



May 26, 2010

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington
Ottawa, ON
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Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you with respect to environmental safeguards surrounding offshore oil and gas drilling in the Canadian Arctic.

The dramatic and destructive consequences of the recent rupture to an oil drill in the Gulf of Mexico underscore the environmental risks and engineering challenges associated with offshore oil and gas exploration and production. In the Arctic offshore, these risks and challenges are compounded greatly by harsh climatic conditions, the presence of annual and multi-year ice, incomplete knowledge bases, and the limited availability of port, transportation, and other forms of infrastructure.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, on behalf of Inuit, is seeking the following core assurances from the Government of Canada with respect to the governance of offshore oil and gas drilling:

1. An immediate pause or "time-out" on drilling in the Beaufort Sea in order to take stock of environmental risks and needed risk reduction and mitigation measures.
2. A commitment that any future drilling proceed only on the basis of the best safeguards used internationally.
3. The adoption of supplementary environmental protection measures that address unique Arctic vulnerabilities.
4. Rejection of the December 2009 proposal to relax mandatory offshore drilling regulation in favour of developer generated undertakings.
5. Ensuring that the timing and pace of Arctic oil and gas development balance two primary considerations --- improving the well being of Inuit and enhancing the energy security of Canadians --- while contributing to a larger Canadian and global strategy to reduce carbon emissions.
6. Recognition that Inuit knowledge of unique and fragile conditions is vital to decision making on environmental protection and emergency response.
7. Reconsideration of the adequacy of the Ship Source Oil Pollution Fund as set out in the Marine Liability Act ... and
8. Action on the recommendations of the Arctic Council Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment 2009 Report.

To provide you with further insight into Inuit views on these matters I am attaching copies of an Inuvialuit Regional Corporation press release of May 19, 2010, a Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources dated May 13, 2010, and my speech to the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto on May 26, 2010.

I look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Simon,
President

3 Attachments

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