

**Speaking Notes
Premier Kathy Dunderdale
Muskrat Falls Sanction
December 17, 2012**

Please check against delivery

Your Honours, Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Crosby;
Former Premier Williams;
Minister Penashue;
Senators Manning, Marshall and Doyle;
Grand Chief Poker, and representatives of the Innu Nation;
Minister Pottle, representing the Nunatsiavut Government;
Mr. Ed Martin, President and CEO of Nalcor
Members of the Nalcor Board of Directors;
Colleagues and Friends;

Newfoundland and Labrador is a very special corner of the world. No one wants leave, and for anyone who does, this place never leaves them. The rhythm of a majestic sea, the secrets of ancient rock and the movement of our ever-changing sky all seem to call us home. The nature and geography of this place are so intricately woven into our culture, history and tradition that they are as much a part of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as our own heartbeat. The island and the Big Land hold our hearts and souls, no matter where we go. That separates us from other Canadians. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians yearn for this place. Fortunately, a fundamental shift in our history has occurred in recent years, and we are no longer compelled to leave to provide for our families. Now our aspirations can be met here at home, and as of this day, we may never be forced to leave again.

Thank you, everyone, for being here this evening as we mark what is to be a significant milestone in our progression as a province and, more importantly, as a people.

Harnessing the vast hydro-electric power of the Lower Churchill is a promise that has been hovering just on the horizon for over 50 years, but has remained out of reach for successive governments of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, today, history is being made, as we, together with our partners in Nova Scotia and the Innu Nation, set in motion a project, whose impacts will be felt for generations. Through an unprecedented link to the North American electricity grid, the Muskrat Falls project will unlock the potential of Newfoundland and Labrador's energy warehouse and help drive our economy for 100 years to come.

It will allow stable, affordable electricity to power our homes and businesses. It will power industrial development in Labrador. It will open the door to further development of limitless renewable energy resources and make us energy self-sufficient—all are important benefits, all are significant. But most importantly, this development allows us, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to stand tall and proud on the national stage, knowing that as our

forebears persevered to etch an existence on the edge of the North Atlantic, so will we—with unrelenting focus and steadfast determination—overcome all obstacles and transform challenges into success.

Our experience in confederation with Canada has included some challenges: the stigma of being the poorest province in the union, the bitterness of the Upper Churchill injustice, the resentment of a decimated fishery and the anger of not having our voice heard within the federation. However, today represents a significant shift in our relationship with the federal government. We are now a full partner in the federation of Canada.

For the first time in a very long time, the legitimate aspirations of the people of this province have been heard, considered and acknowledged as important.

I thank Prime Minister Harper for his leadership in recognizing the nation-building proportions of the Muskrat Falls project through a Federal Government loan guarantee. The Prime Minister's support demonstrates the kind of leadership the Federal Government can provide in nation-building energy projects such as this one.

We are ready to be national leaders in energy generation, to produce sought-after, renewable, environmentally friendly electricity for the hungry North American marketplace. We are ready to build on the prosperity of our non-renewable resources and multiply their benefits.

Historically, our province has been challenged economically and socially, both before and after confederation. However, in recent years, we have been moving toward a more promising and prosperous future. Today we take a significant step in that journey and move completely from the shadows of confederation into full and meaningful partnership as a regional leader in clean energy generation.

We are reaping the benefits of seeds sown by our forebears as they struggled to eke out a living against unimaginable odds. From them, down through the generations, have come the characteristics that define us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: optimism, tenacity, resourcefulness, work ethic and a fierce pride in this place and its greatness. Today we stand tall and proud on the shoulders of those who've come before us, knowing that we have not squandered their gifts, but invested them to give our children a brighter, more secure and prosperous future. Generations to come will look back on this decision as the dividing line between short-lived riches and sustainable, renewable wealth.

No one understands the importance of sustainability and wise stewardship better than the Aboriginal peoples who first inhabited this land. The benefits of Muskrat Falls are possible thanks to the grand partnerships we have achieved with the Aboriginal peoples of the Big Land – partnerships nurtured through consultation and embodied in the New Dawn Agreement with the Innu Nation and the agreements that established the Nunatsiavut Government. We are honoured to have representatives of both the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government with us today. As we celebrate the power of cooperation, the rays

of a new day are sweeping across the skies, promising a future of opportunity for young Labradorians and Newfoundlanders – a future of sustainability and respect for the environment we all share.

Today, we stand strong, knowing that our ancestors have worked toward and envisioned a time when we, as a people, would see Newfoundland and Labrador come into the full measure of her greatness. We are the fortunate generation, entrusted with the opportunity to make that a reality. Now, as never before, we are certain of a future with the promise of opportunity for all.

Today, it is my pleasure and honour as your Premier and as a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, to officially sanction the Muskrat Falls project.

As we look forward from this day, the line of sight is clear. Down through the generations of our children, their children and beyond, we will thrive in a province propelled to greatness by the strength and ingenuity of her people and the vast reserves of her energy resources.

We will continue to build productive relationships; we will continue to provide vision and leadership; and we continue as a people to prosper and flourish.

It all begins here!

It all begins now!