
News Release

For Immediate Release

Office of the MP for Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte

MP Byrne on Gros Morne transmission line: Just say 'no'

Rocky Harbour, NL (February 18, 2009) - The Liberal Member of Parliament for Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte will be filing a formal letter of concern to the environmental panel considering the island routing of the Lower Churchill Falls hydroelectric development and the proposal to route the transmission line through Gros Morne National Park

Nalcor Energy, the provincial crown corporation that is responsible for energy production and transmission on behalf of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, has filed applications for the environmental review of their proposed plan to route the hydro lines for the Lower Churchill project through Gros Morne National Park.

Byrne reported that Nalcor began consultations with Parks Canada officials only after the proposal was filed and that consultations with local area residents and businesses directly affected by the extremely high voltage lines running through the area has not yet occurred.

“In 1970, the island transmission route for the Lower Churchill power connection to the island portion of the province was surveyed and cut on the opposite side of the peninsula to the park. They were cut along the eastern side of the Great Northern Peninsula, not the western side”, Byrne said. “In fact, because tree regeneration is so slow throughout the peninsula, those survey lines are still very visible and intact to this day, thirty five years later. To install 175 foot towers for 150 kilometres through Gros Morne National Park and clear 100 metres of trees below them would create a serious environmental degradation to the area, would effectively destroy the aesthetic beauty of the entire park and would cost millions in lost revenue to local businesses.”

Byrne said that while it may be less expensive to the provincial government to put it through the park, their figuring probably doesn't consider the loss of revenue to local businesses, the compensation that the provincial government would have to pay to every affected resident and business and the black eye our entire province's tourism industry would pay in bad publicity.

“All of the provincial government's tourism ads on television and in print media being run by the provincial department of tourism feature Gros Morne National Park as the centre piece of those ads”, Byrne said. “Picture each and everyone of those ads now with a 150 foot steel transmission line running through them and ask yourself if it's worth it when the original route behind the park is still in place and able to be used in a moments notice.”

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