

Norris, Sara

From: Graham Oliver [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2013 6:41 AM
To: Information
Cc: premier@gov.nl.ca; Tom Hedderson; Tom Marshall; Terry French
Subject: Public Review of Draft Western Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area Strategic Environmental Assessment and Update Report

Graham Oliver
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Scott Tessier
Chair & CEO, C-NLOPB
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Copies to:

Premier Kathy Dunderdale, premier@gov.nl.ca
Hon. Tom Hedderson, thedderson@gov.nl.ca
Hon. Tom Marshall, tommarshall@gov.nl.ca
Hon. Terry French, TerryFrench@gov.nl.ca

Dear Scott Tessier;

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

I would like to respond to the request for comments to the C-NLOPB regarding the Public Review of Draft Western Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area Strategic Environmental Assessment and Update Report: The motto of the C-NLOPB is: *"controlling the flow for future generations."* In my opinion, the C-NLOPB may do a good job at controlling the flow, however this regulatory board has little concern for our fragile marine environment when making decisions. The Board is charged with the responsibility of issuing licences and getting the oil out of the ground. I am also extremely disappointed that the C-NLOPB consistently appoints oil executives to positions of power at the C-NLOPB. Mr. Tessier, both you and your predecessor were schooled in the culture of the oil and gas industry. Oil and gas companies have a history of being poor stewards of our environment as extracting oil from the ground is their primary concern.

Recently Scott Vaughn, Commissioner of the Environment, made a number of recommendations to the federal government and the C-NLOPB. One recommendation put forth by Vaughn was that there be a freeze on the granting of new licenses in the very sensitive Gulf of St. Lawrence region. The response of the C-NLOPB was to issue more licenses, a flagrant disregard of Vaughn's recommendation. This move seems counter-intuitive and was certainly an insult to the concerned citizens of our province and a total disregard for the protection of a very sensitive ecosystem.

Throughout Scott Vaughn's tenure, he diligently fought to protect the interests of Canadians, however as commissioner he was consistently met with opposition from the oil and gas industry and the federal government with its pro-oil agenda. Vaughn finally resigned from his position because his well-crafted reports went unheeded.

In my opinion, oil companies have preferential treatment from our governments and are encouraged to “drill baby drill” with little, or no regard for environmental protection. It is time for the C-NLOPB to add “environmental concerns” to the job description. “*Preserving the environment for future generations*” should certainly stand higher on the podium than “*Controlling the flow for future generations*”.

While I support offshore oil development with conventional drilling off the Grand Banks, I do not support oil and gas development in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The ecosystem in the Gulf is confined and extremely fragile and is approximately one third the size of the Gulf Of Mexico. One spill in the Gulf of St. Lawrence would be catastrophic. I therefore ask the provincial and federal government to advise the C-NLOPB to invoke a moratorium on drilling in the Gulf of S. Lawrence.

Request for a Moratorium on Fracking in The Gulf of St. Lawrence

After co-chairing the People’s Forum on Fracking (Sept. 22) and witnessing first hand the concerns of over 400 people who came out to hear Jessica Ernst’s story on fracking, I urge the C-NLOPB to listen to the concerns of citizens and establish a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in this province. Commissioner Vaughn pointed out many concerns about hydraulic fracturing in his report and he cautioned the government about proceeding with this controversial method of oil extraction as it can be hazardous to our environment. If the Black Spruce Exploration proposal to drill the Green Point Shale, which has already been registered with the C-NLOPB, is in turn registered and approved by the Department of Environment and Conservation, it will be irresponsible to proceed with this sketchy method of oil extraction.

Sincerely yours,

Graham Oliver

Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group

Information Below: http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/oil_environment.html

Immediate Effects on Fishing

Scientific research on the Dutch Continental Shelf during the 1990s found that seismic shooting significantly reduced trawl and longline catches of cod and haddock within 18 nautical miles of the testing area. Catch rates did not return to normal until five days after the shooting ended. Whales, seals, and other marine mammals are also sensitive to sounds generated during seismic surveys.

Oil Industry Affects the Marine Environment

Besides introducing oil and other chemicals into the seawater, drill cuttings may smother or interfere with life on the ocean floor. Scientists have expressed concerns that the habitual dumping of cuttings into the ocean may have a more negative effect on marine life than is currently known, especially if the cumulative impacts of the province's three oilfields – Hibernia, White Rose, and Terra Nova – are taken into account.