



NUNATSIAVUT
Senani jarini kajusimanik pivallianimmut
10 Years of Continued Progress

ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OFFICE
25 Ikajuktauvik Road, PO Box 70
Nain, NL, Canada AOP 1L0
Tel: 709.922.2942
Fax: 709.922.2931
nain_reception@nunatsiavut.com

NEWS RELEASE

June 23, 2016
For Immediate Release

Trimper misleading the public in methylmercury debate, says Shiwak

Lands and Natural Resources Minister Darryl Shiwak says he's at a loss in understanding why Environment and Conservation Minister Perry Trimper is distorting the facts as to why Nunatsiavut Government officials did not attend a March 22 workshop to discuss Nalcor's Human Health Risk Assessment Plan in relation to the downstream impacts of the Muskrat Falls development.

"We advised Minister Trimper that we were not available to attend that workshop because our own Human Health Risk Assessment research, conducted by Harvard University, was not ready to be released at that time, and that we wanted to ensure Labrador Inuit were informed of the results first," says Minister Shiwak. "As well, our researchers were not available to attend at that time. We also noted that we were not prepared to debate Harvard's research."

Nalcor's mercury modelling work and predictions, which have been available for scrutiny for years, notes Minister Shiwak, are inadequate and unsubstantiated, and any objective assessment of the work carried out by Nalcor and Harvard University would have revealed that the science is not equal.

The Nunatsiavut Government maintains that if Minister Trimper had been purely objective on this issue, then he would not have organized a workshop to try and find common ground between peer-reviewed science and assumptions.

"This is not a difference of opinion on the science, as Minister Trimper suggests," says Minister Shiwak. "Nalcor's work is based on assumptions, which is not credible science, and to attend the workshop would have legitimized Nalcor's work which, as Minister Trimper knows, has already been discarded through independent third-party expert review."

The Lake Melville Scientific Report was released on April 18, nearly one month after the March workshop.

"The report is the result of credible, transparent, rigorous and independent science," notes Minister Shiwak. "It's disappointing Minister Trimper continues to ignore the hard facts, suggesting that they are nothing more than opinions."

Minister Trimper was given a detailed preliminary briefing on the Harvard work on February 23. At that time, he was made aware of the fact there would be significant increases in human exposure to methylmercury at levels harmful to human health.



NUNATSIAVUT
kavamanga Government
www.nunatsiavut.com

“He knew the facts, and he knows full well that methylmercury levels will exceed current Health Canada guidelines,” says Minister Shiwak. “By holding the March 22 workshop Minister Trimper avoided having to make an independent judgment based on scientific facts. That’s obvious, since his decision to sign off on Nalcor’s Human Health Risk Assessment on June 14 was based entirely on the discussions that took place during that workshop, which upheld much of Nalcor’s discredited science.”

During a public rally in front of his Happy Valley-Goose Bay constituency office on June 17, Minister Trimper claimed the Nunatsiavut Government refused to attend the workshop because it ‘did not trust Nalcor’.

“Based on the facts of the matter, Minister Trimper intentionally misled the public and the media as to why we didn’t participate,” says Minister Shiwak.

Minister Trimper also indicated that he would be willing to host another workshop if the Nunatsiavut Government is willing to participate. Before responding to Mr. Trimper’s invitation, the Nunatsiavut Government would first want to know the names and titles of all participants, as well as the purpose of the meeting, its goals and objectives, notes Minister Shiwak.

As well, during the June 17 rally, Minister Trimper stressed that the Nunatsiavut Government asked for “compensation” as part of an Impact Management Agreement.

“We have never raised the issue of compensation. How can you compensate for a loss of culture and a way of life?”

One of four recommendations put forward by the Nunatsiavut Government calls on both the federal and provincial governments *to require Nalcor to negotiate an Impact Management Agreement with the Nunatsiavut Government to the satisfaction of all parties before Muskrat Falls reservoir flooding and subsequent adverse downstream impacts occur.*

“We asked for a negotiated agreement to ensure we find ways to deal with the downstream impacts that are sure to arise as a result of this development,” says Minister Shiwak. “We have not had any discussions on what would be contained in such an agreement, so for Minister Trimper to suggest we asked for compensation is again misleading.

“By his own admission, Minister Trimper is acknowledging, as the science demonstrates, that there will be an increase in methylmercury because of Muskrat Falls. Labrador Inuit have well-established aboriginal rights and titles downstream from Muskrat Falls that are Constitutionally-protected in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. By refusing to accommodate our concerns, we believe Mr. Trimper is directly violating our rights to self-determination.”

The Nunatsiavut Government is not going to back down from this issue, says Minister Shiwak, until steps are taken to mitigate, as much as possible, increases in methylmercury exposures for downstream Inuit populations, including fully clearing the Muskrat Falls reservoir of wood, brush, vegetation and topsoil.

Media Contact:

Bert Pomeroy
Director of Communications
(709) 896-8582