

Call for Bids NS22-1 Written Comments

Name	Organization	Written Comment
David Milia	The Canadian Energy & Climate Nexus	<p>The Canadian Energy & Climate Nexus #1500, 205 5th Ave SW Calgary, AB T2P2V7</p> <p>October 10, 2022</p> <p>To the CNSOPB, regarding the "Call for Bids NS22-1 Parcels"</p> <p>The Canadian Energy & Climate nexus supports the development of the parcels identified under the "Call for Bids NS22-1" for a number of reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reserves identified are primarily Natural Gas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1A. As the European energy ecosystem is placed under growing stress for viable, ethical, and reliable LNG, these plays could be instrumental to shore up the on-going requirements that Europe will need as they transition from current supply structures. 1B. The establishment of a Hydrogen Hub in the Maritimes can benefit from available natural gas in the short term, as its system establish supply/demand in the region while providing lower cost blue hydrogen and subsequently moving to green hydrogen production. 2. Decarbonization <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2A. The region's potential for Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) are high, particularly given geological formations identified with capacity for CO2 injection, thus driving the regions decarbonization efforts. 2B. The robust procedures in place for the region both federally and provincially that address standard past requirement such as environmental impact assessments, but go beyond that incorporating special considerations for strategic environmental assessments, defense of special areas located in the region, considerations for species at risk, fisheries,

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		<p>and even looking at past mitigation. This robust plan, if executed correctly, can serve as the benchmark for potentially critical energy infrastructure going forward.</p> <p>Overall, the region's development, has the potential to not only progress Canada's energy and climate initiatives but also provide energy for social and economic reasons to other parts of the world.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>David L. Milia President & CEO The Canadian Energy & Climate Nexus.</p>
George Kovacic	Croscorp International	<p>CNSOPB Call for Bids NS22-1 will help Canada and the world reach and exceed national and global climate commitments/goals as well as aid with global Energy Security.</p> <p>Offshore Nova Scotia provides Canada with a unique opportunity to sequester and store over 100 years of Canada's CO2 emissions. This massive opportunity to store CO2 will result in net-negative hydrocarbons (both natural gas and oil) from offshore Nova Scotia. Being directly east of the heavy CO2 emitting US Northeast, offshore Nova Scotia is ideally positioned to sequester and store CO2 from that region as well as from Canada. Since 2000, CO2 has been imported into Canada via the Souris Valley Pipeline. The imported CO2 is transported through a 205-mile pipeline from North Dakota to the Weyburn field in Saskatchewan. About 155 million cubic feet of CO2 is exported from the US to Canada daily. The Weyburn example establishes a useful precedent and serves as a successful example of transporting CO2 from the US to Canada.</p> <p>Offshore Nova Scotia is a very prolific margin that has produced 2.1 Tcf of natural gas and has a significant amount of undeveloped discoveries awaiting development. Offshore Nova Scotia has an estimated 120 Tcf of natural gas and 8 billion barrels of oil. Plus, offshore Nova Scotia is covered with: Gas seeps, Oil seeps, Slicks, Direct Hydrocarbon Indicator clusters and is 2/3 the size of the US Gulf of Mexico. Offshore Nova Scotia is ideal for both net-negative hydrocarbons as well as net-negative hydrogen. The world needs offshore Nova Scotia hydrocarbons to displace coal as well as CO2 intensive hydrocarbons plus for the production of net-negative hydrogen. Equally important and close to my heart is the need to protect global forests, waterways and wildlife. The current overuse of biomass is resulting in deforestation and the corresponding horrible impacts on waterways and wildlife, this deforestation can be lessened by the exploration and production of offshore Nova Scotia hydrocarbons.</p>

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		<p>Offshore Nova Scotia is perfectly positioned to provide Energy Security to Europe and elsewhere globally. Goldboro, Nova Scotia is about half the distance to Europe when compared to the Gulf of Mexico. Proximity to Europe provides Nova Scotia LNG and other hydrocarbons an additional green and economic competitive advantage over US and other hydrocarbon sources. Similarly, the cooler Nova Scotian climate provides additional climate and cost advantages over Gulf of Mexico and other LNG sources.</p> <p>Offshore Nova Scotia offers excellent seismic and other data. The availability of key seismic and other data via the multi-client model allows for quick development of CO2 sequestration and storage as well as exploration and production of hydrocarbons.</p> <p>Nova Scotia has existing pipelines and an opportunity to recommission an offshore natural gas pipeline. Meanwhile, companies are eager to develop LNG export terminals in Goldboro, Nova Scotia and elsewhere in Atlantic Canada as well as other infrastructure.</p> <p>Offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production will advance the development of offshore wind and other renewables energy. Joint hydrocarbon and renewable energy projects will provide economies of scale and as such reduce costs as well as allow for the joint use of pipelines and other infrastructure.</p> <p>To meet climate commitments and goals as well as improve global energy security, the last molecule of hydrocarbons needs to be produced in offshore Nova Scotia. This and future Nova Scotia Call for Bids are necessary to ensure the last molecule of hydrocarbons is indeed produced in offshore Nova Scotia.</p>
Jennifer Turner	Independent Consultant / Self-employed	<p>I am submitting a comment as a concerned member of the public, a Canadian, and a Newfoundlander.</p> <p>Growing up in NL, my father was a fisherman. We were taught to have the utmost respect for a resource that puts food on our tables, yet takes many lives. Early on, we understood the importance of "sustainability" and stewardship for future generations.</p> <p>Unfortunately we also understand how lack of economic and resource development can negatively impact the well-being of a province. Many communities struggle to simply exist against ongoing displacement, as young people pursue economic opportunities elsewhere.</p>

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		<p>I believe that Nova Scotia is similar. We share the same water, and it shapes who we are. We know we depend on it for our future. We also know that economic development can be a lifeline.</p> <p>At this time, we live in a climate crisis that is set to rapidly worsen. Our decisions exist as part of an interconnected global ecosystem that includes millions of vulnerable people that are directly threatened. There will be displacement and conflict. These impacts will be felt globally. There can be no compromise in terms of action to limit pending tragedy. This also requires us to acknowledge how much the world still relies on hydrocarbons and will continue to do so for some time.</p> <p>In response, we must chart a new path forward. We must accelerate development of renewable energy, but we must also rapidly take action to ensure remaining fossil fuel development is done to a higher standard (while taking an active role in raising that bar). Canada is well positioned to act on this imperative.</p> <p>Nova Scotia is part of this potential success story. These parcels overlap with significant CO2 sequestration and storage potential that has been reported to be world-class. There is excellent data to support seal quality and storage efficiency. Nova Scotia has an economic and climate imperative to explore how to leverage these resources to develop safe and permanent subsurface CO2 storage.</p> <p>CCUS has been referred to as both a climate imperative and a trillion dollar opportunity, and Canada already has high regulatory standards and a relatively successful track record. Earlier this month, a study entitled CarbonNext highlighted how much Canada has had more success than the USA in terms of bringing large scale government-funded CCUS demonstration projects to the point of being commercially viable.</p> <p>In addition, offshore Nova Scotia has substantial amounts of natural gas and oil. Despite recently moving towards being a net importer of gas from the USA, Nova Scotia is well positioned to develop these resources responsibly. This can be done in a way that avoids "fossil fuel lock in" while pushing towards lower carbon gas, hydrogen, and offshore wind.</p> <p>It is important to understand how these goals can be interconnected and interdependent.</p> <p>- Canada's own Emissions Reduction Plan projects that Canadian CCUS provides an opportunity to reduce emissions by 19.4 Mt per year, with another 1.3 Mt from CCUS-enabled hydrogen production.</p>

