

Media Release

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Stop Gambling on Big Oil, Invest in Nova Scotia

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – News of BP Canada's dry well offshore Nova Scotia is an opportunity for change, according to the Offshore Alliance, a coalition representing fishermen, environmental groups, and coastal communities. But that's not the end of offshore drilling in Nova Scotia - BP has permission to drill six more wells, and Equinor (formerly StatOil) is planning seismic blasting in waters adjacent to George's Bank.

“Even looking for oil has serious consequences for other industries. The province needs to stop gambling on high-risk offshore oil projects and start betting on Nova Scotia's renewable, sustainable sectors,” says John Davis, Director of the Clean Ocean Action Committee. “In its latest subsidy to the oil and gas sector, the province has invested \$11.8 million to help find oil and gas deposits. This is funding that should be used to help create local, renewable sector jobs in fisheries and tourism that will actually help us tackle climate change, and sustain Nova Scotia's coastal communities in the long-term.”

“It's a relief to hear BP has not found commercial quantities of oil. For the sake of our climate and our communities, we should see this as an opportunity to implement a moratorium on dangerous offshore exploration,” states Angela Giles, Atlantic Regional Organizer with the Council of Canadians. “Fossil fuel expansion is not part of our just transition to a sustainable future, and we should waste no more time or money looking for oil we can't burn anyway.”

“If oil had been found, our oceans, fishing grounds, climate, and endangered species would remain under threat because our decision-making process is designed to facilitate industry, not protect the environment,” according to Marion Moore with the Campaign to Protect Offshore Nova Scotia. “BP spilled 136,000L of drilling mud after just 61 days of operations, and future projects are being reviewed with the same lens that allowed it to happen. We need an accountable, arms-length inquiry to determine if drilling projects like this are worth the risk.”

“If a spill were to happen a capping stack is two weeks away, at minimum, and BP's plan to deal with a spill is to introduce more toxic chemicals into the water. BP coming up dry may give us a much-needed breather to truly address these risks,” adds Simon Ryder-Burbidge, Marine Conservation Officer at the Ecology Action Centre.

“We need a more independent and transparent process to assess offshore oil and gas projects in Canada,” according to Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director of East Coast Environmental Law. “The new Impact Assessment Act that is before the Senate today includes some positive steps but still allows captured regulators too much influence in the assessment of these proposed projects. Unless we take time to fix how we review and regulate these projects, we will continue to place oceans, coastal communities and renewable industries like fishing and tourism at unnecessary risk.”

“Despite evidence that seismic exploration is far more destructive to marine life than previously suspected, and given the recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), our future cannot include more fossil fuel projects,” says Gretchen Fitzgerald, National Program Director at Sierra Club Canada Foundation. “Our geology, not our leaders, saved us this time. Next time we might not be so lucky.”

[A poll commissioned by the Council of Canadians](#) released in October showed that 54% of Nova Scotians oppose BP drilling for oil off our coast.

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Offshore Alliance of Nova Scotia unites a broad cross-section of impacted individuals, groups, and communities to organize and amplify common actions needed to establish a public inquiry into offshore oil and gas regulation and assessment.

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Angela Giles peut également répondre en français.