Scott Tessier (Chair & CEO)
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Offshore Petroleum Board(C-NLOPB)
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Dear Mr. Tessier,

Re: Public Review of Draft Western Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area Strategic Environmental Assessment and Update Report

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on the SEA draft report.

I live in western Newfoundland in the town of Stephenville. My descendents have lived here on the west coast for many generations. My roots here are strong. I am very fortunate to have been able to settle here and I hope to raise a family of my own here. It is a wonderful place to live, with fresh air, clean water and a wonderful environment for a young family.

I have been researching and becoming more aware of hydraulic fracturing and the dangers it presents to our environment and our health. I strongly feel that this controversial technique is way too hazardous to be used in our geological rock formations because our coastal landscape and underlying rock is already very fractured and it would be impossible to control or prevent oil and gas migration into our bays and along our coastlines. It simply would not be safe. My grave concern about hydraulic fracturing and plans for drilling projects using hydraulic fracturing in onshore- to- offshore operations to extract shale oil underneath the seabed here on the west coast is very well founded. I know about accidents and catastrophes that have occurred in other parts of Canada and the United States. In particular, I am following what is happening in Cold Lake, Alberta, where the oil company involved has been told to drain a lake to try and find out where a devastating and unstoppable oil leak has been happening. With such an ongoing disaster like that , I cannot help but wonder what it would be like here on the west coast, if / when a leak occurred, how it would ever be controlled. It would

not be. An oil company certainly would not be able to drain our bays to find it. The fact is it would or could be a disaster much worse than the BP oil spill.

In addition to the above comments, here is a more comprehensive list of my concerns:

1. The draft report shows a lack of social acceptability in all five Gulf provinces
2. Newfoundland's west coast has many sensitive and unique sectors vital to the Gulf ecosystem's health.
3. Our tourism and fisheries sectors are very important. Their successful cohabitation with oil and gas activities would be very difficult, if not impossible.
4. The draft report says that the efficiency of proposed mitigation measures is not proven.
5. AMEC's report is weak in many respects and is not adequate to serve as a decision tool for the C-NLOPB because comments and briefs presented by the public in the Fall of 2012 were not correctly addressed and integrated in the draft report. Impacts and risks of offshore oil and gas activities as well as hydraulic fracturing have been minimized throughout the report. The economic importance of fisheries and tourism are greater than shown in the draft report. Mitigation measures proposed by AMEC are weak and intervention capacity in the case of oil spills is clearly inadequate.
6. The Western Newfoundland offshore SEA draft report clearly establishes the biological importance and sensitivity of Newfoundland's offshore area in the Gulf and the importance of fisheries and tourism.
7. It establishes that there are huge gaps concerning biological knowledge and impact of oil and gas activities, that there are uncertainties concerning the efficiency of mitigation measures and that there are very real and enormous impacts of any oil spill.
8. Former Commissioner to the Environment and Sustainable Development, Scott Vaughn cautioned that intervention capacity in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is inadequate.
9. The liability limit for oil companies is still limited at \$30 million. This limit could be increased to \$1 billion according to Minister Oliver, an amount

which remains small compared to a potential spill. Costs in the Gulf of Mexico have surpassed \$42 billion to date.

The following recommendations put forth by the St. Lawrence Coalition reflect how I feel and what I believe needs to be carried out.

1. The C-NLOPB should defer the issuing of any new exploration licenses in the Newfoundland offshore area.
2. The C-NLOPB should cancel the call for bids issued on May 16, 2013 for four parcels in the Newfoundland offshore area.
3. The C-NLOPB must refrain from giving authorization to projects currently submitted in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, including Corridor Resources' Old Harry or Shoal Point Energy and Black Spruce Exploration's Western Newfoundland drilling program.
4. The C-NLOPB must submit to public scrutiny the recommendations and conclusions of the final SEA report.

I believe that the C-NLOPB and the Provincial Department of Environment and Conservation as partners in the conjoint regulatory body should not be both a facilitator of oil and gas development and a regulator for work safety and environmental protection.

In its present form, I believe the C-NLOPB has little credibility and legitimacy. The Board is conducting a SEA to determine if it is appropriate to proceed with oil and gas development in our Gulf , while simultaneously allowing seismic testing, issuing licenses , making land ownership and control agreements with oil companies to facilitate oil and gas exploration and development. I believe that to be a serious conflict of interest.

I will be asking the Provincial and Federal governments to enact a moratorium on oil and gas exploration and development in the Gulf of St. Lawrence until they have established a more democratic and ecosystem based management system and until oil and gas development are subject to a credible independent, science-based environmental process.

Sincerely,
Erin Marche



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