

Muskrat Falls to get a PR push

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Newfoundland and Labrador's new minister of natural resources admits the government can do a better job of selling the controversial Muskrat Falls hydroelectric megaproject.

"We have to do a better job in terms of making our, getting our message out there," Jerome Kennedy told CBC News.

Kennedy, formerly the minister of health, took on the natural resources portfolio in last week's cabinet shuffle.

He said the provincial government needs to improve how it responds to questions about the \$6.2-billion plan to tap power at Muskrat Falls on Labrador's Churchill River, transmit it to Newfoundland and export as much as 40 per cent to Nova Scotia and potentially other markets.

"The questions being raised are valid. The issues are valid, and they're certainly ones that we've addressed and will continue to address," Kennedy said.

The Liberals have hammered away at Muskrat Falls since former premier Danny Williams unveiled an agreement with Halifax-based Emera Inc. in November 2010. The Nova Scotia government also supports the deal.

The Liberals have accused Nalcor, the Crown-owned energy corporation, of withholding critical information about the plan, and have repeatedly alleged that Muskrat Falls will mean domestic electric bills will double.

Kennedy said a better explanation of Muskrat Falls is partly needed because some critics make false statements.

"For example, power rates are not going to double. Nova Scotia is not getting free power," he said.

"But it didn't seem how often we said that, it's the old [saying], if you tell something long enough, [they] will believe it."