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		<p>- The International Energy Agency recently completed a carbon capture study, reporting that "CCUS is often viewed as a fossil fuel technology that competes with renewable energy for public and private investment, although in practice it has substantial synergies with renewables."</p> <p>- The Public Policy Forum recently reported that "the link between CCUS and gas goes far beyond carbon removal", being "a key to emissions reduction in the short term and to the eventual separation of hydrogen and carbon in the production of low-cost, non-emitting hydrogen fuel."</p> <p>As Canada begins to account for ocean climate solutions (including natural carbon sinks and nature-based infrastructure), I know that Nova Scotians understand how the "blue economy" sustains life as we know it.</p> <p>Nova Scotia can, and should, still move to protect what matters most, in full consultation and partnership with First Nations and Indigenous communities (and in alignment with Canada's commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).</p> <p>This means that true climate leadership might deviate from what we envisioned in the past (or even today, given unknown challenges ahead). It requires us to reach beyond our comfort zones, take more of an "all of the above" approach to energy, and focus more on how to keep raising the bar - while expediting energy transition in a progressively unstable world.</p> <p>Nova Scotia is uniquely capable of charting this new course. I sincerely hope this happens - for the sake of a brighter future for all of us.</p>
Mark Brooks	World Wildlife Fund - Canada	Click to access World Wildlife Fund – Canada Letter
Isabelle Jubinville	Oceana Canada	Click to access Oceana Canada Letter
Reanne Harvey	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Nova Scotia Chapter	Click to access Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Nova Scotia Chapter Letter
Twila Gaudet	Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn Negotiation Office	Click to access the Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn Negotiation Office Letter



WWF-Canada
410 Adelaide St. West
Suite 400
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5V 1S8

Tel: (416) 489-8800
Toll-free: 1-800-26-PANDA
(1-800-267-2632)
Fax: (416) 489-8055
wwf.ca

November 16, 2022

Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board
1791 Barrington St., 8th Floor TD Centre
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K9
comments@cnsopb.ns.ca

Re: CALL FOR BIDS NS22-1

Dear Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Call for Bids NS22-1. We commend the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) for engaging stakeholders and seeking public feedback. WWF-Canada hopes that this Call for Bids process will be used to help ensure that any industrial activities in the region, should they take place at all, contribute to a region's broader sustainability objectives.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is one of the largest conservation organizations in the world with projects in more than 100 countries. As part of this global network, WWF-Canada works to expand habitats, reduce carbon in the atmosphere, lower industrial impacts and, as a result, reverse wildlife loss and fight climate change, , creating solutions to the environmental challenges that matter most for Canadians. We work in places that are unique and ecologically important, so that wildlife, nature and people can thrive. WWF-Canada believes healthy coastal communities depend on healthy oceans. We work in partnership with Indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and other groups to advocate for marine protected areas and sustainable oceans management, and to ensure the rules governing offshore oil and gas activities are consistent with international best practices for safety, accountability and environmental protection.

This submission provides an overview of our key concerns and recommendations on how to ensure industrial activities in the offshore are conducted safely with the lowest possible risk to human health and the environment.

Sincerely,

Original letter signed

Mark Brooks
Senior Specialist, Wildlife and Industry
WWF-Canada

General Comments

Any economic benefits derived from industrial development in the Nova Scotian offshore must be weighed against associated environmental and social impacts, which could have serious consequences for local economies. The goal of this call for bids should therefore be to advance the overall well-being of local communities and ecosystems. Whether resources end up benefiting local people or leading to adversity and ecological decline is very much dependent on how well resource development is planned and managed. Petroleum exploration and development is only one of several possible development options for this region and it is likely to be the option with the highest risk both economically and environmentally, as explained below.¹

In addition, it is not clear why a Call for Bids is needed at this time. The CNSOPB's Call for Bids NS21-1 for the southwestern Scotian Slope, which was issued in May 2021, **resulted in no bids**. The parcels that made up Call for Bids NS21-1 are no longer up for bid and will remain undeveloped under federal control. Previous exploration wells in the region have been plugged and abandoned, and previous development projects have all been decommissioned.

