

## Christy Wickenheiser

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**From:** Shari Gearheard [sharig@qiniq.com]  
**Sent:** May 31, 2011 11:02 AM  
**To:** Expro EA  
**Cc:** environment@qia.ca; Lizzie Palituq  
**Subject:** 1 of 2 Petitions from Clyde River opposing Seismic Testing  
**Attachments:** petition 1\_seismic.pdf; ATT560508.htm

### To the National Energy Board,

Please find attached the **first of two petitions** with signatures from Clyde River residents **opposing the Seismic Testing proposed to start this summer, 2011**. A second petition (public petition) will follow before end of today.

The attached petition was circulated near the end of the public "consultation" meeting in Clyde River on May 26, 2011. As you should be aware from the detailed notes submitted to you by the QIA representative in attendance, as well as the representatives of the seismic company, there was clear and strong public opposition to the testing. In fact, over the course of the 4.5-hour meeting, there was not a single comment supporting the testing. There was not even a neutral comment. All of those who spoke at the meeting (over 4.5 hours) were strongly opposed. Of the 30 people in the room at the time the petition was circulated (during hour 3.5 of the meeting), 28 people signed the petition. It should be noted that the two people who did not sign were not in favour of the testing, but did not sign for other reasons.

The reasons for local opposition to the testing should be outlined clearly and in detail to you in the notes submitted by QIA and the company representatives. We trust that they will provide you with detailed notes as they promised at the meeting, and given the 4.5 hours worth of discussion, you should expect a lengthy report.

To be sure that you receive some of the main points, I have provided some brief notes below. The reasons for strong local opposition to seismic testing centre around two main themes, (i) the process of local consultation, and (ii) potential impacts from the testing. These notes are based on the public meeting, as well as local conversation with residents. They represent many of the shared concerns you will see in the notes, and I have also include a few examples based on my own personal opinion (noted as such). The potential impacts are of the utmost concern, but the poor process for including public opinion and knowledge is also an important aspect that must be considered.

### The Process:

- very poor "consultation" process. The May 26th, 2011 meeting was not a "consultation" whatsoever, but rather a "this is what will happen" information session. The company representative said as much, "we're here to tell you what's going to happen".

- the quality of the presentation on May 26th was extremely poor. The presentation was jargon-ridden and many concepts, ideas, and technical terms were not explained. Slides were not prepared in the local language. Maps were absolutely UNREADABLE with washed-out colours, and impossibly small fonts and legend. Diagrams were not to scale. Such poor information does not allow one to be informed in order to make a judgement or decision. I personally was at the meeting and would like to include an illustration of the unacceptable approach to the entire meeting. Immediately after the speaker finished the slide show portion, on the way to her smoke break, she happened to stop and ask me what I thought about it. I said I found it pretty full of jargon. She said, " "They" get the gist of it. You'd be surprised how much "they" pick up". First of all,

not only was this extremely condescending, but "they" was a big clue into how the company representatives viewed the audience. Second, a consultation process should not be founded on "gist". When I go to a professional for a consultation (doctor, lawyer, etc.) I want a consultation - good information, back and forth discussion, clear and informed answers, opportunity for more questions, time to consider information, and to talk with someone who listens and *respects* my questions. Imagine you or your child were faced with a serious health problem. When you go to the specialist for a health consultation, do you expect to come away with the "gist" of it? I think not. The community residents in that meeting room considered seismic testing a serious matter, for them *and* their children. They expected and expect real information and real consultation. They also fully deserve it.

- the company representatives were also not competent for the job. They clearly did not have the right expertise for communicating effectively with local residents. The delivery of the information was very poor (see above).

The representatives introduced themselves as experienced, but at question period they could not answer many of the questions, or claimed they did not know. For example they could not provide any information about potential impacts to marine mammals as a results of noise from the air guns. This information is readily available online, but the representatives claimed that this information was not known, available, or at least they had no idea. They also seemed to have no knowledge of basic boat travel and ocean conditions. For example they did not understand the point raised that marine mammals would be more difficult to see on the surface in rough water conditions or waves. One of the representatives claimed to have worked on a ship for a decade.

