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# NEWS RELEASE

## Regulations can't protect B.C. coast from oil industry damage, says new report

**For Immediate Release**

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VANCOUVER – No existing or potential regulatory regime could adequately protect B.C.'s coastline from oil spills like the one experienced in Newfoundland on Sunday, says a new report released today by the David Suzuki Foundation and the Living Oceans Society.

*Putting the assumptions to the test*, authored by Susan Rutherford, LL.B., examines, and discounts, key assumptions made by the Royal Society of Canada in their submission to the federal government in February, 2004. In their report, the science panel concluded that the moratorium could be lifted, provided an 'adequate regulatory regime' was in place.

"What our report makes clear is that the science panel's conclusions don't withstand scrutiny," says Jay Ritchlin, marine conservation specialist for the David Suzuki Foundation. "No 'regulatory framework' can truly protect the B.C. coast from this high-risk and potentially devastating industry."

*Putting the assumptions to the test* comes on the heels of results from two other stages of the review process. The results of a public review process were released last Friday, indicating that 75 per cent of British Columbians supported maintaining the moratorium, while the findings of the First Nations engagement process found that 100 per cent of B.C. First Nations interviewed support maintaining the moratorium at this time.

"The exploration phase alone would pose a serious risk to B.C.'s marine environment," says Oonagh O'Connor, offshore oil and gas campaign coordinator for the Living Oceans Society. "Science shows that seismic testing can harm fish and marine mammals, and no regulations can eliminate this significant risk."

The key findings of today's report point out that existing regulatory regimes are inadequate, that industry best practices don't protect the environment, even when they are

applied, and that the Species at Risk Act is a politicized regulation, incapable of protecting wildlife and other marine mammals.

“As they stand, existing offshore oil and gas regulatory systems are neither independent nor arms length – and monitoring and enforcement programs are chronically under funded and under enforced,” says Mr. Ritchlin.

The report also points to the endemic problems with the oil and gas industry in Cook Inlet, Alaska, often used as a template for a potential offshore industry in British Columbia.

“Clearly, the public does not support lifting the moratorium,” says Ms. O’Connor. “Today’s report demonstrates that the arguments put forward in support of oil and gas activities are based on flawed assumptions. Maintaining the moratorium is the best way to achieve a secure environment and sustainable economy.”

*Putting the assumptions to the test* is available on the Living Oceans Society website at <http://www.livingoceans.org/library/index.shtml> and the David Suzuki Foundation website at [www.davidsuzuki.org/oceans](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/oceans).

**For more information, contact:**

Jennifer Brown  
Communications Specialist  
David Suzuki Foundation  
(604) 732-4228, ext. 229

Oonagh O’Connor  
Offshore oil and gas campaign coordinator  
Living Oceans Society  
(250) 973-6580