

# NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

## **Facts ‘indisputable’; no value to hold workshop on downstream effects of Muskrat Falls, says Shiwak**

The Nunatsiavut Government has rejected an invitation from provincial Environment and Conservation Minister Perry Trimper to participate in a workshop later this month to discuss the potential downstream effects of the Muskrat Falls development, the peer-reviewed research conducted by Harvard University and Nalcor Energy’s Human Health Risk Assessment.

“The Nunatsiavut Government’s interpretation of downstream effects is anchored in peer-reviewed scientific fact,” states Nunatsiavut’s Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Darryl Shiwak, in a letter sent to Minister Trimper today.

Minister Trimper has been presented with the scientific data collected over the past three years from the Lake Melville ecosystem - data that “clearly demonstrates that methylmercury inputs to Lake Melville will increase significantly once the Muskrat Falls reservoir is flooded,” says Minister Shiwak.

Nalcor’s assertion that there would be no downstream effects on Lake Melville from the Muskrat Falls project relied solely on modelling and assumptions about Lake Melville, but not on any measurements throughout Lake Melville - nor an understanding of how the estuary functions, says Minister Shiwak.

The Joint Environmental Assessment Panel that reviewed Nalcor’s assumptions concluded that “Nalcor’s assertion that there would be no measurable effect on levels of mercury in Goose Bay and Lake Melville has not been substantiated,” and that “Nalcor did not carry out a full assessment of the fate of mercury in the downstream environment.” The Panel recommended that a full downstream effects assessment be done prior to flooding of the reservoir.

“In sanctioning the project, the federal and provincial governments ignored this recommendation,” adds Minister Shiwak. “Meanwhile, Harvard University carried out the Panel’s recommended assessment and its peer-reviewed results demonstrate that Nalcor’s assumptions were incorrect. The facts and evidence, based on actual measurements from Lake Melville, are indisputable.”

Harvard is expected to release further data in April on projected impacts of mercury exposure on Inuit once the Muskrat Falls reservoir is flooded, Minister Shiwak notes. The data was collected from a survey involving over 1,500 Inuit who depend on Lake Melville for food security.

The workshop being proposed by Minister Trimper would be of no added value to the Nunatsiavut Government as it will not change any of the facts, says Minister Shiwak.

“As a former scientist, Minister, you would surely recognize that there is only one peer-reviewed, evidence-based downstream impacts assessment for Lake Melville,” states the letter from Minister Shiwak.

“The Nunatsiavut Government will not compromise Inuit health and rights,” the letter reads. “Minister, you have an opportunity now to chart a new direction on this important issue. We implore you to focus on the actual data available and the information that will be forthcoming in April. There is still an opportunity to *Make Muskrat Right*, to follow the science, to adopt the precautionary principle, and to make evidence-based decisions.”

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