

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

August 20, 2026

Dinn Questions Timing of Cabinet Shuffle; Concerns About Continuity

NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) is questioning the timing around Premier Wakeham's cabinet shuffle, following the announcement of the new Churchill Falls agreement, and expresses concerns of lack of continuity in the work done in portfolios following the shuffle.

Dinn says the timing around this major change in cabinet does not inspire confidence, especially as the PCs have been governing for less than 10 months. He says this being an effective change remains to be seen, but it does not inspire much confidence.

"Earlier this week, Premier Wakeham stood in front of media to announce a new "historic" agreement for Churchill Falls. It's interesting the government is now using that as an excuse for these shuffles, saying it will benefit the deal. I look at key portfolios such as the Department of Labour and the Department for Municipalities being put with ministers with already overwhelming commitments," said Dinn. "You would think that something as important as these portfolios, especially in terms of this deal, would be put somewhere a minister can dedicate their full attention to it. I have to question if decisions were made to focus less on these areas and to push things through."

Prior to the shuffle, both NDP MHAs have been meeting and working with Ministers, pushing to improve outcomes across many departments. Dinn fears that now that many of these have changed, there will be a lack of continuity and a loss of time and good work towards solutions for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

"I am certainly afraid of good work being lost in this change," said Dinn. "Both myself and MHA O'Leary have been meeting with many ministers and continuing dialogue to help ensure change to benefit the people of the province. We met with the former Minister of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change about their 10 year Climate Action Plan. We have been working on this for a while – does that work now get lost? Will this impact the plans for residents at Horizons at 106? I have had good rapport with the former minister of housing. This is not about the new ministers abilities, but it's about that continuity. Have we wasted precious time and work with this shuffle?"

"Or will this be like the previous administration, shuffling so that ministers can use the limited time with a recently acquired portfolio as an excuse to not answer questions and be accountable to the public? That's what we wait to see."

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