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Please see attached release. Inuktitut version to follow.

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# NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

## **Nunatsiavut Government outraged by Nalcor's response to Harvard mercury study**

The Nunatsiavut Government is outraged with Nalcor Energy's dismissal of a Harvard University study which clearly indicates that flooding of the Lower Churchill reservoir will result in a substantial increase in methylmercury inputs to Lake Melville, says Lands and Natural Resources Minister Darryl Shiwak.

During a radio interview with CBC's Labrador Morning today, Nalcor's Vice President, Lower Churchill Project, Gilbert Bennett, maintained that appropriate mitigation measures are being taken to lessen the impacts of the lethal effects of methylmercury. Making such statements is misleading and categorically false, says Minister Shiwak.

"Nalcor continues to try and sweep the issue under the rug, as it has since a joint Federal-Provincial environmental review panel clearly recommended full clearing of the reservoir to reduce levels of methylmercury downstream from the project," says the Minister. "Partial clearing is not an acceptable mitigation measure."

Bennett further suggested the effects could be mitigated by issuing consumption advisories to people to who harvest fish and seal from Lake Melville while, in the same breath, talking about swordfish and canned tuna being contaminated with mercury elsewhere.

"Mr. Bennett has a distinct lack of corporate social responsibility and cultural awareness and sensitivity," says Shiwak. "At a time when the Harvard study is making headlines across North America, Bennett continues to downplay the serious health impacts associated with the Muskrat Falls project – not only to Inuit, but to all people dependent on Lake Melville as a source of food."

The publication, entitled *Freshwater Discharges Drive High Levels of Methylmercury in Arctic Marine Biota* has been independently peer-reviewed by experts in the field and published by a team led by Harvard University in a prestigious and internationally reputable journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

"Despite this, Mr. Bennett never discusses the results of this objective science during his entire interview," says Minister Shiwak. "He instead prefers to talk about their models showing no impacts downstream."



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Incidentally, the joint Federal-Provincial environmental review panel concluded that Nalcor's assertion that there would be no measurable effect on levels of mercury in Goose Bay and Lake Melville had not been substantiated and that Nalcor did not carry out a full downstream assessment, notes Minister Shiwak.

“It's time for Nalcor Energy and the federal and provincial governments to acknowledge the new reality – one based on facts and good science. It's time for them to take this concern seriously, not just for Inuit, but for all people living downstream of the development,” says Minister Shiwak. “Methylmercury is a serious issue, and instead of spending time sweeping this under the rug, Nalcor needs to engage in an honest dialogue around facts to find solutions. It's time to stop playing politics and have a serious conversation about the new reality and for Nalcor to live up to its responsibilities as a Crown corporation.”

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