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Subject: Urgent: please protect the health, culture and human rights of Labradorians

Dear Federal and Newfoundland and Labrador leaders,

I write to you with an urgent demand to **protect the health, culture and human rights of Labradorians.** This means you must ensure that the flooding of the reservoir at Muskrat Falls does not go ahead without full clearing of the reservoir.

As you know, Harvard science shows that reservoir flooding will significantly increase methylmercury levels in Lake Melville and Labradorian's exposure to methylmercury for generations. For some individuals, exposures may increase by as much as 1500%. For the Inuit community of Rigolet, over half of the community may exceed the Health Canada methylmercury guideline. (1)

The World Health Organization states that methylmercury can "have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, and on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes." And "Methylmercury exposure in the womb can… adversely affect a baby's growing brain and nervous system." (2)

As Make Muskrat Right - Rigolet wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau, Premier Ball and others on August 16, the impact of this goes well beyond Rigolet and will harm "a local Inuit population of 2,560 (or 1/3 of the Nunatsiavut membership) and an additional 8,000 settler, Innu, NunatuKavut and Labradorians living in the Upper Lake Melville area". (3)

These increases in methylmercury exposures jeopardize the health, culture, and human rights of the NunatuKavut Inuit, Nunatsiavut Inuit, Innu and all people of Labrador. In the words of the people of Rigolet:

"The continuation of the project as is, will violate our basic human rights as outlined in Section 27.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP): "'Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community… and to share in the scientific advancement and its benefits.'"

These concerns have already been shared with you by Amnesty International (4), the Council of Canadians (5), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (6), the Memorial University Students Union (7) and thousands of people across Labrador, Newfoundland, Canada and the world.

Science demonstrates that fully clearing the reservoir area of topsoil, wood, trees, and brush can mitigate these harmful methylmercury increases.

Furthermore, I wish to add my voice to the grave concerns that many Labradorians downstream of the Muskrat Falls project have about the possibility of the collapse of the North Spur. In recent weeks, hundreds of Labradorians have spoken out about their fears that they or their families might "drown in our beds." This fear is in part based on a conclusion, after intensive analysis by professional engineer Jim Gordon, that "the dam design developed for the North Spur is just not acceptable". (8)

It is imperative that the health, culture and human rights of the people of Labrador be your top priority if you attempt to move forward with this project. As such, I demand that you:

- Meet all of the conditions of the Make Muskrat Right Campaign (9)
- Do what is necessary to provide a 100% guarantee that the North Spur is not at risk of collapse. Including convening an international panel of experts as recommended by P. Eng. Jim Gordon
- Only proceed with the flooding of the reservoir when you have the consent of all indigenous peoples of Labrador. This is necessary if the government is to meet its commitment to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (10) and to achieve true reconciliation with indigenous peoples

This is a matter of indigenous rights, human rights and human lives. Please do not take these away from anyone for the sake of a hydro dam.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your location]

(1) http://makemuskratright.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Policymakersreport1.pdf
(2) http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs361/en/
(3) PDF of letter: http://bit.ly/2d3Lou1
(4) Amnesty Canada's petition: http://bit.ly/2dOtGzi
(5) Council of Canadians blog: http://bit.ly/2dTtRGo
(6) Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami statement: http://bit.ly/2dVYoml
(7) http://ntv.ca/mun-students-union-joins-campaign-to-make-muskrat-right/
(8) http://unclegnarley.blogspot.ca/2016/09/north-spur-design-unsafe-concludes.html
(9) http://makemuskratright.com/petition/
(10) http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf