



Nalcor lowering water levels at Muskrat Falls reservoir



Labrador Land Protectors cheer announcement by Premier Dwight Ball

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Angus Andersen, right, orchestrated a water bottle public awareness campaign to pressure Premier Dwight Ball on commitments made by the provincial government. (Mark Cumby/CBC)

Muskrat Falls protesters got more than a handshake from Premier Dwight Ball on Wednesday when he announced Nalcor Energy has taken action to lower water levels at the Muskrat Falls reservoir.

- [N.L. government, Labrador leaders make 'significant' Muskrat Falls progress](#)
- [Battle over Muskrat Falls: What you need to know](#)

"This action is responsive to commitments agreed upon Oct. 26, 2016, by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut government, and the NunatuKavut community council regarding the health and well-being of the people of Labrador as it relates to the Muskrat Falls project," Ball said in a statement to media Wednesday evening.

*Nalcor's Muskrat Falls operations team have actioned the lowering of water levels at the Muskrat Falls reservoir.

This action is responsive to commitments agreed upon on October 26, 2016 by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, and the NunatuKavut Community Council regarding the health and well-being of the people of Labrador as it relates to the Muskrat Falls project.

Nalcor has indicated that the operations team are putting a procedure in place to begin to adjust the spillway gates to lower the water levels in the river above the Muskrat Falls generation facility. Nalcor has indicated that this release will be completed in a controlled and gradual manner to ensure safety.

Nalcor has also informed that it will take several days to gradually and safely lower the water levels from the current elevation of 21.5m to levels that would typically been seen at this time of year.

In recognizing the dangers associated with dams and hydroelectric facilities, Nalcor wants to ensure people are safe when taking part in recreational activities on the lower Churchill River. Users should be aware of the dangers and follow safety signage along the river near the generation facilities."



Katie Breen

@KatieBreenNL

They've started lowering the reservoir at Muskrat Falls

7 5:07 PM - Jun 21, 2017

[See Katie Breen's other Tweets](#)

Earlier that same day, about half a dozen protesters gathered outside the Sheraton hotel in downtown St. John's, where Ball was giving a keynote address at the Fortis Energy Exchange conference.

The protesters were handing out bottles of water with labels featuring the Muskrat Falls dam and reading "Muskrat Falls Water" with "10% Methyl Mercury."





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Angus Andersen orchestrated a water bottle public awareness campaign. (Mark Cumby/CBC)

Angus Andersen of Nain, Labrador, organized the protest and created what he called a public awareness campaign to "to let the world and Canada know that, in Labrador, we'll be drinking methylmercury water."

Andersen said he handed the premier and his assistant bottles of water, as well as one to Natural Resources Minister Siobhan Coady.

"We are trying to protect our land in Labrador ... We want the government of Newfoundland and Nalcor to keep their promise of what they said they would do, that they would clear-cut the land, [and] they'd lower the water in the spring," he said.

"Today, it's the first day of summer. They have not kept their promise. We want them to keep their word that they gave to the aboriginal leaders and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador."

Water will take several days to go down

In Ball's statement, he said the release will be completed "in a controlled and gradual manner to ensure safety" and that it will take several days to lower the water levels from its current elevation of 21.5 metres, which is typical for the time of year.





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Natural Resources Minister Siobhan Coady speaks with protester Angus Andersen outside the Sheraton hotel in downtown St. John's. (Mark Cumby/CBC)

The premier also noted the dangers associated with dams and hydroelectric facilities and advised people to follow safety signage near generation facilities.

After they got word of Nalcor lowering the water levels, the protest group Labrador Land Protectors took to social media to proclaim their excitement.

Group urges followers to keep up pressure

"This is excellent news and never doubt the role that public pressure played in this decision," read a post on Facebook.

The group asked followers to keep the pressure on the provincial government and Crown corporation Nalcor, and to demand an independent review of the North Spur stability and a full forensic audit of Nalcor.

"We are creating real change here! Governments will have you believe we didn't do anything to force their hand. Do not believe them, we are succeeding in our goals," the Facebook post read.

"No surrender and #ShutMuskratDown! If they are serious about putting people's health first, it is the only solution until we have all the answers regarding the impacts of the Muskrat Falls hydro project."

With files from Mark Cumby

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