Anyone who's been on a boat knows that it is difficult to see anything in rough water. This is partly why life preservers have flashing lights. How one ship observer is supposed to see animals in flat water, nevermind in waves, in a 500m CIRCLE seems extremely difficult if not impossible.

- the overall attitude of the representatives was disrespectful. They projected the attitude, body language, and energy that clearly this was just something they had to get through and they could not wait for it to be over.

- the representatives had no decision making power what so ever. The community wants to meet with people from the company and the NEB in person - they want to meet with the people who "matter", not hired consultants. It only added to the feeling that this "consultation" process did not matter, but rather was just a box to check.

- between the day of the meeting and the deadline to respond, there were only 3 working days. How was the community supposed to have adequate time to discuss the information, coordinate a proper response, and submit it?

### **The Potential Impacts:**

- related to the point above, it was clear that one observer on the pilot boat and one observer on the ship to watch for marine life is nowhere near adequate. Also, it is unacceptable that the ship will not have radar or 'fish finder' technology to help watch for life UNDER the water surface. Especially since there are many animals, fish, copepods, etc. that do not surface. There is no way to prevent marine life from being affected.

- There is no question that the sound of the air guns will have physical, behavioural, and psychological impacts on marine life. This has been documented in scientific studies (though the representatives did not refer to or acknowledge this). We also know this to be a fact from local knowledge and the Elders and other hunters in attendance provided examples and analogies to help explain their knowledge to the representatives - having found deaf animals in the past, observing the impacts of gunshot noise, etc. Also, psychological impacts should not be dismissed lightly. The representatives seemed to not understand when the Elders explained how the intense noise could result in skinnier seals. The company representatives seemed to take this as a direct connection: loud noise = skinny seals, which they seemed to dismiss as impossible or as some random

comment. But what they failed to understand is what the local experts understand about seals' (and other marine life's) biology and behaviour. Loud noises can stress an animal, and that stress may not go away for some time.

As a result, the animal might stop eating, thus becoming unhealthy and skinny. That physical impact could then result in that animal not being able to take care of it's young, or to not breed successfully, and thus a whole chain of events unfolds, which goes back to one noise event. This is not unheard of and there are examples all around the world. For example, the flocks of dead birds found in Arkansas in 2010. The death of the birds was linked to a possible loud noise event where the shock and stress of it literally caused the birds to drop dead.

This is only an example, but the point is that it is more complex than 'loud noise causes x'. As the Elders explained, the ecosystem and animal biology/physiology/psychology is complex and sensitive and something like the intrusion of a loud noise (which we were told does travel much farther than the "safety zone") can create physical, behavioural, and psychological consequences that can lead to a chain of events devastating to animals and thus the Inuit

- When the marine life is harmed, so are Inuit communities. Inuit communities depend on sea life for food and for cultural identity. Inuit have been here long, long before anyone else and they understand the animals and ocean systems. Inuit know when we should take caution, when something is a bad idea. Because Inuit food is likely to be harmed by the testing, they want it stopped.

- The company representatives made it clear that their job in the seismic survey is to collect the data and sell it. They acknowledged that this could be to oil and gas companies. While they tried very hard to say they were not interested in oil, they neglected, again, to see a more complex connection. By proceeding with the testing and selling the data, they start a chain of events that may include oil exploration and production. For the residents of Clyde, they would rather see the area remain a hunting ground, with healthy animals. Because the data could be used for oil and gas purposes, they want the testing stopped.

A second, public petition is being circulated in the community and will be scanned and sent to the NEB with copy to our QIA representatives before midnight tonight.

Two last points before closing. First, we hope that you will consider all the testimony, and all the submitted signatures that back that testimony, seriously. They all support a clear message that Clyde River residents do NOT want the testing to proceed. Second, please review all the notes from the community meeting carefully.

You will find that the Elders and local experts in attendance did not give their opposition lightly. Their message to stop the testing is based on long-time observation and knowledge of the environment, previous experience with animals exposed to noise and stress, knowledge of ocean travel, knowledge of ocean ecosystems, and much more. They provided a long list of expert reasons for why the testing should not proceed, reasons that are backed up with experience, observation, and knowledge.

The second petition from Clyde River will follow by the end of today.

Sincerely,

Shari Gearheard, Ph.D.  
Clyde River, Nunavut