



www.innu.ca

☐ Box 186 Natuashish, NL A0P 1A0 T 709 478 8943 F 709 478 8833
☐ Box 119 Sheshatshiu, NL A0P 1M0 T 709 497 8398 F 709 497 8396
☐ Box 1106 Stn C, Goose Bay, NL A0P 1C0 T 709 896 3883 F 709 896 1180

April 24, 2018

The Honourable Eddie Joyce
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
West Block, Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

By Email: EddieJoyce@gov.nl.ca

Dear Minister Joyce:

We are writing with respect to the recommendations made by the Independent Expert Advisory Committee ("IEAC") that you received earlier this week. As you are aware, consensus was not reached by the participants about all the recommendations – and in particular, about what should be done in an effort to avoid an increase of methylmercury in country foods that may be caused by the flooding of the Muskrat Falls reservoir.

The IEAC recommended requiring Nalcor remove vegetation and soil from the Muskrat Falls reservoir prior to flooding. We disagree with that recommendation, and we have provided an opinion detailing why. In brief, it is because we have concerns about how this decision was made, the gaps in the information available to the Independent Experts Committee and the Oversight Committee, and also that the implementation of this recommendation has the potential to cause harm to the local environment and local food sources.

The IEAC was meant to be an independent body that operated on consensus. However, that did not turn out to be the case. Important issues were pushed forward to a vote, rather than this being a truly consensus building exercise. While we can appreciate that everyone was operating under time constraints, we feel that this was used as an excuse to limit transparency and to limit the ability of the participants to have full access to and discussions with the scientists tasked with advising the IEAC. Ultimately, Innu Nation does not think that decisions were made based on scientific expertise and consensus.

Innu Nation has been consistent in calling for a thorough, science-based assessment to ensure we are using the best mitigation, monitoring and management measures, and that we are ensuring minimal impact on Innu people and lands. But, the science behind the IEAC's recommendation to remove vegetation and soil is not conclusive, and we do

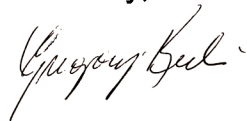
not think it supports taking a significant action that is in and of itself a risky experiment. There was no consensus reached amongst the scientists that advised the IEAC about whether the predictions being made about methylmercury increase in the food supply downstream are reliable, and about whether it is necessary to remove vegetation and soil. Some of the scientists concluded that soil and vegetation removal is risky, saying that it might actually increase methylmercury production.

What happens now is particularly important to Innu Nation because we are dealing with Innu lands. Mista-Shipu – the Churchill River– has always been and remains an important area for Innu land use. We have constitutionally protected rights to harvest in the area and so methylmercury accumulation in the local food supply as a result of the Muskrat Falls Project is a significant concern for our people. It the reason why we have engaged in various discussions and assessment processes respecting the Muskrat Falls Project, including the IEAC process, and why we have an impact-benefits agreement in place.

Undertaking targeted soil and vegetation removal from the reservoir on the scale being recommended has the potential for further impact on Innu lands, people and rights. No environmental assessment of this proposed undertaking has been done, as it was not part of the original project impact review. Such a review has not been completed by the IEAC. Innu Nation takes the position that targeted soil and vegetation removal must be carefully assessed, and this undertaking (if Nalcor is directed to do this by the province) should not be exempted from regulatory and environmental review. And importantly, there must be consultation with and consent from Innu Nation prior to any decision about this recommendation.

As such, we would like to schedule a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Grand Chief Gregory Rich



Deputy Grand Chief Etienne Rich

Cc: Mr. Gregory Nuna, Innu Nation
Mr. Peter Penashue, Innu Nation
Mr. Aubrey Gover, Deputy Minister, Indigenous Affairs