

PRESS RELEASE

British Columbians Strongly Oppose Offshore Oil and Gas Development

VANCOUVER (June 24, 2004) - A new poll released today shows that 69 per cent of British Columbians think lifting the offshore oil and gas moratorium is too risky.

The poll completed by Synovate Research, a large international marketing firm with 77 offices in over 46 countries, showed that two-thirds of British Columbians want to keep the current moratorium until information on how environmental risks will be managed. Only 26 per cent want the moratorium removed.

"The poll clearly shows that British Columbians do not want to lift the moratorium," said Art Sterritt, spokesperson for the nine Coastal First Nations that commissioned the poll. "Both the federal and provincial governments should listen to British Columbians and keep the moratorium in place."

The British Columbia government has been promoting offshore oil and gas development with the intent of commencing production by 2010.

One study completed by researchers at Simon Fraser University concluded that the moratorium should not be lifted due to the significant information gaps on environmental impacts of offshore oil and gas activities and the lack of a regulatory regime. According to the study offshore development would also generate fewer than 200 direct jobs, most of which would be taken by skilled workers from outside of B.C.

Council of the Haida Nation President, Guujaaw believes that an informed public is the best response to the Provincial Government's premature efforts to remove the moratorium. "Informed people don't want seismic explosions and dead fish" he said. "This moratorium is sensible and sensible people don't gamble with precious things."

The offshore oil and gas moratorium is consistent with similar moratoriums declared by the US Congress and the White House in most American waters.

Offshore development recently emerged as an election issue when Steven Harper attacked Environment Minister David Anderson for Anderson's opposition to offshore development.

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Question: There is currently a moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in British Columbia. Some people say we should lift the moratorium and allow offshore development. Other people say that the environmental risks such as oil spills of offshore development are too great and we should keep the moratorium in place until we are better able to manage these risks.

Which view is closer to yours? Lift the moratorium now or keep the moratorium in place until we get more information on the risks.

Lift Moratorium	26%
Keep Moratorium	69%
Don't Know	5%

Sample size	500
Margin of Error	+/- 4.4% 19 times out of 20
Date of Poll	June 4 to June 10