

## **Question on Nunavut Marine Council Request**

May 13, 2015

**Mr. Dennis Bevington MP Northwest Territories:**

Mr. Chair, last summer the Nunavut Marine Council sent a letter to the minister demanding a full scale strategic environmental assessment of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait before any seismic testing was allowed.

Without such a strategic investment, local communities would not support future oil and gas development the letter said.

Why did the minister refuse this request?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):**

Mr. Chair, as in the Beaufort Sea, Canada has indeed a strategic interest in advancing oil and gas exploration in the eastern Arctic where no exploration rights have been issued since the seventies.

As early as 2012, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development officials made public commitments to undertake a strategic environmental assessment to inform a ministerial decision around whether, when and where oil and gas companies might be invited to bid on parcels of land for exploration rights in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait under the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

That commitment has already been made and it will take place.