

Regulators set dates for Deep Panuke Coordinated Public Hearings - CNSOPB Commissioner & NEB Member Named

HALIFAX and CALGARY - The Canada - Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) and the National Energy Board (NEB) have named the people who will head their coordinated review of the Deep Panuke Offshore Gas Development.

The CNSOPB has named Phillip Saunders as its Commissioner. NEB Vice-Chairman Jean-Paul Théorêt has been authorized under section 15 of the NEB Act to take evidence for his Board.

Mr. Saunders is a professor of law at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Mr. Théorêt was appointed a Member of the NEB in 1999 and was designated Vice-Chairman in November 2002.

EnCana Corporation, formerly PanCanadian Energy Corporation, filed applications with the two Boards on March 1st, 2002. The application to the CNSOPB includes a development plan, a Canada-Nova Scotia benefits plan, an environmental impact statement and a socio-economic impact statement, collectively known as the Development Application.

The company also filed a Pipeline Application with the NEB which includes an application to construct and operate 179 kilometres of 24 inch pipeline from the outlet flange of the offshore production platform to an interconnect with the Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline Management Ltd. main transmission pipeline approximately 1.1 kilometres downstream from the Goldboro gas plant.

To co-ordinate the regulatory process and avoid duplication, the Commissioner and NEB member will sit together to essentially hear both applications at the same time. The Boards have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and adopted Joint Directions on Procedure. In addition, the CNSOPB has issued Terms of Reference for its Commissioner.

A Secretariat will be established with an office in Halifax. Information about the public process can be obtained through the Secretariat after December 16th, 2002, at Suite 1201, Centennial Building, 1660 Hollis Street, Halifax, NS, B3J 1V7; or on the website at www.deeppanukereview.ca after December 16th, 2002. Information is available immediately by calling toll-free at 1-866-234-6704.

The coordinated public process to hear and consider the applications will begin with initial public consultation sessions, a written information request/response process and an oral hearing. The public consultation sessions will be held in Halifax on Thursday, January 9th, 2003, and in Guysborough on Saturday, January 11th, 2003. Both sessions will start at 9 a.m. and are open to the general public.

The oral hearings will be held in Halifax and begin Monday, April 28th, 2003. Anyone interested in intervening at the hearings must make an application to the Secretariat, Deep Panuke Coordinated Public Review by Monday, January 6th, 2003. Those wishing to participate in the hearings without the rights and responsibilities of an intervenor can register as written, oral or hearing participants. Information about participant status is available through the Secretariat office or the website at www.deeppanukereview.ca after December 16th, 2002.

This Project has also undergone an environmental review under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEA Act) through a Comprehensive Study Report which is being reviewed by the federal Minister of the Environment. If the Minister decides the Project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be justified or that the Project should be referred to mediation or a review panel under the CEA Act, then the Deep Panuke Coordinated Public Process will not continue as proposed.

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For further information:

Barbara Pike
Public Information Coordinator
Canada - Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board
902-496-0744 - office
902-221-5611 - cell

Ross Hicks
Public Affairs Officer
National Energy Board
403-299-3930 - office
403-807-8305 - cell