

No pleasing Muskrat critics Danny Williams says

[CBC News](#)

Posted: Dec 6, 2012 11:12 AM NT

Last Updated: Dec 6, 2012 1:47 PM NT

Former Newfoundland and Labrador premier Danny Williams has applauded the house of assembly's symbolic passing of a motion on Muskrat Falls, and says little can be said to persuade the project's critics.

Opposition politicians and many opponents of Muskrat Falls have said government has avoided meaningful debate on the megaproject, in addition to skipping a full Public Utilities Board review.

But Williams, who announced the tentative agreement with Emera Inc. and Nova Scotia on the multi-billion-dollar project shortly before retiring from politics in late 2010, said the Opposition would never have been content.

"The opportunities were there for debate and no matter what the Opposition says they had the opportunity to debate," Williams said.

"They wanted special hearings, they wanted special witnesses brought in — that becomes a gong show."

Williams sat in the public gallery at the legislature on Wednesday as the governing Tories pushed through Premier Kathy Dunderdale's private member's bill that asked for the house's support for Muskrat Falls.

Williams said there has been too much focus on the cost of Muskrat Falls, which the provincial government has projected to be \$7.4 billion, well above the original estimate of \$6.2 billion. Emera Inc. has said that the costs of building the so-called maritime link will push the cost as high as \$7.7 billion.

"No matter what it costs, if it costs \$6 billion or \$7 billion or \$8 billion, at the end of the day, it's going to be paid off, it's going to be a valuable asset, and the province will be in a better position," said Williams.

"I just think it's such a win-win-win, it's a no-brainer for me."

Meanwhile, Williams credited Prime Minister Stephen Harper — a frequent target while he was premier — with coming through with a federal loan guarantee.

Harper signed a term sheet on the guarantee last Friday in Happy Valley-Goose Bay with Dunderdale and Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter.