

Diesel electricity must be eliminated, Liberal leader says

Jones believes PC plan to complement diesel generators doesn't go far enough

The provincial Liberal leader is calling for the province to take Labrador communities off diesel-powered generators entirely, after the Williams government announced Monday it will look for alternative energy sources to complement diesel in coastal communities.

The government's plan was announced in Happy Valley-Goose Bay by Natural Resources Minister Kathy Dunderdale and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Patty Pottle, and it included a \$500,000 alternative energy study and an energy efficiency community pilot project.

Both projects will be administered by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and should be completed by the end of 2009.

The energy study, to be done in Cartwright, Charlottetown, Hopedale, Makkovik, Mary's Harbour, Nain and Port Hope Simpson, will look at energy sources that include solar power, wind power, or hydro electricity, to be used in addition to diesel electricity generators.

But Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones said the government should be working to get isolated communities off diesel all together.

"This study may have some benefit in identifying the problems that exist with diesel generation on the coast of Labrador, but the people of our region want diesel replaced, not complemented," said Jones in a news release. "Burning diesel to generate electricity is damaging to the environment, and very costly. Our people and businesses pay the highest rates in the province for heat and electricity."

She said one option may be small hydro-electricity developments which could provide electricity to the coast via transmission lines.

Meanwhile, in addition to the study, Hydro will also conduct a pilot

project to explore conservation and efficiency opportunities in two coastal Labrador communities.

Energy reviews will be conducted with residents and commercial customers to identify opportunities for improvements in energy efficiency. Hydro will be contacting coastal Labrador communities over the next few days to invite them to apply to be part of this pilot project.