**CANADA – NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE PETROLEUM BOARD**

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File No. 30,008

May 17, 2004

Ms. Danielle Dallaire  
Commission Secretariat Coordinator  
Commission for Public Hearings on the Environment  
Édifice Lomer-Gouin  
575, rue Saint-Amable, bureau 2.10  
Québec, Québec  
G1R 6A6

Dear Ms. Dallaire:

Your letter of May 10, 2004 indicates your commission is looking at the issues associated with seismic surveys in the estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Canada – Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board held a similar public review with an independent commissioner and I have attached a copy of that report for your review.

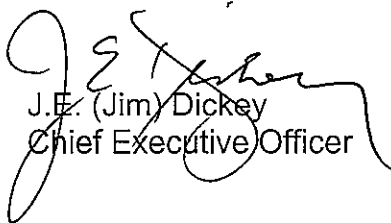
As for the questions you asked:

1. The Board is the joint independent agency of the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia responsible for the regulation of the petroleum industry offshore Nova Scotia. It is not therefore strictly governed by the Government of Canada cabinet directive on strategic environmental assessments (S.E.A.). However, the Board has completed a number of SEAs before issuing exploration licences, including an S.E.A. in 1999 prior to issuing Exploration Licence 2368 off western Cape Breton in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.
2. The Board uses a number of methods to confirm operator compliance with the conditions placed on a work authorization for seismic acquisition, or any other work authorization. The Board requires regular reporting throughout the program. In addition, the Board can conduct audits and investigations to ensure compliance with conditions placed on authorizations. The final reports that are filed are used as verification on the timing and location of the survey, which is one of the principal mitigation measures used.

3. The Canada – Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada – Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board do coordinate reviews of applications for single seismic programs that run from one offshore jurisdiction to the other. The Board reviews information from many jurisdictions and agencies as it considers the cumulative affects of seismic. In addition, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* requires that all environmental assessments, whether a screening or comprehensive study, consider cumulative effects. No petroleum activity takes place offshore Nova Scotia without an environmental assessment.
4. The Board requires a fisheries liaison officer on all seismic vessels. For some recent authorizations, the Board has required a trained marine mammal observer on board as well. In some cases, marine mammal observations are included in reports, but marine mammal sightings are not normally included in the seismic data submitted to the Board. A research program conducted offshore Nova Scotia in 2003 near the Sable Gully did, however, record marine mammal observations, which will be included in a report to be published later in 2004 by the Centre for Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Research (COOGER). In the case of the seismic program offshore Cape Breton, COOGER also conducted a scientific study in association with this survey. The results of this study will be published in the fall of 2004. The research is focused on the potential effects of seismic on snow crab, but it is understood that no marine mammals were sighted during this six day program.

Should you have any further questions please feel free to contact me again.

Yours very truly,



J.E. (Jim) Dickey  
Chief Executive Officer