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Churchill threatened**SOURCE:** The Telegram**BYLINE:** Clarice Blake Rudkowski**SECTION:** Editorial; Pg. A6**LENGTH:** 327 words

I wish to comment on the Churchill River in Labrador making the environmentally endangered list compiled by Earth Wild and wildcanada.net -- organizations dedicated to raising the profiles of Canadian rivers threatened by human activity.

Not only is there talk of a dam at Gull Island, but the spectre of another at Muskrat Falls still lurks in the background. On top of that, there is now a proposal to construct a causeway/bridge nine miles up river from our town.

Along with that, Happy Valley-Goose Bay pumps raw sewage directly into the river which, in itself, is an environmental disaster, not to mention the stench we have to live with on a daily basis. Our river is indeed under threat and is endangered.

I strongly disagree with Environment Minister Robert Mercer in several respects. He suggests that hydroelectricity is an eco-friendly source of power -- clean, safe, green. Thousands upon thousands of dams have been built worldwide and there are mountains of evidence about the negative impacts of such projects.

In our own backyard, the Upper Churchill demonstrates that well. The creation of the Smallwood Reservoir, the second largest man-made lake in the world, bigger than Prince Edward Island, affected all waterways flowing out of the height of land. It caused methyl mercury poisoning which moves through our food chain (Health Canada warns we should eat only one meal of trout a month); there is loss of habitat for our wildlife; salination of drinking water as far downstream as Northwest River; and siltation is happening in the reservoir itself, as well as downstream.

In addition, the reservoir emits methane gas, adding to greenhouse gases. A study is ongoing to determine the effects the project may have had on the declining fish stocks on the Hamilton Banks, some 600 miles away.

Clean -- no; safe -- no; green -- no; endangered -- yes.

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Friends of Grand River/Mista Shipu Happy Valley-Goose Bay

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