The development of new oil and gas resources in high-cost regions such as the North Atlantic offshore is not promising. In a landmark report earlier this year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) concluded that there can be **no new oil, gas or coal development if the world is to reach net zero emissions by 2050**.² According to the IEA, net zero will require “nothing short of the complete transformation of the global energy system” and massive deployment of all available clean energy technologies – such as renewables, electric vehicles and energy efficient building retrofits – between now and 2030.³ And crucially, this will lead to a “**huge decline in the use of fossil fuels**...There is no need for investment in new fossil fuel supply” in the net zero pathway, according to the IEA.

The world is undergoing an accelerating energy transition, driven by the global consensus that to avoid disaster, the Earth's overall rise in temperature must be limited to well below 2°C, with a safer aspirational target of 1.5°C.⁴ However, carbon emissions from the full production of currently operating oil and gas fields and coal mines across the world will lead to a global temperature rise beyond 2°C. To stay within this target, studies indicate that 68-80 per cent of existing global fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground.⁵ The lowest cost reserves will be burned first, whereas higher priced oil, such as in the North Atlantic offshore, will be much less viable in a low carbon world. Thus, the development of oil and gas resources in the Nova Scotian offshore is not consistent with international efforts to limit the worst impacts of climate change.

¹ For example, see: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2006. *Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment: Good practice guidance for development cooperation*. Paris. See additional resources in section 4.7 below.

² <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

³ <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

⁴ United Nations Climate Change. The Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement> ²¹ See Carbon Tracker Initiative. 2011. Unburnable Carbon – Are the world's financial markets carrying a carbon bubble? <https://www.carbontracker.org/reports/carbon-bubble/>; M. Raupach et al. 2014. Sharing a quota on cumulative carbon emissions.

⁵ *Nature Climate Change* 873; Oil Change International. Sept. 2016. The Sky's Limit: Why the Paris Climate Goals Require A Managed Decline of Fossil Fuel Production. (<http://priceofoil.org/2016/09/22/the-skys-limit-report/>)

Protected and Special Areas

As WWF-Canada indicated in our submission to the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Middle and Eastern Scotian Slope and Sable Island Bank Areas, we are concerned that the Eastern Canyons Conservation Area may overlap with Call for Bids NS22-1 parcels. At a minimum, parcel 8 and 5 are directly adjacent to the marine protected area. Despite there being no explicit prohibition of oil and gas activities in marine refuges, the CNSOPB should follow the precautionary principle and be proactive in removing pressure from areas of known ecological importance and sensitivity.

WWF-Canada continues to attest that oil and gas activities should not be permissible within marine protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures and recommends that the CNSOPB prohibit offshore oil and gas development in these areas in order to help conserve biodiversity and uphold Canada's commitments to marine conservation under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The CNSOPB has the authority to proactively put sites off limit to development and should do so for marine refuges such as the Western/Emerald Banks Conservation Area and the Eastern Canyons Conservation Area. We agree with the statement in the SEA that “though not legally protected under regulations that prevent oil and gas activities, these areas should be considered in environmental planning efforts that aim to prevent harm to marine animals and their habitats especially those special areas identified for the presence of benthic species and habitats (e.g., sponges, corals) and marine and migratory birds.” In this case, preventing harm should be to put these sites of limits to development.

The SEA did not provide detail on what mitigations are needed to reduce harm to large gorgonian corals, small gorgonians corals, sea pens and sponge, species present in marine refuges close to or within bid parcels. It is also unclear how potential effects on protected and special areas, including coral and sponge communities, are expected to be minimal when the SEA noted that recovery times for cold-water deep-sea species are likely to be longer than decades were they to be impacted by offshore oil and gas activities.

