



NUNATSIAVUT
Senani jārini kajusimanik pivallianimmut
10 Years of Continued Progress

ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OFFICE

25 Ikajuktauvik Road, PO Box 70
Nain, NL, Canada A0P 1L0
Tel: 709.922.2942
Fax: 709.922.2931

nain_reception@nunatsiavut.com

Makkovik

PO Box 92
Makkovik, NL A0P 1J0
Tel: 709.923.2365
Fax: 709.923.2366

Hopedale

PO Box 91
Hopedale, NL A0P 1G0
Tel: 709.933.3777
Fax: 709.933.3746

Rigolet

PO Box 47
Rigolet, NL A0P 1P0
Tel: 709.947.3383
Fax: 709.947.3543

Postville

General Delivery
Postville, NL A0P 1N0
Tel: 709.479.9880
Fax: 709.479.9891

Happy Valley - Goose Bay

1A Hillcrest Road, PO Box 909, Str. 'B'
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL A0P 1E0
Tel: 709.896.8582
Fax: 709.896.2610

North West River

1 Mission Road, PO Box 234
North West River, NL A0P 1M0
Tel: 709.497.8725
Fax: 709.497.8751



NUNATSIAVUT
kavamanga Government
www.nunatsiavut.com

November 9, 2015

Via Email cjanes@gov.nl.ca and fax (709) 729-0112

Colleen Janes
Deputy Minister
Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
St. John's, NL
Tel: (709) 729-2572

**Re: Harvard University mercury research results in relation to
Muskrat Falls hydroelectric development in Labrador – protecting
Inuit lands and health**

Dear Ms. Janes,

The Nunatsiavut Government continues to be deeply concerned of the potential for the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam to cause serious harm to downstream Inuit communities.

This letter follows our October 30, 2015 meeting you and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador officials where we presented the results of a recent research paper entitled “Freshwater discharges drive high levels of methylmercury in Arctic marine biota” published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The Muskrat Falls hydroelectric development is currently being constructed on the Churchill River in Labrador. Nalcor Energy, the provincial energy corporation, predicted no measurable effect on Lake Melville, a large estuary that falls mostly within Labrador Inuit Settlement Area and on which nearby Inuit communities depend for their sustenance and health. The project was approved based in part on this assessment. However, the Joint Review Panel conducting the environmental assessment concluded Nalcor's claims were “unsubstantiated”. A subsequent independent, peer-reviewed Harvard University study released in early September 2015 and designed to fill this gap in knowledge shows that, in fact, we can expect significant increases in methylmercury inputs to Lake Melville as a result of Muskrat Falls (Harvard feature release from Monday September 7:

<https://www.seas.harvard.edu/news/2015/09/poison-in-arctic-and-cost-of-clean-energy>). Consumed by humans, mercury can cross the blood-brain barrier, leading to cardiovascular effects in adults (e.g. higher risk of heart attack), and neurological and cognitive impairment among infants and children.

Inuit communities rely on Lake Melville for hunting and fishing. The estuary is crucial to the exercise and enjoyment of Aboriginal rights and

other human rights, including the right to culture, the right to health, and the right to livelihood. The Harvard-led research follows a recommendation for a new downstream effects assessment from the Lower Churchill Joint Review Panel report and adds significant new information relevant to the Muskrat Falls development.

In light of this new, independent and scientifically-defensible information, to reduce impacts on Inuit health and rights, the Nunatsiavut Government is requesting that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador direct Nalcor Energy to:

1. **Fully clear the future Muskrat Falls reservoir** area of wood, brush and vegetation before flooding to reduce methylmercury inputs downstream into Inuit territory, consistent with recommendation 4.5 of the Joint Review Panel.
2. **Negotiate an Impact Management Agreement** with the Nunatsiavut Government before Muskrat Falls flooding and subsequent damaging downstream impacts occur, consistent with recommendation 13.9 of the Joint Review Panel.
3. **Establish an independent Expert Advisory Committee** of recognized academic experts to advise on the design of and audit, a rigorous, credible, and predictive monitoring program for downstream impacts of Muskrat Falls on the environment and health, using the best available scientific and Inuit knowledge.
4. **Grant Inuit joint decision-making authority over downstream environmental monitoring and management** of the Lower Churchill project.

Health and the right to a healthy environment are of fundamental importance to Inuit. Therefore, I would like to discuss each of these measures directly with the Minister of Environment and Conservation immediately subsequent to their appointment after the November 30, 2015 election and look forward to a reply confirming a meeting soon after this date.

Sincerely,



Darryl Shiwak
Minister, Lands and Natural Resources
E-mail: darryl.shiwak@nunatsiavut.com
Tel: (709) 947-3383 x201
Fax: (709) 947-3543

cc. Aubrey Gover, Deputy Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
Via Fax 709-729-4900