OFFSHORE HELICOPTER SAFETY INQUIRY

PHASE II

April 14, 2011

Offshore Safety and Survival Centre Fisheries and Marine Institute Memorial University of Newfoundland

Submitted by:

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Insert Offshore Safety and Survival Centre, Marine Institute, Memorial University.

The Offshore Safety and Survival Centre of the Marine Institute of Memorial University would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commissioner and all involved in this Inquiry for their significant contribution to Offshore Helicopter Safety.

In our submission to Phase II of the Inquiry we would like to update the Inquiry on actions taken to date and proposed actions with respect to Recommendations 13 and 14 which are the two recommendations relating to issues of training.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that safety-training goals be established by the Regulator in consultation with suppliers of personal protective equipment, *trainers*, oil operators and worker representatives. HUET and HUEBA training are necessary, but should not be so rigorous as to pose safety risks. Training should be done with greater fidelity, which objective is already being pursued. Fidelity should encompass survival training in more realistic sea conditions than is currently the case. The Regulator, oil operators, worker representatives and, as appropriate, other stakeholders should be involved as to how other training goals should be met.

The Marine Institute has been actively involved with the CAPP training and qualifications committee, other training providers and the regulator with respect to the development of a definitive and rigorous suite of optimal survival competencies which should be attained during BST, BST-R and OSI training.

At this time, the Marine Institute meets or exceeds the standards, but the improvements to the optimal competencies identified are not fully achievable with existing facilities and infrastructure. Hibernia Management and Development Company Ltd. (HMDC) has, however, provided a significant contribution to the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) which will allow retrofit of a new integrated helicopter training system incorporating a new configurable HUET, up rated crane and environmental theatre. A tender document has been developed and is posted for bid submissions. It is expected that the retrofit work will take place over the summer. With these modifications in place, the Marine Institute will be outfitted with current *state of the art* training aids for helicopter underwater escape training.

The modifications will permit the introduction of more complex and challenging training evolutions. As noted in the Commissioner's recommendation, however, training should not be so rigorous as to pose safety risks. When the new equipment is installed, MI will assess new exercises in accordance with internal risk management protocols. The participation, during risk assessments, of key stakeholders such as regulators, operators representatives and worker representatives would be welcomed. It may be that initial risk

assessments identify a need for structured Research and Development and associated ethics approval to formally assess risk against benefit to properly inform the implementation decision. The MI/ MUN is well positioned to undertake such research if and as deemed necessary.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that the Regulator set goals for physical fitness of workers in preparation for safety training, after consultation with oil operators, worker representatives, *trainers* and medical experts.

The Marine Institute confirms that it would be pleased to work with the Regulator in assisting in the establishment of appropriate goals for physical fitness in preparation for safety training. It is likely that such goals may have to be established and re-established in conjunction with increasing the level of difficulty of training exercise evolutions. In the short term, we have available resources that can assist within our research unit and other units/ departments of the Marine Institute and Memorial University. For the longer term, we are pleased to advise that an interdisciplinary team at Memorial University led by the Faculty of Medicine and involving the Marine Institute Offshore Safety and Survival Centre (OSSC) has developed a graduate program for Occupational Physicians entitled Human Physiology, Performance and Safety in Extreme Environments. OSSC involvement in the course will be to provide short course safety/cold water/ high temperature training as part of the program as well as to provide opportunities for occupational physicians to undertake applied research. The occupational medical expertise of the program participants will be appropriate for developing necessary underpinning research for the establishment of training fitness goals particularly if more difficult and challenging evolutions are envisaged.