There are several instances where the SEA noted that standard mitigations to reduce impacts on corals and sponges include pre-drilling surveys to assess potential presence of sensitive benthic habitats, but it did not say what will happen if these are found. We reiterate findings from the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat¹ that recommend that for areas with defined benthic conservation areas that the mitigation hierarchy be applied: (1) avoid; (2) mitigate; and (3) offset (though recognizing that offsetting will not be possible for areas with benthic conservation objectives as there is no way to offset these unique, structurally complex habitats). As the first mitigation measure should be to avoid significant benthic areas by eliminating the possibility of interaction, video surveys should be required by the CNSOPB to confirm the presence or absence of sensitive species and/or habitats, and minimum setbacks applied to planned well and infrastructure locations. The SEA report suggested minimum proposed setbacks for areas with defined conservation objectives as 200 meters from seafloor infrastructure with no expected discharges, and 2 kilometers from any discharge points and/or surface (i.e., floating) infrastructure. It also suggested setback distances of 50 meters from corals and other sensitive benthic species and habitats for associated pipelines.

Other comments

Due to the risk profile of offshore oil and gas in the North Atlantic and the extreme consequences involved with a spill event, effective and efficient spill response will be of critical importance if the Call for Bids leads to the granting of Exploration Licenses. The CNSOPB must consider what additional accident prevention measures unique to the Nova Scotian offshore should be put in place before any exploration drilling programs are approved.

The CNSOPB will also need to consider the most effective spill response tactics including mechanical containment, natural degradation, chemical dispersion and in situ burning. All of these have drawbacks and limited effectiveness depending on the environmental conditions at the time. In the event of a major spill, it is likely that much of the oil would never be recovered given the remote location of the project area and the probability of adverse weather conditions.

In addition, thorough, long-term studies will also need to be carried out to get robust baseline biological information on the distribution and abundance of valued ecosystem components such as whales, harbour porpoises, cod, halibut, clams, mussels, squid, and shrimp, all of which are present in the area. The long-term impacts of seismic air gun noise, together with threats such as climate change and ocean acidification, on the ecosystem and population biology should be thoroughly studied before any licenses are issued in relation to this call for bids.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind as well that future oil and gas activities would or could exacerbate impacts on marine wildlife and ecosystems. For example, the development of offshore oil and gas related activities will result in an increase in offshore support vessels, which will turn up the volume of underwater noise to which marine mammals are exposed. Research has shown that underwater noise can have short- and long-term effects on marine mammals, including changes in behavior, masking of important sounds, temporary or permanent hearing loss, physiological stress, and changes in prey availability. Displacement could result in negative consequences, such as changes in food availability, which would likely affect energy budget and fitness. More research is needed on the cumulative effects of oil and gas activities on the North Atlantic marine environments before any offshore oil and gas activities take place in the region.

Oceana Canada

Halifax Office

1701 Hollis St, Suite 800

Halifax, NS Canada B3J 3M8

+1.844.362.3262

OCEANA.CA

Re: Call For Bids NS22-1

On behalf of Oceana Canada we are writing to express our significant concerns with the recent Call for Bids NS22-1, and the location of parcels open for bidding in the affected offshore area. These areas contain unique and sensitive submarine canyon environments and represent critically important habitat for sensitive benthic fauna, as well as a high diversity of fish.

Specifically, the nominated parcels overlap with Significant Benthic Areas (SBAs) identified for small and large gorgonian corals, sea pens, and sponges.¹ Exploratory drilling disturbs benthic substrate and releases discharge made up of dense particulates that can rapidly accumulate in these species and affect their filter-feeding and reproductive abilities.² The extremely slow growth rates of corals and sponges mean that the impacts of breaking, burying or otherwise damaging corals and sponges may persist for many years.³ Such impacts extend beyond just affecting corals and sponges, as many fish, invertebrates and mammals rely on their enhanced productivity.

The parcels overlap with Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs).⁴ The Scotian Slope EBSA contains four submarine canyon features which represent high productivity areas and provide a variety of habitat types for the many species that utilize canyon environments (and associated corals and sponges) for feeding, spawning or shelter.⁵ This includes not only commercially important species such as Atlantic halibut or lobster but also several at-risk fish species like cusk, white hake and thorny skate. Impacts to fish, larvae and fish habitat may be caused by acoustic stress or sediment disruption and can extend beyond the well site.

