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The Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society would like to comment on the failure of the SEA to identify areas where oil and gas cannot not occur on the Western Scotian Shelf and Slope. The federal government has committed to protecting 25% of our oceans by 2025, and 30% by 2030. It has also announced new minimum protection standards for Marine Protected Areas, in the process of being implemented, that prohibit oil and gas within all new federal MPAs. While these standards have been recognised within the SEA in sections 3.2.8. and 5.2.3, the SEA does not clearly state that federal MPAs on the Western Scotian Shelf and Slope will be inaccessible to oil and gas. This is particularly pertinent given the location of the Fundian Channel – Browns Bank Area of Interest, and other Special Areas within the Study Area. To increase transparency, the SEA should put greater emphasis on this information.

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