



**Clean Ocean Action Committee**

P.O. Box 363, Clark's Harbour

Nova Scotia B0T 1P0

February 24, 2012

**Municipality of Argyle**

**Warden, Danny Muise**

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**Re: the upcoming review of the Georges Bank Moratorium**

Good Day, Warden Muise,

We are writing to request your assistance in securing the critically important renewal of the Moratorium on oil and gas exploration on Georges Bank. The decision on whether the Moratorium will be renewed is to be made by December of 2022 but the review process is now being defined in both Halifax and Ottawa and the oil and gas industry already has lobbyists working. Much will be happening over the next 18 to 20 months and we need to have our views forcefully presented as the Georges Bank Moratorium review process is being defined.

Since the first moratorium in 1987 Georges Bank has generated billions of dollars in Lobster, Scallop and Groundfish landings. It is an economic mainstay which we cannot allow to be put at risk. The Bank remains the most important spawning, nursery and fishing ground and the solely most important economic generator for our coastal communities on the South and South Western Shores.

The fact that Georges Bank is the richest, multi-species fishing ground in North America is no accident. A strong clockwise circular current or Gyre surrounds the Bank holding fish spawn, larval lobster and scallop, along with important nutrients safely up on the shallow water of the Bank. At the same time the slow moving Labrador current moving Southwest at the base of the

Scotian Shelf enters the deep canyons on the Northeast of the Bank creating an upwelling of cold water which mixes nutrients vertically in the water column. These important attributes, which make Georges so productive, also make the Bank exceedingly susceptible to hydrocarbon pollution. We cannot allow even small amounts of oil to be spilled on Georges, the impacts would be disastrous. Below is a table showing spawning times by species on Georges Bank.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Cod	•	•	•	•	•	•						
Haddock		•	•	•	•	•						
Pollock	•	•	•							•	•	•
Winter Flounder			•	•	•	•						
Yellowtail Flounder			•	•	•	•						
Hallibut	•	•	•	•	•	•						
Red Hake					•	•	•	•				
Silver Hake					•	•	•	•	•	•		
Atlantic Mackerel				•	•	•	•					
Skate	•					•	•			•	•	•
Sea Scallop							•	•	•	•		
Cusk			•	•	•	•						
Lobster						•	•	•	•	•		

SOURCE: Adapted from Minerals Management Service, 1983

There is no time or place for an oil spill on the Bank and it falls to us to make certain that it is protected and that the Moratorium is continued.

There are two additional points that should be noted. The first is that Georges Bank is not a deep water "Offshore" play which requires expensive semi-submersible rigs and 2,000 meters of drill depth. Georges is shallow water, with drill sites at 5 to 60 meters in depth. Here you can use much less expensive "Jack Up" platforms.

The second point is that oil prices have rebounded dramatically since their low point in March and prices are expected to continue to rise. Prices are now in the \$55 per barrel range. Georges would be exceedingly profitable at that price.

We have two requests:

**1. That a letter go from Council to:**

Emily Lutz, President  
 Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities  
 1809 Barrington Street, Suite 1304  
 Halifax, Nova Scotia

B3J 3K8

[councillor.lutz@countyofkings.ca](mailto:councillor.lutz@countyofkings.ca);

Requesting that the Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities consider and pass the following resolution at their next annual meeting:

### **Renewal of Georges Bank Offshore Oil & Gas Exploration and Drilling Moratorium**

*Whereas:*

- 1 The renewable fishery resources on Georges Bank are critically important to the social and economic wellbeing of Nova Scotia's coastal communities.*
- 2. Georges Bank has strong and persistent circular currents and persistent upwelling in the water column which make the Bank remarkably biologically productive but which also make the Bank much more susceptible to hydrocarbon pollution*
- 3. Georges Bank is vitally important to the seafood industry, being the largest private sector employer in the Province of Nova Scotia, generating more than 25,000 direct jobs and over 2 billion dollars in exported value each year,*
- 4. The moratorium on exploration and drilling for oil and gas on Georges Bank is due to expire on December 31, 2022;*

*And Whereas:*

*The Minister of Energy and Mines is on record as stating that the Province intends to extend the moratorium beyond 2022;*

***The Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities stands in support of Extending the Moratorium on oil and gas exploration on Georges Bank for a further period of at least ten full years, namely, December 31, 2032, if not permanently.***

### **2. That letters go out to:**

The Honorable Chuck Porter, Minister  
Nova Scotia Energy and Mines  
Joseph Howe Building  
1690 Hollis Street  
PO Box 2664

Halifax, NS B3J 3P7  
Canada  
Telephone 902-424-4575  
Email [enerinfo@novascotia.ca](mailto:enerinfo@novascotia.ca)

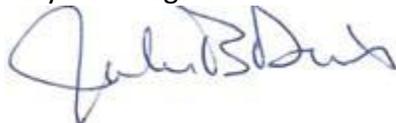
The Honorable Seamus O'Regan, Minister  
Department of Natural Resources  
580 Booth Street, 18th Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4  
1-855-525-9293  
[Seamus.OREgan@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Seamus.OREgan@parl.gc.ca)

These men head up the Federal and Provincial Departments that have jurisdiction over the Georges Bank Moratorium and the upcoming review. These letters would simply state your councils ongoing and unwavering support for the continuation of the Moratorium, would request information on the scale and scope of the Georges Bank review process and would request information about how your council can participate in the review process.

We realize that Councils carry a heavy work load but we, as your constituents, believe that this is an issue that must be addressed.

Thank you for your work on this critically important task.

Very Best Regards



John Davis, Director  
Clean Ocean Action Committee  
Co-Chair, Offshore Alliance

The Offshore Alliance is a consortium of 18 fisheries groups and environmental NGO's concerned about the well being of our fishery and tourism industries in the face of offshore oil and gas development on the Scotian Shelf. Our Group has been in discussion with many Nova Scotian municipal units on this critically important issue. There are now twelve Nova Scotian towns and municipalities that have called on our provincial and federal governments to hold a full public inquiry on the risks and impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration and extraction so that fully informed and rational decisions can be made.

