



NUNATSIAVUT
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10 Years of Continued Progress

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NUNATSIAVUT
kavamanga Government

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April 27, 2016

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Re: Lake Melville scientific report and summary for policymakers

Dear Minister,

As you are undoubtedly aware, the Nunatsiavut Government held a news conference on Monday, April 18 to release the Lake Melville Scientific Report, including a chapter authored by Harvard University on the projected increases in methylmercury exposure from the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project. The results were subsequently presented in the communities of North West River, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Mud Lake and Rigolet. The report, as well as a summary for policymakers can be found at www.makemuskratright.com.

Nalcor continues to claim that impacts from Muskrat Falls will not extend past Goose Bay and has therefore excluded Lake Melville from the environmental assessment and subsequent predictive work. Assessments commissioned by Nalcor have been limited by a lack of data and impacts on biological organisms are disconnected from the biogeochemistry of the system. The research conducted by Harvard University focuses on the downstream environment and the mechanisms that make it (and the Inuit population that depend on it) vulnerable to changes in freshwater inputs. This is done through empirical data and post-flooding methylmercury concentrations that are derived mechanistically.

From a human health perspective, the Harvard study revealed wide ranges in Inuit diet and exposure across seasons, communities and demographic groups. Relatively high enrollment was therefore necessary to adequately characterize the Inuit population, including high-end consumers, and possible future increases in methylmercury exposure.

We urge you to fully consider the results of the report, including the Harvard University authored chapter, and take these into account during your future decision-making. In particular, we urge you to make evidence-based decisions while adopting the precautionary principle. We need to be thinking 20-40 years into the future when decisions are being made today

and the most recent scientific epidemiological data points to no threshold for methylmercury exposure that is without measurable effects. Any increase in methylmercury exposure to Inuit, therefore, is a significant impact and it is unethical to unilaterally impose such an increase upon Inuit or require them to modify their culture in order to attempt to avoid this.

A lot is at stake and the Nunatsiavut Government is recommending reasonable solutions that substantially reduce the project's risk to Inuit while simultaneously improving project governance. We are hopeful that the Province will fully adopt each of the solutions put forth in the summary for policymakers and require Nalcor to implement each of them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darryl Shiwak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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