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## Feds Face Internet Claim

A federal agency is being sued for allegedly violating the *Copyright Act* on the internet. The [Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board](#) is accused of spreading copyright data on the web in a contract tender without permission of the creator, Geophysical Service Incorporated of Calgary.

"It's a horrible mess," said Paul Einarsson, Geophysical's chief operating officer. "The *Copyright Act* doesn't matter to these people. How do you have a chance?"

Geophysical owns the largest collection of underwater maps in Canada, by company estimate. The company conducted surveys for the Petroleum Board from 1998 to 2003, depositing copies with the board as a condition of license, according to court documents.

However Einarsson asserts that in mid-March 2013, the board put Geophysical's maps on its website as part of a call for bids on new exploration licenses. "I had an inkling they took our data and were giving it out in new and novel ways," he said in an interview. "We did an *Access to Information* search and, sure enough, one of our surveys was in there."

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver did not take *Blacklock's* questions outside the House of Commons. The Halifax-based Petroleum Board refused comment, noting the case is now before Federal Court.

In its application, Geophysical said it only learned its maps were published on the internet weeks after the fact. The company has sued for an injunction against any further distribution of its data, and damages for the information already published.

The board earlier apologized to Einarsson in 2013 for contravening the *Access to Information Act* when it decreed Geophysical Service must forward its requests to a federal attorney.

"They have been obstructing us terribly," said Einarsson. "This is part of the ongoing effort to undermine our intellectual property rights. There is a co-ordinated attempt here by multiple government agencies. We've explained the law to them through our attorneys. They know exactly what they are doing."

Geophysical has also filed claims against the Department of Natural Resources; the National Energy Board; the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board; and Newfoundland & Labrador's Crown-owned [Nalcor Energy Inc.](#) for improperly using company surveys in breach of the *Copyright Act*.

By Tom Korsi  

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