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From: Premier <PREMIER@novascotia.ca>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 4:46 PM
To: Ministre / Minister (ECCC)
Cc: HonTim.Hodgson@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca; terence.hubbard@iaac-aeic.gc.ca; Halman, Tim (NS/NE)
Subject: A Letter from the Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia
Attachments: Letter to Hon. Julie Dabrusin.pdf

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Good evening,

Attached, please find a letter from the Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia.

Thank you,

Premier's Correspondence Team



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OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

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December 1, 2025

Hon. Julie Dabrusin
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca

Re: Regional Assessment for Petroleum Offshore Nova Scotia

Dear Minister Dabrusin:

Nova Scotia is taking action to explore and develop its offshore natural gas and hydrocarbon resource potential and we are asking the Federal Government to help improve our chances for success with the creation of a regional assessment for our offshore.

One of the foundational ways the government can provide confidence to industry that Canada is worthy of their billions of dollars of investment and support offshore energy development overall, is by establishing a clear, streamlined regulatory framework.

Our offshore competes with jurisdictions globally to attract the next project. A clear, efficient regulatory framework is essential to create the conditions to attract investment and development to Canadian waters.

Federal assessments for offshore Nova Scotia currently take two to three years. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) manages federal assessments, while the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER) oversees Strategic Assessments. Both assessments include public consultations, Indigenous engagement and technical reviews.

This type of timeline and duplicated efforts creates challenges. Often industry just says it is not worth the risk and moves on to another opportunity in another jurisdiction outside of Canada. This has been a killer for the Nova Scotia offshore.

It does not have to be like this. In fact, next door in Newfoundland, it is not. In contrast to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland was granted an IAAC Regional Assessment (RA) for its offshore in 2019 and under that process, the RA was given an accelerated timeline. This allowed for a faster path to petroleum exploration.

Nova Scotia is seeking a similar expedited RA like Newfoundland was afforded.

We are ready and it is necessary. We can also draw on the extensive experience from the 68 Environmental Assessments that have already been completed in Atlantic Canada.

These assessments established accepted scientific thresholds, best practices and effective guidelines and provide a path to significantly accelerate the review process in Nova Scotia. We can also build on the findings of the recent RA completed for offshore wind, which is highly relevant.

Given the work to date, we believe you can leverage the existing data, reports and analysis to satisfy yourselves and grant an RA in a much shorter timeframe than other situations may warrant. In the case of the Nova Scotia offshore, a longer review will not necessarily result in stronger environmental protection. This is a well-understood industry that has operated safely in Nova Scotia for decades.

The lack of a comparable RA to the one provided for Newfoundland and Labrador leaves Nova Scotia at a competitive disadvantage that hurts Nova Scotians and hinders our economic future. Previous development supported Nova Scotians with revenue dedicated to hospitals, roads, education and high-speed internet for rural communities.

Energy projects require strong Federal and Provincial leadership within the joint management regime to address concerns, counter misinformation and build public confidence. We are asking that ECCC issue a directive to enable a more effective and efficient assessment process for exploratory drilling projects offshore Nova Scotia. This directive should require that the RA be completed within six months, allowing time to identify any remaining gaps and finalize regulations promptly. Additional regulatory tools such as alternative assessment streams or removing exploratory drilling from the project list, should also be considered to expedite these short-term, well-understood activities.

Without your support, Nova Scotia and Canada face increased risks of regulatory delays, underinvestment, and public opposition. Prioritizing an RA for Nova Scotia would accelerate exploration while ensuring responsible resource management.

I am seeking your commitment that Environment and Climate Change Canada will prioritize the Regional Assessment and/or other appropriate tools in offshore Nova Scotia to create a clear regulatory pathway.

I look forward to hearing back from you on your decision, which could result in a resounding positive announcement that I would be delighted to host in beautiful Nova Scotia.

Yours truly,

<Original signed by>

Honourable Tim Houston, MLA
Premier of Nova Scotia
Minister of Energy

cc: Terry Hubbard, President of IAAC
Minister Hodgson, NRCan
Minister Halman, ECC