

Opening Remarks – Bill C-49
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Hello. My name is Christine Bonnell-Eisnor and I am the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board.

I am delivering my remarks from Ottawa, and I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am in the traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin People.

Thank you for the invitation to come and speak to you today about Bill C-49, which outlines the Accord Acts amendments required for the expansion of our mandate to include the regulation of offshore renewable energy. We support these amendments and are actively preparing for the completion of the Bill and becoming the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board is the independent joint agency created by the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia. Federally we work with Natural Resources Canada and provincially with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources & Renewables. We have more than 30 years of experience regulating offshore oil and gas exploration and development activities in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area. We are the lead and life cycle regulator and oversee all activities of an offshore oil or gas project, from land tenure to exploration through development and finally to abandonment. We do this by recognizing that safety and environmental protection are paramount, and we make sure the operators who work in our offshore area do too.

When it comes to any oil and gas activity that an operator proposes to conduct in our offshore area, we go to great lengths to ensure that regulatory requirements are met before granting an authorization that would allow activities to commence. We implement effective monitoring programs to confirm that operators comply with these requirements during the execution of a program. We ensure compliance with legislated requirements so that exploration and development of offshore resources are completed in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

We will do the same with offshore wind and other offshore renewable energy activities.

Leveraging the similarities and managing the differences between oil and gas and offshore wind is critical to the success of delivering on an expanded mandate to regulate the broader energy industry in our offshore area. There are similarities in the geotechnical studies and assessment of metocean conditions, the approach to risk management, environmental considerations, and the need to coexist with Indigenous communities, fisheries, and other industries. The majority of what we do is directly transferrable to offshore wind. We recognize that each section of the ocean is unique, and each project is unique.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board has the technical and regulatory experience and expertise necessary to regulate offshore renewable energy. We are committed to continuous improvement and invest in building and maintaining the technical competencies and expertise of our staff. We work closely and are regularly in contact with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, the Canada Energy Regulator, other government departments, and international regulators, and continue to learn from regulatory peers, including those already regulating offshore wind.

In anticipation and preparation for our expanded mandate, we developed our five-year strategic plan that describes our strategic priorities and reviewed our organizational structure and skills to determine the required changes for the future growth, development, and success of our organization. This work will ensure that we continue to focus and deliver on our current mandate and properly prepare for taking on these important new regulatory responsibilities.

As we have over the past 30 years, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board will continue to work with Indigenous communities, fishers, the public, and other stakeholders to provide information about our regulatory role and to understand their unique and specific insights that should be taken into consideration prior to making decisions. We recognize the importance of meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and fishers. We have our own active and long-standing Fisheries Advisory Committee that is composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers. We value our relationships with Indigenous groups and the fishing sector, and the input received from them.

Our relationship with each of these groups remains a commitment as we transition. We are committed and will be ready to be the lead and life cycle regulator and deliver on this new and expanded mandate. We are trusted and recognized for the high standards to which we hold the oil and gas industry accountable and will continue to deliver regulatory excellence as our mandate is expanded to include offshore renewable energy.

Thank you.