

## **Oil spill questions continue to flow**

### **Minister says Placentia Bay under Transport Canada's juris- diction**

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THE TELEGRAM*

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Issues around oil spills continued to gush from both opposition parties in the House of Assembly Tuesday.

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones concentrated her questioning on a recent news release from Placentia Mayor Bill Hogan.

In the release, Hogan lashes out at both the provincial legislature and the House of Commons in Ottawa.

"It is most disappointing that neither legislative body is recognizing that the greatest risk of oil spill and the most damaging impact would be in Placentia Bay," Hogan said in his release.

In the House of Assembly Tuesday, Jones put her questions to Environment Minister Charlene Johnson.

[\(To page No A3\)](#)

## Booms on loan to Gulf not a concern, says minister

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[\(From page No A1\)](#)

— Photo by Joe Gibbons/The Telegram



Environment Minister Charlene Johnson talks to reporters Tuesday about concerns raised in the House regarding potential oil spills in the province and the loaning of oil booms to the Gulf of Mexico.

“According to comments made by the mayor of Placentia there is no emergency management plan in place to address a spill in Placentia Bay, and I ask her today, why hasn’t government implemented such a plan?” asked Jones.

But Johnson said while she is concerned about a possible spill, Placentia Bay is under the jurisdiction of Transport Canada.

The Liberal leader continued to press Johnson with a number of related questions.

“Mr. Speaker, in 2007, and again in

2010, Transport Canada performed an oil spill risk assessment for the south coast of Newfoundland. It estimated that a spill in the range of 10,000 barrels will likely occur within the next 30 years,” Jones said.

She then asked Johnson what’s been done to address the “alarming findings” of those studies.



Lorraine Michael

Johnson repeatedly said in response to questions Transport Canada is responsible for Placentia Bay. When it was NDP Leader Lorraine Michael’s turn to ask questions, she also challenged Johnson.

Michael said reports have stated half the province’s oil booms — used to contain spills — have been shipped to Louisiana to help with the clean up there.

“I am asking the minister of Environment and Conservation, what is her concern about the implication of half of our boom capacity being deployed to the Gulf of Mexico?” Michael asked.

Johnson said the booms are owned by the Canadian Coast Guard and recommended Michael ask it.

But after question period Johnson appeared to have more information when reporters asked the question again.

“ That certainly falls within the jurisdiction with the coast guard to do so, but they have assured us as a government (and) there’s requirements in place they can only do that provided there’s enough capacity left behind to deal with a spill here, should there be a spill,” Johnson said.

The minister compared the loan of the booms to the province lending water bombers to another jurisdiction when a major forest fire occurs.

Reporters then asked Johnson how confident she is the necessary resources are in the province to clean up a spill if one occurred.

“ When it comes to oil spill response time and all the policies and procedures in place, Canada is one of the leaders in the (world) when it comes to this and a lot of our models are followed in the North Sea and Norway and so on,” she said.