

Independent Expert Advisory Committee

MUSKRAT FALLS PROJECT

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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

The Honourable Jim Carr
Minister of Natural Resources Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

September 22, 2017

Dear Ministers Joyce and Carr,

As Chair of the Independent Expert Advisory Committee (IEAC) for the Muskrat Falls Project, I am pleased to provide this update on the work of the Committee and to deliver our first set of recommendations arising from this work.

As you are aware, the mission of the IEAC is to independently assess the adequacy of mitigation, monitoring and management of the Lower Churchill Project, and to provide recommendations to the Responsible Ministers with respect to the protection of the health of the Indigenous and local population impacted by the Lower Churchill Project, with particular focus on methylmercury in the Churchill River and downstream.

The IEAC has been extremely busy fulfilling its mission since my appointment as Chair in early August. To date we have held nine working meetings and spent countless hours working on analysis of existing information, identification of data gaps, and determination of how to fill these gaps through further research. This work was guided by the primary goal of protecting the health of Indigenous and local populations affected by the project.

At this time, the IEAC wishes to make the following recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment:

Recommendation #1: The IEAC recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken by December 20, 2017, for the removal of soil and vegetation from the future reservoir area.

This feasibility study will inform IEAC discussions about whether soil and further vegetation removal is determined to be an effective and desirable mitigation measure. Such a study should focus on engineering, using the new data on soil types, volumes and depths and should determine how much of

the organic soil layer can be removed safely. It should consider the impact of heavy equipment, the time of year that the work is best conducted, the time frame and storage options. The study results should be available to the IEAC as soon as possible and certainly no later than December 20, 2017.

Recommendation #2: The IEAC recommends that Nalcor implement the changes described in the report entitled "Recommendations on changes to the scope and quality of the Muskrat Falls Aquatic Monitoring Program".

A detailed analysis of the current monitoring program was undertaken by our independent experts, who determined that the program was exceptional when compared to similar programs in Canada. They did, however, recommend some changes to the monitoring program that will enable it to better detect changes as they occur, and hopefully serve as an early warning prior to increases in the amount of methylmercury in the food that people consume. The recommendations also include reductions in the frequency and type of sampling in some areas, providing opportunities for cost savings and efficiency.

Recommendation #3: The IEAC recommends that Nalcor expedite the finalization of their current methylmercury modelling project, and complete the work no later than 15 Feb 2018.

The IEAC was made aware of work, currently underway by Nalcor and its consultants, to expand and improve their modelling of the production and fate of methylmercury. This mechanistic model will include Lake Melville and will be integrated into Nalcor's human health risk assessment. We believe that it is important that the IEAC be able to review the results of this model, and compare the outcomes to other studies dealing with these issues.

Further, the Committee has identified a number of studies that will be commissioned to inform future recommendations. I am very pleased to report that we are getting excellent cooperation from all parties and foresee a very productive and positive future for this extremely important Committee.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kenneth Reimer
Chair, Independent Expert Advisory Committee

Cc: The Honourable Dominic Leblanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health
Abla Hanna, Director, Resource Development Project Operations
Members of the IEAC Oversight Committee

Att: IEC report: "Recommendations on changes to the scope and quality of the Muskrat Falls Aquatic Monitoring Program".