

Clyde River Inuit to continue fight against seismic testing

18 August 2015 (Toronto) – The Inuit community of Clyde River was dealt a blow today in their efforts to stop unwanted oil exploration in their waters, when the Federal Court of Appeal ruled against Clyde River, upholding a National Energy Board decision to permit five years of dangerous seismic blasting in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait.

Last year Clyde River [launched an application for a judicial review](#) of the decision by the National Energy Board to approve the seismic plans. More than 300,000 people from around the world [added their voices](#) to support Clyde River's fight. But despite this and widespread opposition from the Inuit of Baffin Island, who expressed concern about the impacts seismic noise would have on local wildlife, which they depend upon for their food and livelihoods, the National Energy Board approved the seismic project.

Clyde River's lawyers argued that the government had failed to adequately consult with local Inuit or accommodate their concerns. However, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the level of consultation was sufficient to meet the Crown's constitutional obligations.

"Inuit depend on our animals for our food, livelihoods and our culture," said Clyde River Mayor Jerry Natanine. "Scientists are telling us that seismic blasting can harm animals and disrupt their migration patterns. Inuit's own experiences with seismic blasting in the past tell us the same thing. This ruling is a big blow to Inuit rights and Inuit culture, but we will continue to fight until justice is served."

"We are encouraged that the Federal Court of Appeal agreed that this case raises serious issues about the Crown's duty to consult," said Nader Hasan, the lawyer representing the Clyde River applicants. "But we respectfully disagree with how the Court dealt with those issues in its opinion. We will be asking the Supreme Court of Canada to hear this appeal."

The decision comes at a difficult time for Conservative Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, who is the Member of Parliament for Clyde River, as she is currently campaigning to keep her seat in the upcoming federal election in the riding of Nunavut. Minister Aglukkaq was criticized last year for failing to come to the aid of Baffin Inuit on the issue of seismic testing and for putting the interests of the oil industry ahead of those of her constituents.

"One thing's for sure, we won't stop our fight here," said Natanine. "We will be appealing this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. We will also be continuing our work to bring people's attention to this issue."

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