

# Air ambulance report a farce: Libs

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*Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones says the report used to justify the transfer of an air ambulance from St. Anthony is a joke. (CBC)*

Newfoundland and Labrador's Opposition Liberals say newly obtained documents prove a consultant's report on moving a provincial air ambulance was a sham.

In the legislature Wednesday, Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones said documents obtained through briefing notes showed that officials with the provincial medical transportation program and Labrador-Grenfell Health met last August, and wound up discussing the possible move of an air ambulance to Labrador.

In that meeting, Eastern Health official Corey Banks laid out recommendations on how he would improve response times, including moving the air ambulance to Labrador.

Jones said notes from that meeting are suspiciously similar to a subsequent report by consultant Wes Drodge. The government used that report in March to justify a decision that outraged Northern Peninsula residents.

"I ask the minister today to confirm that, on that day, the decision was made to move the air ambulance from St. Anthony to Goose Bay seven months before Wes Drodge's report was ever received by your government," Jones said in the house of assembly.

Health Minister Jerome Kennedy flatly rejected the suggestion. "There was certainly no decision made," he said.

"All it amounts to is independent confirmation of Mr. Drodge's report and the confirmation that this government has made the right decision," Kennedy said.

The Liberals went further, and suggested the August notes were enough to prompt the resignation of Tory cabinet minister Trevor Taylor last September.

As well, Marshall Dean, the Liberal member for The Straits-White Bay North, said seven of the eight recommendations in Drodge's report come directly from an earlier report by Banks.

"It's obvious that Drodge did nothing only copy or paste government's own information," Dean said later.

A citizens' group has been trying to halt the transfer of the St. Anthony air ambulance, but on Monday lost a bid for a court injunction.

Kennedy said this week government now would proceed with the move.