



CEO Scott Tessier - CAPP Environmental Forum Remarks - November 18, 2025

Thank you to CAPP and the organizing committee for this opportunity to speak and for developing such an excellent agenda, and to all of you for participating today.

I respectfully acknowledge that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and specifically St. John's, are situated on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Beothuk, and on lands and waters long connected to Mi'kmaq, with enduring ties to Inuit and Innu across Newfoundland and Labrador. We honour Indigenous peoples past, present, and future, and the living cultures and knowledge that continue here. In that spirit, we will keep improving how we listen, share information, and reflect Indigenous input in our decisions. This acknowledgment is one part of aligning our words with action and accountability.

When I joined what was then known as the C-NLOPB almost 13 years ago, one of our Board members was the late Reg Anstey, who had a long career with the fishing industry and who some of you no doubt knew well. Reg gave me great advice at the time. He said, "You'll be fine as long as you tell the same story on every wharf."

Some of you have heard me talk about that before, but it really did stick with me.

By the end of this week, in the space of about a month I will have spoken at the International Regulators Forum Safety Conference (a great event that we proudly hosted for the first time, right here in St. John's), at an international exploration investment conference, before the Senate Committee studying our offshore, at today's Forum, and later this week, at a C-NLOER staff Town Hall meeting.

I also look forward to my first meeting with Minister Parrott, which takes place later today.

That's a lot of different wharves in a very short time! But true to Reg's advice, you will all get the same story.

Events like today's are important to the C-NLOER, helping ensure that environmental protection remains at the forefront in our energy sector. I think you can draw a direct line between the presentations and discussions that have taken place at the Environmental Forum over the past five or so years and improvements in environmental practices and results offshore, as well as communications and coordination amongst participants.

But we know that collaborative work in these areas needs to continue and we appreciate the efforts and commitment of everyone in this room.

A lot has changed politically since last year's Forum. We're on our second Prime Minister, our third Premier and President Trump has returned.

The C-NLOER itself has undergone a few significant changes this year, including our new name and expanded mandate. We have one new facility to regulate -- the West White Rose platform, and we are preparing for a possible Bay du Nord Development Plan Application, should that project proceed.

Beyond those significant undertakings, no exploratory drilling or seismic activity took place this year, with none planned in 2026. No bids were received on the offshore parcels we offered this year. The reasons for all of that depend on who you ask -- I would suggest a series of high profile, negative drilling results in recent years, combined with what are politely referred to as "above-ground" considerations.

While there is no one single factor, we have fallen behind African countries, Brazil, Guyana, Norway and the United States, to name a few, when it comes to attracting new investments in oil and gas. Some who do not support oil and gas expansion will say, “this is a good thing”. Others disagree, concerned about the immediate economic and energy security consequences for our province and for Canada as a whole.

Under Prime Minister Carney, more emphasis is being placed by our federal government on economic resilience and sovereignty. Premier Wakeham has pledged to stand up for oil and gas, reignite offshore exploration, and support production growth.

Both of their governments want regulators to streamline and expedite our approvals processes.

Clear and predictable regulatory pathways have always been called for as being necessary to attract capital and encourage investment. But let’s face it, Canada’s competitiveness and the corresponding results, including in the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area, have been uneven at best. So, regulatory stability and certainty are no longer enough. The status quo is seen as a negative here by those focused on new investment.

At the C-NLOER, we have embarked upon a more risk-focused and collaborative approach than ever before, through transformative work to pursue innovative, digital solutions and reduce red tape. Specifically, we are committed to enhancing inter-agency coordination and cooperation as we:

- modernize and expedite our permitting systems through streamlined approvals and authorizations with optimized decision points;
- conduct risk-based compliance verification activities;
- collaborate with industry on guidance and other regulatory instruments; and
- pursue transformative digital solutions, including those that can harness the power of artificial intelligence.

We are also about to undertake a review of our scheduled land tenure system with a view to trying to stimulate more focused interest and will engage governments and stakeholders recognizing we can only do so much on our own.

When we hosted international safety and environmental regulators last month, we saw a lot of commonalities in issues and approaches among participating countries, which is always encouraging.

And this year, we found ourselves at the leading edge of many of the topics discussed, which made me very proud of the capacity and expertise of the C-NLOER in areas such as offshore safety, well control, and spill prevention and response.

I assure you that our increased efficiency will not come at the expense of our main priorities and values in safety and environmental protection. The initiatives we’re undertaking will only proceed if they lead to enhancements in these areas through more effective deployment of our resources and regulatory oversight.

We also remain deeply committed to meaningful engagement with fisheries stakeholders as we try to figure out where to from here. And as mentioned earlier, we are working to get better in our engagement with Indigenous communities.

We remain deeply committed to science and evidence-based marine conservation and wildlife protection, to the energy transition and to the fight against climate change.

Those priorities and values must remain fundamental, as they are essential to a more innovative, collaborative, efficient and effective C-NLOER, and to building a more competitive Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.