

## **The intersection of offshore oil and gas leasing decisions and marine protected areas**

### **About the project**

This research project focusses on a fundamental decision point: the regulatory processes leading to decisions to permit exploratory offshore oil and gas drilling, with a focus in or near marine protected areas (MPAs). The research will consider how regulators identify parcels of the ocean floor as possible areas for exploratory drilling (call for bids), the consultation processes with stakeholders, and the tendencies and constraints of each regulator around conflict-laden decisions.

### **Project aims and methods**

The aim is to assess upstream oil and gas decision-making processes by drawing on comparative international, commonwealth cases that highlight how offshore oil governance practices can be strengthened to permit more robust public engagement early in the development process and curtail subsequent political conflict.

For each jurisdiction, the following information will be collected: 1) the various policies, mandates and/or laws for each region specific to the call for bids processes. 2) Detailed information on annual call for bids for each regulator where there was spatial overlap with, or close proximity to MPAs. For example, what types of criteria or data (e.g., environmental risks, seismic testing) are used to make those decisions, who generates the data for the decisions, and what are the consultation processes for the other marine users such as other governmental agencies, fishing organizations, Indigenous communities, or tourist operators. 3) In cases where consultations occur with other stakeholders, the processes will be assessed. If conflicts arise when parcels are identified, are they mitigated or resolved and, if so, how? And 4) compile information on marine spatial planning frameworks for each jurisdiction and sector planning tools such as strategic EAs, and evaluate the connections among these efforts to the call for bids processes and stakeholder consultations.

### **Candidate requirements**

Highly motivated and a willingness to collaborate with research team

Willingness to conduct field work – interviewing communities.

A Masters degree, field open (e.g., law, political science, ecology, conservation) but must demonstrate interest in interdisciplinary work in marine sustainability and excellent writing skills.

Work in the areas of marine protected areas and offshore oil and gas environmental policies, desirable but not required.

### **Training**

This research project is an international collaboration between a group of researchers in Canada and New Zealand. The Candidate will have an opportunity for travel to case study sites as well as working with both ecologists and social scientists. Learn about interdisciplinary case study research methods:

interviewing, coding, cross-case analyses as well as engage in topics on offshore oil and gas, establishment and management of marine protected areas and social contentions about these case studies.

### **How to apply**

Send initial application (CV and cover letter) to Prof Gail Fraser, [gsfraser@yorku.ca](mailto:gsfraser@yorku.ca)

You also must apply to the Environmental Studies PhD program<sup>1</sup> at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University (note deadline Jan 15, 2023).

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/environmental-studies/programs/phd/>

### **Deadline**

Applicants must make deadline Jan 15, 2023 to the [Environmental Studies PhD program](#)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Funding Notes**

Students will receive a stipend as part of the funding package and may be required to be a teaching assistant for part of that funding.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note, acceptance to the program for international applicants is very low.

<sup>2</sup> See website for details. Supporting documents: Transcripts, research description, personal statement, CV, sample of written work, and references from two individuals.

<sup>3</sup> International applicants, should they be accepted, will have to pay international tuition fees.