

## **Board Establishes Ad Hoc Cape Breton Working Group**

May 23, 2002

**Halifax, NS** - The Canada - Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (Board) will establish the Ad Hoc Cape Breton Working Group under its Fisheries and Environmental Advisory Committee (FEAC). The decision is in response to recommendations made to the Board in the Report of the Cape Breton Public Review.

"This ad hoc group is set up for the particular purpose of reviewing activities and providing advice through the next part of the regulatory process as recommended by Dr. Teresa MacNeil in her report," explained J.E. (Jim) Dickey, the Board's Chief Executive Officer. "The Board will establish this group as soon as possible."

The group will operate under the Board's existing FEAC and provide advice to the Board specifically on the next phase of the regulatory process for the three Exploration Licences off Cape Breton. The group will consist of representatives from environmental associations, fisheries groups, government agencies and the licence holders.

The prohibition order remains in effect for Exploration Licences 2364, 2365, and 2368 off Cape Breton until a determination is made as to whether exploration activities can proceed and, if so, on what terms and conditions. Meanwhile, the two companies that hold the licences have been asked to submit updated applications for work activities incorporating the knowledge gained through the public review process.

In October 2000, the Board received a joint directive from the federal and provincial governments to hold a public review of the effects of potential oil and gas exploration and drilling activities offshore Cape Breton. Dr. Teresa MacNeil was appointed Commissioner in February of 2001. She conducted the independent review including information sessions last fall and 15 days of public hearings in January of this year. Her report was presented to the Board and to the governments in March.

-30-

For further information, contact:

Barbara Pike

Public Information & Environmental Coordinator

Canada - Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board 902-496-0744 - o / 902-221-5611 - cell