



NEWS RELEASE

November 5, 2016
For Immediate Release

Labrador's Indigenous leaders respond to engineering reports on rationale for initial flooding of Muskrat Falls reservoir

The Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation and NunatuKavut Community Council have received two independent reviews of seven engineering reports outlining Nalcor's rationale for initial impoundment of the Muskrat Falls reservoir this fall. The engineering reports were provided to Labrador's three Indigenous leaders during a meeting with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on October 25. A formal response was sent to Premier Dwight Ball late Friday, November 4.

The Nunatsiavut Government, supported by the Innu Nation and NunatuKavut Community Council, engaged the services of two independent experts, both with expertise in river ice engineering, to review the engineering reports.

As part of their response to the review of the engineering reports, the three leaders reiterated the principles that were committed to during the October 25 meeting, namely: that the protection of human health and well-being would be paramount in decision-making related to the Muskrat Falls project; and – with respect to first-phase impoundment – water levels would be raised to the minimum acceptable level if such impoundment was deemed necessary, and drawn back down to normal levels as soon as the risk of ice damage had passed.

Accordingly, the independent experts were instructed to critically evaluate the need for first-phase flooding (as proposed in the seven engineering reports), identify the minimum acceptable water level rise, and advise on how the duration of the water level rise might be kept to a minimum during the ice season. In summary, the independent experts' views suggest that:

- the findings of the engineering reports are credible;
- first-phase flooding is required;
- the proposed ice boom should be installed as soon as possible;

- it is highly unlikely that the minimum required water level would be less than 23 metres above sea level;
- lower water levels (one to two metres below the 25 metre maximum allowable) are feasible if appropriate actions are taken – including further modelling using current conditions;
- such modelling is undertaken with the stated objectives to minimize water levels and the duration of those levels; and
- historical spring flood levels within the proposed first-phase flooding area may have reached elevations of 22 to 22.5 metres above sea level.

The Indigenous leaders asked Premier Ball to indicate how the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will direct Nalcor to respond to the recommended actions presented by the independent reviewers.

The leaders also insisted that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador actively communicate with them on Nalcor's management of this issue, including regular and timely information on all facets of initial flooding, to demonstrate that concrete actions are being taken to minimize impacts to human health.

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