

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSKRAT FALLS INQUIRY FINAL REPORT CONCLUDES NUNATUKAVUT NOT ADEQUATELY CONSULTED; CALLS FOR ACTION

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, March 10, 2020 – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) is pleased with the findings of the final report from the Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Muskrat Falls Project. The report, titled “Muskrat Falls – A Misguided Project,” was released publicly by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador today.

NCC was granted limited standing at the Inquiry and participated fully in the process with integrity and transparency. NCC President Todd Russell testified before the Inquiry on three separate occasions. During his testimony, he described the deeply rooted and longstanding relationship that NunatuKavut Inuit have with the lands and waters of the Churchill River and Lake Melville and the intentional lack of engagement with NCC before and after project sanctioning.

NCC’s participation in the inquiry highlighted how the Province and Nalcor failed to build a relationship of trust and respect with NCC throughout the Muskrat Falls project, and the negative consequences of that failure. This was clearly validated in the final report and accepted as a finding of fact. The report concludes that “...GNL and Nalcor created an environment of mistrust and suspicion by not allowing all of the Indigenous Peoples and other concerned citizens to engage in a meaningful and transparent consultation process. This mistrust and suspicion continues to this day and, in my view, led to protests that caused Project delays and significant cost overruns.”

The report also states that NCC and other Indigenous groups “...were prevented from meaningful participation in the consultation process by inadequate funding and a lack of timely responses by GNL and Nalcor. Given the ongoing concerns of the Indigenous Peoples and other residents of Labrador, I believe that **it is imperative that GNL and Nalcor work toward building trust with these groups.**”

NCC will continue to work with Nalcor and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to build meaningful and respectful relationships. The Indigenous rights of NunatuKavut Inuit are to be respected on any future development happening in NunatuKavut.

.../2

Quote

“On behalf of the NunatuKavut Community Council, I thank Commissioner LeBlanc and his team for undertaking this important work. We have raised, and continue to raise, serious concerns about the impacts and potential effects of the Muskrat Falls project on the environment and on the health and traditional way of life of our people. Our concerns have long been documented, going back nearly two decades. Today, these concerns have been heard and validated. We hope that this is inspiration for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nalcor to build meaningful and respectful relationships with the NunatuKavut Community Council and our people. Another ‘misguided’ project like Muskrat Falls must never happen again.”

-- Todd Russell, President of NCC

Quick Facts

- The Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Muskrat Falls Project was established by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on November 20, 2017. Justice Richard LeBlanc was appointed Commissioner.
- The Commission of Inquiry heard from dozens of witnesses throughout three phases of testimony. The final report has six volumes and contains 76 findings and 17 recommendations.
- NCC prepared a final written submission to the Commission. It can be viewed at <https://www.muskratfallsinquiry.ca/files/NunatuKavut-Community-Council-Inc-Final-Submission.pdf>
- NCC is the representative governing body for approximately 6,000 Inuit of NunatuKavut.
- NunatuKavut means “Our Ancient Land” in Inuttitut.
- In July 2018, NCC entered into talks with the Government of Canada on the recognition of its Indigenous rights and self-determination.

Associated Links

- To learn more about the Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Muskrat Falls Project, please visit www.muskratfallsinquiry.ca. To view the report, visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/nr/muskrat-falls-a-misguided-project/>
- For further information on NCC, please visit www.nunatukavut.ca. Please also join in the conversation at Facebook.com/nunatukavut and Twitter @nunatukavut.

Media Contact

Kelly Broomfield

Director of Communications

T: 709-280-5965; E: communications@nunatukavut.ca