The Scotian Slope EBSA is an important migratory pathway for several Species At Risk Act (SARA)-listed species including leatherback turtles, North Atlantic right whales, Sowersby's

¹ DFO (2017) Delineation of Significant Areas of Coldwater Corals and Sponge-Dominated Communities in Canada's Atlantic and Eastern Arctic Marine Waters and their Overlap with Fishing Activity. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2017/007.

² Fernandez-Arcaya U, Ramirez-Llodra E, Aguzzi J, Allcock AL, Davies JS, Dissanayake A, Harris P, Howell K, Huvenne VA, Macmillan-Lawler M, Martín J (2017) Ecological role of submarine canyons and need for canyon conservation: a review. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 4:5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00005>

³ Cordes EE, Jones DO, Schlacher TA, Amon DJ, Bernardino AF, Brooke S, Carney R, DeLeo DM, Dunlop KM, Escobar-Briones EG, Gates AR (2016) Environmental impacts of the deep-water oil and gas industry: a review to guide management strategies. *Frontiers in Environmental Science* 16;4:58.

⁴ King M, Fenton D, Aker J, Serdyska A (2016) Offshore Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas in the Scotian Shelf Bioregion. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2016/007. viii + 92 p.


⁵ Ward-Paige CA, Bundy A (2016) Mapping Biodiversity on the Scotian Shelf and in the Bay of Fundy. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ecosystems and Oceans Science.

beaked whales and blue whales⁴. Increased shipping traffic to and from the offshore site poses increased risk of collisions between vessels and cetaceans, a leading cause of mortality for North Atlantic right whales and other whales⁶. Chronic anthropogenic noise from exploration and drilling activities can mask whales' ability to communicate, forage and avoid predators, and can affect whales several kilometres from the sound origin. Finally, a heightened chance of spills or release of toxic petroleum products poses a substantial risk of catastrophic effects to all marine species in the area, from the smallest invertebrates to the largest sharks and whales.

The close proximity of the parcels to The Gully, the Haddock Box fishery closure and the newly established Eastern Canyons Conservation Area brings about the potential for those protected areas to be negatively affected by exploratory drilling activities in their immediate vicinity. The adjacency of the nominated parcels, and potential downstream impacts from exploratory drilling nearby such as the increased risk of spills, may threaten the conservation objectives of those other designated spatial management measures.


Exploration for, and development of, petroleum resources in these areas put forward for bidding will put fish stocks, marine mammals and sensitive benthic fauna like corals and sponges at significant risk of long-term detrimental effects. Although the parcels of the Scotian Slope are not covered by any legal protection status, the potential for long-lasting ecosystem damage within the nominated parcels is high. Management recommendations for oil and gas activity emphasize avoidance of ecologically or biologically sensitive areas as the primary mitigation measure to eliminate all possibility of negative effects on habitats and species.⁷ To call for bids in areas of particular vulnerability is inadvisable and undermines efforts to create an effective network of protected areas in Atlantic Canada.

Thank you,



Original letter signed

Isabelle Jubinville, M.Sc.
Marine Scientist, Oceana Canada
Tel: (902) 817-5355
ijubinville@oceana.ca

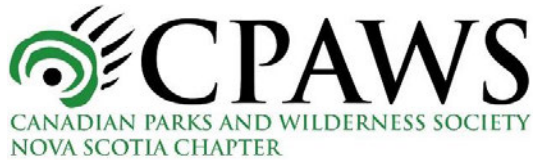


Original letter signed

Robert Rangeley, Ph.D.
Director of Science, Oceana Canada
Tel: (902) 401-2961
rrangeley@oceana.ca

⁶ Mullen KA, Peterson ML, Todd SK (2013) Has designating and protecting critical habitat had an impact on endangered North Atlantic right whale ship strike mortality?. *Marine Policy* 42:293-304.

⁷ DFO. 2019. Assessment of the Effectiveness of Mitigation Measures in Reducing the Potential Impacts of Oil and Gas Exploration and Production on Areas with Defined Benthic Conservation Objectives. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2019/025.



Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - Nova Scotia Chapter
P.O. Box 51086, Rockingham Ridge
Halifax, NS, B3M 4R8

Re: CPAWS-NS comment on the CNSOPB Call for Bids NS22-1

November 28th, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) Call for Bids NS22-1. The Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-NS) does not support oil and gas activity occurring within the parcels nominated in the Call for Bids NS22-1, given their proximity to the Sable Island National Park Reserve and the Gully Marine Protected Area (MPA). We recommend that no oil and gas activity occur within these parcels.

CPAWS-NS is the leading voice in the protection of Nova Scotia's public lands and waters. We work to protect Nova Scotia's rich natural heritage through grassroots advocacy, science, and collaboration with stakeholders. We advocate for the creation of new protected areas, on land and in the ocean, and we work to ensure that existing protected areas are well-managed for ecological integrity.

Sable Island lies within the NS22-1 Call for Bids. It was established as a National Park Reserve in 2013, however since 1977 it has been designated a Migratory Bird Sanctuary to protect the abundant and diverse migratory birds that take refuge there. Sable Island is one of Canada's furthest offshore islands - a 32km² crescent of dynamic sand dunes that is home to a wild horse population, the world's largest breeding colony of grey seals, species at risk including the endangered Roseate Tern, and species that are endemic to the Island, such as the Sable Island sweat bee.¹ Sable Island is particularly sensitive to the impacts of climate change, and additional threats such as oil spills pose a significant risk to the Island. Oil and gas activities should not be allowed to occur around Sable Island.

The Gully MPA, established in 2004, is the largest underwater canyon in the Northwest Atlantic, protecting sensitive deep-sea coral and sponge habitats and a population of endangered Northern bottlenose whales. The Call for Bids NS22-1 parcels are outside of but within the vicinity of the Gully MPA, meaning that any exploratory or extractive oil and gas activities would present a serious and unacceptable risk to these species and ecosystems through the risk of spills and leaks, noise pollution, and disturbance. Well managed protected areas, on land and in the ocean, are one of the most effective tools to protect ecosystems, rebuild biodiversity and help species adapt to climate change. Oil and gas activity in the vicinity of the Gully MPA and Sable Island National Park Reserve

¹ Parks Canada. (2019). Sable Island National Park Reserve of Canada Management Plan.

will harm the species and ecosystems the areas are established to protect, undermine the conservation objectives, and reduce the effectiveness of these sites.

It is also worth noting that the parcels nominated in the Call for Bids NS22-1 are known habitat for species at risk and support Indigenous and commercial fisheries. The risk associated with an oil spill, to Sable Island National Park Reserve, the Gully MPA, fisheries, and broader marine ecosystems, are catastrophic. Other environmental impacts include seismic activity, which will impact marine life within the parcels and the adjacent MPA. The NS22-1 parcels contain critical habitat for Blue whales, which are protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, and bottlenose whales, which have been shown to be significantly impacted by anthropogenic noise.²³ Drilling into the seabed also disturbs sensitive benthic ecosystems, many of which take a long time to recover, and provide habitat for other marine species. Fisheries within the parcels and further away will be impacted by disturbances to the marine ecosystem, as well as other ocean sectors that rely on a healthy ocean.

Oil and gas activity is one of the largest global contributors to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and the climate crisis. Companies around the world are being ordered to reduce their emissions⁴, and in Canada the federal government has committed to reaching net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, by 2050 at the latest.⁵ The International Energy Agency have calculated that no new oil and gas platforms are needed in the pathway to net zero⁶, so new oil and gas activity in the Call for Bids NS22-1 parcels will reduce the likelihood of Canada reaching its net zero targets. Most Canadian citizens do not support oil and gas activity, in fact recent polling has shown that more than 4 out of 5 people in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador want to see a transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency.⁷

Given the proximity of the Call for Bids NS22-1 parcels to the Sable Island National Park Reserve and the Gully Marine Protected Area (MPA), the importance of these waters to species at risk and Indigenous and commercial fisheries, and the known GHG emissions from oil and gas activities, **CPAWS-NS recommends that the CNSOPB prohibit oil and gas activity within the Call for Bids NS22-1.** As a conservation organization with expertise in environmental protection, we are calling on the CNSOPB to halt this process.

