



Astaldi wants to finish the job after Muskrat Falls workers booted from site



About 50 people remain on site to back up Astaldi and its employees' belongings

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Trades NL says workers' belonging have been packed up and will soon be shipped to the owners. Meanwhile, Innu Nation Grand Chief Gregory Rich says the 50-or-so Innu workers are hoping to keep their jobs (CBC)

With most of its 500 employees now off site after a stop-work order, Astaldi says it wants to finish the work it started at Muskrat Falls.

In a statement released Monday evening, the contractor said Nalcor's order, issued Thursday, has jeopardized the hydroelectric project and shows that it's not interested in finishing the project on time.

Astaldi said it has delivered on its promises to Nalcor, is awaiting payment on approved invoices, and has requested arbitration with Nalcor to reach an agreement on additional costs brought on as a result of extra work and accelerated timelines.

“We are disappointed that Nalcor has chosen to act as an adversary, rather than a partner.”

- Don Delarosbil

The contractor said it has not been fully compensated for the work it has done, contrary to claims in Nalcor's stop-work order.

"We are disappointed that Nalcor would rather jeopardize the completion of this project, potentially adding costs and risking further delays, than settle this matter in arbitration," said project manager Don Delarosbil.

"We are disappointed that Nalcor has chosen to act as an adversary, rather than a partner."

Winding down work

A small crew is still working on the hydroelectric project alongside other contracting companies to wind down the Italian firm's work.

According to a post by Trades NL on Facebook, Astaldi employees' belongings have been packed up and will be shipped to them this week.

- [Astaldi meltdown symbolic of rush to sanction Muskrat Falls, says consumer advocate](#)
- [Nalcor issues stop-work order to Astaldi; 500 workers being sent home from Muskrat Falls](#)

"Our members are maintaining control of the warehouse until all personal belongings are shipped out," Trades NL said in the post.

"Nalcor has been very co-operative in the process; providing assistance, tags, bags, boxes, etc."

Astaldi's exodus from Muskrat Falls follows months of financial uncertainty for the subcontractor hired by Crown corporation Nalcor to build the hydroelectric powerhouse and other dam components.

Late last week Nalcor cut ties with Astaldi and pledged to announce a new plan to complete construction of the already over-budget megaproject.

"Astaldi is nearing completion of their work in the powerhouse, intake and spillway with around 95 per cent of its scope of work complete," Nalcor spokesperson Karen O'Neill said in an email.

"The remaining work is not on the critical path and therefore won't hold us up for achieving first power next year as planned. We intend to complete the project on time and within the current budget."

Innu workers remain on site

The Innu Nation in Labrador has an impacts and benefits agreement with Nalcor pertaining to the Muskrat Falls project. Among other things, it guarantees preferential hiring for qualified Innu workers.

On Monday, Innu Nation Grand Chief Gregory Rich told CBC Radio's *Labrador Morning* there are roughly 50 Innu people employed by the subcontractor.





Rich says Nalcor is obliged to continue to follow his group's impacts and benefits agreement, which among other things, guarantees preferential hiring for skilled Innu workers. (Bailey White/CBC)

Rich said he met with Nalcor officials after the corporation announced its split from Astaldi.

"We have heard through the media that there were problems there between Astaldi and Nalcor, but in detail, we didn't know," he said.

“The holiday season is approaching and they want to keep their jobs.”

- Gregory Rich

Rich said he plans to meet with Nalcor again Tuesday. Though it's not clear yet how Nalcor intends to complete the work Astaldi started, Rich says he wants Innu workers to remain a part of the project, as stipulated in the impacts and benefits agreement.

"We told Nalcor when we met them last week that we want to continue," he said. "They have to honour the IBA."

- [Flights for Muskrat Falls workers planned, as Astaldi shuts down work at site](#)
- [Trades council representing Muskrat Falls workers sues Nalcor, Astaldi for \\$7.8M](#)

Rich said he's had several calls and texts from concerned Innu workers who are unsure whether they'll be employed much longer.

"There are some qualified and apprentice Innu workers out there that we want to keep there," said the grand chief.

"The holiday season is approaching and they want to keep their jobs."

In her email, Nalcor's spokesperson said current hiring practices would continue, but as to whether Astaldi's current staff will be laid off, O'Neill couldn't say.

"Specific questions regarding layoffs, etc. are best directed to Astaldi as they are the employer and are responsible for the terms of employment," she said.

"We will share further details on the next steps for the completion of Astaldi's work scope as the situation progresses."

With files from Labrador Morning

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