



News Release

- Late Daniel Ashini, former Grand Chief of the Innu Nation

FIFTY YEARS PAST DUE

INNU NATION OF LABRADOR FILES \$4 BILLION CLAIM AGAINST HYDRO-QUÉBEC FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCHILL FALLS PROJECT.

Tuesday, October 6, 2020 St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador – The Innu Nation of Labrador announced today that it has filed a \$4 billion claim against Hydro-Québec in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador as compensation for the illegal taking of their land in Labrador in 1969 to build the Churchill Falls hydro-electric project. This project was built on land that forms part of the land claim of the Innu Nation that is being negotiated with Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada.

“Over 50 years ago, Hydro-Québec and the provincial utility in Newfoundland and Labrador now called Nalcor Energy, through the Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation, stole our land and flooded it in order to take advantage of the enormous hydro potential of the Churchill Falls,” stated Grand Chief Etienne Rich. “This project was undertaken without consulting us and without our consent.”

“For decades,” continued the Grand Chief, “we ha:.”



Until 2011, the Innu had never been compensated for these damages. In 2011, with the signing of the Upper Churchill Redress Agreement, Nalcor Energy agreed to provide some compensation for the damages caused by the Churchill Falls project.

“While Hydro-Québec has made tens of billions of dollars from taking the power from Churchill Falls and selling it to the US, it has repeatedly refused to engage in dialogue and to address this travesty,” asserted Deputy Grand Chief MaryAnn Nui.

The Innu claim flies in the face of Hydro-Québec’s positioning as a socially and environmentally responsible crown corporation. For example, Hydro-Québec suggests that it strives “to develop sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with indigenous communities and nations, based on respect for values and cultures. Communities work with us from the initial stages of a project and, together, we make sure that the facilities remain socially acceptable throughout their service lives.”¹

The Innu know that the flooded reservoir lands will never be restored. They cannot get the land back. As a result, they are asking for a fair share of the tremendous profits being made by Hydro-Québec from the destruction of their lands.

“What has been lost is priceless,” explained Nancy Kleer of Olthuis, Kleer, Townshend LLP which represents the Innu Nation. “In this case, there is no going back to fix what was lost. The only measure of justice left that the courts can give is a share of Hydro-Québec’s profits. Some have estimated that Hydro-Québec has already made up to \$80 billion from Churchill Falls – and stands to make up to \$150 billion by the end of the power
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