

Joint Letter: Strengthening Bill C-49 to Ensure Regulatory Best Practices

Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, PC, MP
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
Government of Canada

Cc: Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, PC, MP
Honourable Andrew Parsons, Q.C., Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology
Honourable Tory Rushton, Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables, Nova Scotia
Shannon Stubbs, MP, Natural Resources Critic, Conservative Party
Mario Simard, Député, Porte-Parole, Ressources naturelles et D'Énergie
Charlie Angus MP, Natural Resources Critic, NDP
Elizabeth May, MP, Green Party of Canada

Date: 5 June, 2024

Strengthening Bill C-49

Dear Minister Wilkinson;

On May 30, 2023, you introduced Bill C-49 to update and expand the Accord Acts in order for Canada and the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to develop offshore renewable energy resources in their jointly-managed waters. This is another welcome step in the development of offshore wind in Atlantic Canada.

As you know, Atlantic Canada has some of the best offshore wind in the world and an extensive continental shelf, providing real potential for successful offshore wind development. The scale and duration of this development could be considerable. As outlined in a recent policy options paper,¹ Atlantic Canada's offshore wind resource could play a major role in decarbonisation.

Given the size, duration, and value of this opportunity, it is important to get it right at the outset. The governance structure for offshore renewable energy development will determine how the offshore wind industry is regulated in Atlantic Canada, how impacts on the environment are assessed and minimized, and how the wind industry interacts with other ocean users, in particular the fishery. Getting it right can facilitate positive relations with other ocean users, build public acceptance, and provide greater regulatory certainty for the industry.

¹ Peter Nicholson, Catching the Wind. How Atlantic Canada Can Become an Energy Superpower (Ottawa: [Public Policy Forum](#), 2023.)

For these reasons, the signatories to this letter are aligned in asking you to support two key amendments to Bill C-49.

1. Amend Bill C-49 to only allow Calls for Bids for areas that have been recommended through a regional assessment or a strategic environmental assessment that has studied the impacts of introducing offshore renewable energy development.
2. Amend Bill C-49 to require project-specific environmental assessments by the Offshore Energy Regulators when impact assessments under the *Impact Assessment Act* are not required.

These changes would ensure that the results of any consultative and scientific processes are followed and other ocean users would not be blindsided during the Call for Bids process.

As well, the amendments are consistent with regulatory best practices demonstrated by other jurisdictions where wind development is already well established. Such improvements would not need to lengthen the approval processes for proposed offshore wind developments.

We realize that your government and the respective governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia have worked hard to come up with the current language in Bill C-49 and you may be reluctant to make further changes. However, the long-term benefits of these changes to the more harmonious development of offshore wind and building social licence will outweigh any short-term disruption.

We the undersigned encourage you to work with the respective governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to make these amendments as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

Conservation Council of New Brunswick
David Suzuki Foundation
East Coast Environmental Law
Ecojustice
Ecology Action Centre
Environmental Defense
West Coast Environmental Law



East Coast
Environmental Law



Ecology Action Centre



**environmental
defence**



WEST COAST
Environmental Law



**DAVID SUZUKI
FOUNDATION**
One nature.



Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation *du* Nouveau-Brunswick

ecojustice