

Press Release

June 23, 2011

Commissioner Wells Supports Call for Firm Commitments on Helicopter Safety

The Honourable Robert Wells, Q.C., Inquiry Commissioner, is expressing his support for the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's call for firm commitments and action to make helicopters operating in the offshore safer. Commissioner Wells says he unequivocally supports the actions and recommendations of the Transportation Safety Board without hesitation as it pertains to their investigation into what caused the crash of Cougar Flight 491 on March 12, 2009.

Commissioner Wells is pleased the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) will pay close attention to safety regulators; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Canada (TC) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), over the next six months to ensure they follow through on the recommendations. "Individuals working in the offshore need to have a time frame imposed on when these recommendations will be acted on. They need to know when the 30 minute run dry capability will be fixed on all helicopters currently operating offshore" said Commissioner Wells.

Commissioner Wells also noted that there are bilateral agreements in place between Canada, the United States and Europe governing aviation safety regulations, which may mean action on these recommendations could take longer than anticipated. However, Commissioner Wells is pleased the TSB has taken on the onus of ensuring these safety issues are addressed in a timely manner.

Commissioner Wells is continuing his review of the Transportation Safety Board's Report and the subsequent response from Transport Canada to those recommendations as part of the mandate of Phase II of the Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry. The full Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are posted on the Inquiry's website www.oshsi.nl.ca

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