

Offshore Alliance  
c/o Mark Butler  
Ecology Action Centre  
2705 Fern Lane  
Halifax, NS  
B3K 4L3

January 24, 2018

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

The Offshore Alliance is a growing consortium of more than 25 Atlantic Canadian community, environmental, fishery and non-governmental organizations concerned about environmental assessment and regulatory decision-making regarding oil and gas activity off Canada's East Coast. We are writing to request that you immediately instruct your ministers to cease and desist in their efforts to grant the east coast petroleum boards any decision making responsibility in the environmental assessment process, in particular naming the C-NSOPB and C-NLOPB as Responsible Authorities.

During the 2015 election you made many important promises concerning the environmental review process. In some areas, progress has been made, and for this we are hopeful and thankful; however, in other areas actions are currently being undertaken which contradict and undermine the intent and spirit of your clear election promises.

One such action is your government's proposal to rationalize and streamline the process of environmental assessment. Environmental assessment oversight is of tremendous concern to all who care about the health of our oceans, especially to those of us dependent on the renewable resources on the Scotian Shelf and Georges Bank and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We have been dealing with these petroleum boards for decades. They are totally unsuited for the responsibility of environmental assessment. On the contrary, they are advocates for hydrocarbon resource development. They consist of unelected, political appointees and oil industry veterans. They have a clear conflict of interest. Their professional experience lies not in the science of ocean ecology, for example. They are not equipped to assess risk either to the environment, or to the hundreds of coastal communities economically dependent on our renewable ocean resources. Mr. Prime Minister, we represent thousands of people directly involved with harvesting and processing our ocean's renewable resources. This proposed retooling of the environmental assessment process will have an irreversible negative impact. It must stop now.

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We cannot grasp why the government of Canada, specifically Canada's Fisheries and Environment Ministers, would willingly give away federal powers of marine protection under Canada's Environmental Protection Act and Oceans Act to unelected, industry controlled petroleum Boards, powers that belong to the people of Canada and future generations. In our opinion, such conduct is neither rational nor responsible.

Attached please find a Backgrounder to this letter which further explains our position.

We look forward to your immediate action on this issue and to a timely response.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Butler on behalf of the Offshore Alliance

Cc: The Honourable Catherine McKenna  
The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc  
The Honourable Jim Carr  
The Honourable Scott Brison

The Offshore Alliance includes:

- Bay of Fundy Inshore Fishermen's Association
- Campaign to Protect Offshore Nova Scotia
- Clean Ocean Action Committee
- Coldwater Lobster Association
- Council of Canadians
- Council of Canadians - South Shore Chapter
- East Coast Environmental Law Association
- Ecology Action Centre
- Gulf Nova Scotia Herring Federation
- Lobstermen's Association Area 34
- Lobstermen's Association Area 33
- Maritime Fishermen's Union, Local 4
- Maritime Fishermen's Union, Local 9
- Maritime Fishermen's Union, Local 6
- Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance
- Save our Seas and Shores
- Save Our Seas and Shores - PEI Chapter
- Scotia Fundy Inshore Fishermen's Association
- Shelburne County Quota Group
- Sierra Club Canada Foundation
- St-Lawrence Coalition / Coalition St. Laurent  
St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association