

Government unprepared for Lower Churchill power: Jones

Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones is accusing the Progressive Conservative government of being unable to find a route for power from the proposed Lower Churchill Development.

In September, natural resources minister Kathy Dunderdale downplayed the provincial government's missed opportunity to bid on transmission capacity through New Brunswick when requests for proposals were issued in 2008, Ms. Jones said.

Ms. Dunderdale stated at the time that she was unconcerned the province failed to submit a bid and it was not a missed opportunity for the Lower Churchill development, she added.

"Government did not complete its due diligence on transmission options for Lower Churchill power and it is their fault that we are in this situation today," Ms. Jones said, citing Hydro Quebec's having purchased all excess capacity on the New Brunswick grid.

"This is a continuous cycle of this government, when they haven't done their homework, they throw their hands up in the air and find someone else to blame. If government participated in the request for proposal process in 2008, we would be in a better position today with more transmission options available."

She said Premier Danny Williams has approached the situation with Lower Churchill haphazardly.

"He was willing to put transmission lines through Gros Morne National Park, but recently took that option off the table saying he was only kidding," Ms. Jones said.

"It appears the premier is unprepared to deal with the real circumstances facing the transmission of power from the Lower Churchill. This is not the approach of someone who is serious about working with other provinces as opposed to telling them how to do their business. If the premier was serious about this development, we would see more action and less political rhetoric."