



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
Newfoundland and Labrador

James Dinn, M.H.A.  
District of St. John's Centre

**Independent Churchill River Review Committee**  
[submissions@churchillriverreview.ca](mailto:submissions@churchillriverreview.ca)

February 27, 2026

Dear Panel Members,

A new Churchill Falls Deal that has an escalator clause, develops our enormous hydroelectric potential without causing devastating environmental damage or causing massive debt, and benefits a province with a small population of aging people would be a good outcome. We cannot afford another failure.

I was 10 years old when the first agreement was signed. My oldest granddaughter will be 10 years old if a new deal is signed this year. I do not want her to live with the sense of regret that many of my generation felt about the 1969 deal. We want (I want) the best possible deal for the people of the province. We owe it to them to ensure that no more financial fallout is placed on their shoulders by bad deals and that we instill confidence and optimism so that people want to remain and make it their home.

In response to your call for public input into the Churchill Falls MOU, below is the submission of the Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party which outlines our concerns:

**1. Seek public input once the independent report is released.**

Seeking public input at this time is tantamount to putting the cart before the horse. Seek input once you have done your job and presented your findings.

My former colleague from Labrador West and I attended four days of presentations on complex negotiations, questions, and intense debate and we still had questions we needed answered. For us, the main question was whether the forecasted \$33.8 billion in payments from Hydro-Quebec to CF(L)Co is a set of fixed payments or has an escalator clause built in. Most people of the province did not have the luxury of time to watch the House of Assembly special session.

We demanded an oversight committee to work on behalf of the people of the province. We reached an agreement with the government to have the committee struck. The purpose of the original Independent Oversight Panel (IOP) was to provide independent and objective assessment of the negotiations, to monitor their progress, and ensure that the information provided was independently verifiable and as accurate as the negotiating

team said it was. It was not so much mistrust of the negotiating team as it was a concern that their proximity to negotiations might inherently bias their findings.

The IOP would consult its own experts and provide regular reports as well as a final report that would answer questions we still had following last year's debate in the House of Assembly. At that point we would be able to decide whether to support the deal or not.

The current panel will not deliver a final report until the end of April, yet you are asking people to submit an informed opinion without the necessary information before them. There have been plenty of opinions by self-appointed experts in the public. However, none of them have had access to the information we envisioned an independent panel would have.

## 2. **The independence of the panel.**

We are concerned about the independence of the current panel. From the announcement of the CF MOU partisan politics was present with the splashy announcement that had the hallmarks of an election campaign. The people of the province are still paying off a \$13 Billion hydro megaproject which has exacerbated the health care and affordability crisis. Our citizens are making decisions between medication, heat, and food. In 2030 rate mitigation will end and electricity rates will increase even more annually.

For the six years prior to the announcement, we have had to endure the relentless sniping between Liberals and PCs over Muskrat Falls.

The NL NDP proposed an independent oversight panel. Along with the independent MHAs, we negotiated a review process to keep partisan, anti-Quebec, and Newfoundland nationalist politics out of the discussion and judge the MOU on its economic merits. The PC Official Opposition were invited but chose not to participate in shaping the original IOP. When they disbanded the IOP and stuck the current Panel, we asked to have input into shaping it and were ignored. There has been little transparency.

The chair of the current review committee is Chris Huskilson, the former CEO of Emera who helped negotiate the Maritime Link as part of the Muskrat Falls debacle. Considering Mr. Huskilson's vested interests in the Atlantic energy market, we are uncertain about how truly independent he can be in assessing a power deal involving Newfoundland and Labrador.

## 3. **Future hydroelectricity power needs of the province.**

Because of the delays, the intrusion of partisan politics, and the political situation in Quebec, many believe that the current MOU is essentially dead. Labrador needs power if it is to grow and if the mining industry is to survive. In all public discussion on the MOU, the impact on Labrador, and by extension the province as a whole, is seldom raised.

In the absence of a deal, what is the plan to get energy to Labrador West and Happy Valley-Goose Bay so they do not become casualties?

**4. The public's right to know.**

How exactly will the panel inform the public once the independent review is complete? The Premier has committed to holding a referendum once the review has been completed. Given the complexity of the deal, how will the review committee inform the people of the province so that they can make an informed choice. We wrote the Premier with concerns about a referendum. We have included that letter, and the others we have written, with our submission.

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In conclusion, we hope the final report will bring clarity to the Churchill Falls MOU and set a path forward to a sustained future for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Dinn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Dinn, MHA  
St. John's Centre  
Leader, NL NDP