Sincerely,



Original letter signed

Reanne Harvey, M.M.M.
Conservation Campaigner
CPAWS Nova Scotia

² <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0032681>

³ <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rsos.140484>

⁴ https://www.npr.org/2021/05/28/1000882311/big-oil-faces-a-reckoning-decades-in-the-making?fbclid=IwAR0wL5J6mft_Buflz_0mrVYUZ5fJ9_XOSLWF3MwSQmBbvOjjSiCcfOlrvPQ

⁵ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/net-zero-emissions-1.5807877>

⁶ <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

⁷ <https://ecologyaction.ca/sites/default/files/images-documents/Atlantic%20Canadians%20overwhelmingly%20want%20shift%20from%20fossil%20fuels%2C%20support%20for%20workers%20and%20equity-seeking%20groups.pdf>



November 29th, 2022

Dena Murphy
Director, Operations/Health, Safety & Environment
Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board
E-mail: kburns@cnsopb.ns.ca

Re: Notification of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board Call for Bids NS22-1

Mrs. Murphy,

I write to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated October 14th, 2022, with respect to the *Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq - Nova Scotia – Canada Consultation Process (TOR)* as ratified on August 31, 2010, on the above noted project.

The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia depend on the lands, waters, and resources in Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq Nation has never surrendered, ceded, or sold title to any of its lands and waters in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq have a title claim to all of Nova Scotia and as co-owners of the land, waters, and its resources it is expected that any potential impacts to rights and title shall be addressed. Clearly any development in the proposed area will impact traditional and current use fishing activities.

Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO) is of the opinion that the Call for Bids for NS22-1 should remain in Crown Land Holdings. This will give The Mi'kmaq future opportunities such as utilizing these unceded waters for offshore fishing and earning a moderate livelihood. These parcels overlap with the habitat of known Species at Risk Act (SARA) listed species such as the bottlenose whale, loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles and spotted wolffish. The Mi'kmaq practice Netukulimk, a respectful way of harvesting with conservation at the heart of the principal. If any exploration licenses are approved, the effects from seismic activity will directly interfere with a Mi'kmaq world view.

Research on the Mid-Atlantic ridge found that a single seismic blast can be heard as far as 4000km from the source, that's over 10 times as large as all 8 parcels combined¹. The seismic blasts alone pose serious threats to marine mammals at a population level and direct threats to sessile organisms such as corals and sponges by increasing turbidity². There are also identified threats from invasives, spills, vessel traffic/noise and direct disruptions.

KMKNO is working to conserve our marine environment through partnerships around the governance and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and Marine Refuges. The proximity of these parcels to both the Gully MPA and Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge directly minimize the intent of these areas to protect and conserve both cetacean and

deep-water coral populations^{3,4}. Consultation is expected with the Mi'kmaw of Nova Scotia on any future proposed developments prior to the Canada-Nova Scotia Petroleum Board making any final decisions.

KMKNO does not represent the communities of Membertou, Millbrook or Sipekne'katik First Nations.

Please contact Patrick Butler, Senior Mi'kmaw Energy and Mines Advisor at KMKNO for any further questions.

Yours in Recognition of Mi'kmaw Rights and Title,

Original Letter signed

Twila Gaudet, B.A., LL.B.
Director of Consultation
Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn Negotiation Office

c.c.:

Patrick Butler, Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office
Janel Hayward, Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
Annette Tobin, Natural Resources Canada

References:

1. Weilgart, L. (2013). "A review of the impacts of seismic airgun surveys on marine life." Submitted to the CBD Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, 25-27 February 2014, London, UK. Available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MCBEM-2014-01>
2. Oak, T.G. 2020. Oil and gas exploration and production activities in areas with defined benthic conservation objectives: A review of potential impacts and mitigation measures. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2020/040. vi + 55 p.
3. <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/gully/index-eng.html>
4. <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oecm-amcepz/refuges/eastern-canyons-est-eng.html>