

NDP Caucus News

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“It’s like Déjà Vu”: Dinn Reacts to Churchill Falls Agreement and Lack of Transparency

Following the announcement of a renewed Churchill Falls MOU, NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John’s Centre) says he’s left with more questions than answers, citing the lack of transparency from the PC government and no independent oversight on the details of the agreement.

“The PCs refused to give opposition members a briefing on the deal prior to the announcement, and we weren’t given any resources, any key documents, to back up what they announced. We learned from Quebec media what our government was doing, and that’s unacceptable,” said Dinn. “In fact, I found the new agreement by going to the Hydro Quebec website – not our own. It’s evident the Conservatives see transparency as a buzzword, not a practice.

“After attending the briefing, I was left with more questions. Why is there a discrepancy in numbers coming from Quebec and from our province – which the oversight team could not explain when asked. We are supposed to be in partnership with Quebec, so why would we have different figures? This certainly can’t be clear to the public if it’s not clear to our own team,” said Dinn. “It is clear that without the intervention of Prime Minister Carney a new deal would not have been reached.

“We are about to embark on a fifty-year decision that will impact our lives, the lives of our children and grandchildren. From the get-go, I always said that an independent review with expert oversight was needed to review the Churchill Falls MOU given the reality of our situation, the value of our resources, and the need for growth.

“Just last May, the Premier went back on his promise that the Independent Review Committee (IRC) he set up after the election would be available to answer questions about their report. Government also refused to tell the public where the IRC got their information from. If government is basing its decision on the work in that report, the public has the right to know where that work came from.

“Let’s be clear: this deal is aspirational. It relies on a myriad of external factors, including the Quebec election this fall, for things to move forward as the government has outlined,” Dinn continued. “We learned that the deadline in the MOU is written as March 31, 2027. Premier Wakeham broke his election promise he made to the people of this province. There would have been time to hold a referendum if he truly believed in the process. The premier said he doesn’t believe in timelines. It is clear that this deal, and the future of our resource, remains uncertain.

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“Holding a special debate in the House of Assembly and having an independent oversight committee on the MOU and the work after the deal is signed are imperative to understanding the enormity of this decision and its impact on the future of the province.”

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