

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Flooding of Muskrat Falls reservoir must not be allowed until full clearing is carried out

Hundreds of Labrador Inuit will be pushed above regulatory guidelines for exposure to methylmercury if the Muskrat Falls reservoir is not fully cleared of all wood, brush, vegetation and topsoil, according to a Harvard University report released today.

The Lake Melville Scientific Report is the result of four years of a multi-pronged investigation that has led to important scientific discoveries about how methylmercury accumulates in the Lake Melville ecosystem and how it will impact Inuit who rely on Lake Melville for food and resources.

“The independent research confirms that our concerns are valid,” says Nunatsiavut President Sarah Leo. “Steps must be taken to mitigate as much as possible increases in methylmercury exposures for Inuit living downstream from the project. Until full clearing is carried out, flooding must not be allowed to take place. It’s as simple as that.”

The research indicates that flooding will cause a sharp rise in methylmercury production in the Muskrat Falls reservoir within 120 hours that can remain elevated for several decades. Methylmercury exposures of Inuit living around Lake Melville are currently higher than the Canadian population, and will increase significantly after flooding unless the reservoir is fully cleared. Rigolet residents are at a higher risk of increased methylmercury exposure compared with Inuit living in the Upper Lake Melville area due to their greater reliance on locally-harvested food.

“I am a father of three children, and Rigolet is our home. Families like mine regularly rely on Lake Melville for food,” says Nunatsiavut’s Lands and Natural Resources Minister Darryl Shiwak. “If the Muskrat Falls project continues on the current path, we are going to see a significant increase in methylmercury exposure to our families. That is not acceptable, especially when something can be done about it.”

The Nunatsiavut Government will hold public information sessions this week in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Mud Lake, North West River and Rigolet to provide overview of the Lake Melville Scientific Report. Electronic copies of the Lake Melville Scientific Report, as well as a Summary for Policymakers, which draws a number of conclusions and lays out four key recommendations, can be found at www.makemuskratright.com

Media Contact:

Bert Pomeroy
Director of Communications
(709) 896-8582 / (709) 899-0049