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Subject : CBC - 'We are doing the right thing': Nalcor CEO speaks out after Muskrat Falls protests

## 'We are doing the right thing': Nalcor CEO speaks out after Muskrat Falls protests

Recent protests costs hundreds of millions, months of delays, Marshall says

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Stan Marshall, the CEO of Nalcor Energy, says he was surprised by the Muskrat Falls protests in October, calling it "challenging for all concerned."

Marshall spoke out for the first time on Tuesday since the Muskrat Falls protests in October.

One of the biggest concerns from protesters was the risk of contaminating the Churchill River with methylmercury, which could flow downstream to Lake Melville and affect food supply.

"This is an issue that has risen whenever a reservoir has been built, even for hydro dams or municipal water supplies. So it's a fairly well-known issue," Marshall said.

"[There is] not one documented case that I'm aware of that flooding a reservoir has caused harm due to methylmercury. It's in the environment. It's everywhere."

### Fear of the unknown

Marshall said to the ordinary person the term methylmercury causes great concern, because people are afraid of what they don't understand.

He pointed to the already established Upper Churchill project as support for his statements.

"And when you look at even Labrador...when they built the Upper Churchill. The reservoir in the Upper Churchill is 60-times larger than the little one we're building now. The reservoir at Muskrat is going to be about 1.1 square kms. A pond. The Upper Churchill was 2,400 square kms — the biggest in Canada," Marshall said.

"And so the amount of methylmercury leaching into the water in the Upper Churchill is going to be 60-times greater than what we'll experience here [in Muskrat Falls]. So ask people, in their own experience, is there a documented case where filling the Upper Churchill caused a health problem in the Lake Melville area? That's the reality."

### Delays, costs of protests

While Marshall said the flooding had not started as of Tuesday, it has to begin by the weekend in order to protect the site — and the work that has been done — before the winter.

Nalcor Energy has lost time due to the protests Marshall believes they can't get back. Even though the delays were 11 days on the ground, the ramifications are greater.

"It's like a sprinter who tripped up in a race. The time he spends on the ground is only a fraction of the time lost if he attempts to just pick up and run again. Momentum has been lost. So we've lost two or three months," Marshall said.

"That's one of the tragedies of these things, when you lose that momentum."

The delays to the project are one consequence, the added cost is another.

Though Marshall said they won't know exactly what the protests cost the company for a while, he said it's "hundreds of millions."

### What does he say to protesters?

The protests were a challenging time for everyone, Marshall said, and he was surprised the concerns were raised at the last minute, adding there is "no need to be panicked here."

Marshall said he fully supports [the agreement reached](#) by Premier Dwight Ball and leaders from Nunatsiavut, NunatuKavut and

"We are doing the right thing at Muskrat Falls. I commit to that. What they mean by making Muskrat Falls right, I don't know. I think it means different things to different people. All I can say is we will do what's right," he said.

"Safety is our number one concern for our workers and for the public in general. Everything we're doing, we have that as number one. And I am absolutely convinced that we will do it without any harm to anybody."