August 1, 2013

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act [Our File #: PRE-10-2013 ]

On June 4, 2013 the Premier’s Office received your request for access to the following records:

In 2011, the federal government announced the closure of the Coast guard MRSC in St. John’s. The NL government objected and offered to cost share the operating expenses to keep it open. Request copies of reports, reviews, opinions, analyses, SAR incidents, evidence, studies and any correspondence that NL government used or obtained to justify proposed expenditure and to substantiate their opinion that MRSC St. John’s provided a better level of service than the service that would be provided by JRCC Halifax.

On July 3, 2013 you were advised that the 30 day time limit for responding to your request had been extended for an additional 30 days in accordance with Section 16.(1)(d) as more time was needed to consult with a third party.

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to these records has been granted in part, as attached.

Access to information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exceptions to disclosure, as specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act):

30. (1) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant where the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy.

Please note that while you have requested information that is specific to the offer of cost sharing the operating expenses associated with keeping the Coast Guard MRSC in St. John’s open, there are no records specifically related to that issue.
As required by subsection 7(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is excepted from disclosure as well as information that is not responsive to your request and have provided you with as much information as possible.

Section 43 of the Act provides that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review this partial refusal of access or you may appeal the refusal to the Supreme Court Trial Division. A request to the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be made in writing within 60 days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.

The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
34 Pippy Place
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John’s, NL. A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

In the event that you choose to appeal to the Trial Division, you must do so within 30 days of the date of this letter. Section 60 of the Act sets out the process to be followed when filing such an appeal.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Office of Public Engagement's website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at (709) 729-3570 or deniseking@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Denise King
Director of Policy
Taylor, Brian W.

From: Marshall Q.C., Hon. Thomas
Sent: June 12, 2011 4:37 PM
To: Hedderson, Tom; 'Jackman, Jennifer A.'; Dunderdale, Kathy; Taylor, Brian W.; Denine, Dave
Subject: FW: Search & Rescue

Tom,

The impending move of the SAR Coordination Center to Halifax appears to be a done deal. Most unfortunate and illogical from our perspective. But that is not the fight. NL has the majority of SAR incidents in Atlantic Canada. Given the need for SAR to the oil & gas industry, I would suggest the Governments fight should be to have the new SAR fixed-wing aircraft based out of Newfoundland and not Greenwood, Nova Scotia.

Right now the SAR helicopters are dispatched out of Gander but they must wait for CAP from Greenwood before they can go over water. (They require air cover.) Greenwood is about 1.5 flying hours from Gander/St John's and before they can go on to Hibernia they must refuel. If you are in a boat in the Atlantic or involved in some other emergency that is far too long to wait for a rescue.

Food for thought.
Taylor, Brian W.

From: Power, Glenda
Sent: March 5, 2012 10:29 AM
To: Taylor, Brian W.
Subject: as requested

Just as Newfoundland and Labrador has played a strategic role in national and international defence in times past, we can play a strategic role in times to come. We urge the Government of Canada to take full advantage of our strengths by investing in defence infrastructure and initiatives at key centres such as 5 Wing Goose Bay, 9 Wing Gander and Canadian Forces Station St. John’s on our country’s easternmost flank.

Canada has a responsibility, not only to ensure the security of our nation’s coasts, but also to ensure the safety of those who travel them. Whether it is fishers sailing the seas in boats or rig workers skimming the seas in helicopters, people are not unjustified in expecting the Government of Canada to provide the resources to enable Coast Guard and Search and Rescue personnel to respond promptly and effectively to emergencies.
Thank you, Glenda. I believe the draft release clearly conveys the intent of the proposed amendments.

Jeff

Sent Via BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----  
From: Power, Glenda  
To: Paddock, Jeff; Taylor, Brian W.  
Subject: Re: For review

Municipal Affairs  
March 7, 2012

House of Assembly Passes Resolution Regarding Search and Rescue

Amendments presented today in the House of Assembly strengthened a private member's resolution regarding search and rescue capabilities which was debated and passed by members of the legislature.

"The commitment of our government to ensuring a strong capacity for search and rescue in Newfoundland and Labrador is unwavering," said the Honourable Kevin O'Brien, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services. "We live in a harsh environment and have experienced far too many tragedies both on land and at sea. The amendments put forth today include a call for the Federal Government to work with our government in implementing any recommendations that result from a review of search and rescue operational and deployment protocols that will strengthen the provision of services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador."

The amended resolution also calls upon the Federal Government to consider establishing a permanent search and rescue capability at 5 Wing Goose Bay and to rescind the closure of the Maritime Rescue Sub-centre in St. John's.

"Our government has clearly expressed very serious concerns about the decision to close the Maritime Rescue Sub-centre," said Minister O'Brien. "We strongly disagree with the position of the Federal Government that safety will not be impacted by this decision. I am pleased that Members of the House of Assembly joined with us today in further expressing our concern. We all have the same goal - to ensure the best provision of service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador."

Media contacts:  
Cheryl Gullage  
Public Relations Specialist  
Fire and Emergency Services - Newfoundland and Labrador 709-729-0857, 631-9962  
cherylgullage@gov.nl.ca

Sent Via BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----  
From: Paddock, Jeff  
To: Power, Glenda
Sent Via BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----  
From: Power, Glenda  
To: Taylor, Brian W.; Paddock, Jeff  
Subject: For review

Any comments?  
G

Sent Via BlackBerry
Taylor, Brian W.

From: Power, Glenda
Sent: March 7, 2012 5:02 PM
To: Taylor, Brian W.
Resolution As Amended

1) WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador is a vast land mass with a long coastline and huge areas of open ocean. Labrador alone has approximately 300,000 square kilometres with a coastline of almost 8,000km and many isolated communities, while the island portion has nearly 10,000km of coastline and a surface area of over 110,000 square kilometres;

2) AND WHEREAS the lifestyle of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for work and for recreation is connected to the land and the sea;

3) AND WHEREAS we have seen many tragedies and many lives lost due to distress at sea and on land, most recently the death of 14 year old Burton Winters of Makkovik Labrador;

4) AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced the closure of the Maritime Search and Rescue Sub Centre located in St. John's thus impairing efficient and timely coordination of search and rescue services within the province;

1) THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House, in light of the Burton Winters tragedy, calls upon the federal government to work with the provincial government in implementing any recommendations of a review of search and rescue operational and deployment protocols that will strengthen the provision of services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador;

2) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this House calls upon the federal government to consider establishing a permanent search and rescue capability at 5 Wing Goose Bay; and

3) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this House calls on the Government of Canada to rescind the closure of the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre located in St. John's, NL.
February 14, 2012

Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

On behalf of the residents and Councillors of the Town of Bay Roberts, I write to you, personally, to express our concerns with regard to what is happening to Search & Rescue in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Recently, a number of events have occurred that makes Council and residents of our community, outwardly express anxiety about the safety of residents, visitors, and workers in the province along with people who may travel our shores. These events include:

1) The tragedy of Cougar Flight 491 in March of 2009 which, unfortunately, crashed into the ocean. Reports indicate that the response was delayed when all available Military Search & Rescue helicopters were off Nova Scotia on a training exercise.

2) The announcement by your government to close the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's in June of this year. It should be noted that this Centre has been in operation since 1977 and deals with approximately 500 incidents on a yearly basis.

3) The response to the tragedy revolving around Burton Winters from Makkovik, Labrador. The failure to respond to the report of a lost boy in the Labrador winter, with all of the Cormorant helicopters capabilities, for 48 hours is totally unacceptable. The initial response(s) to this tragedy is also questionable. First, personnel claimed that the weather had grounded military aircraft preventing their participation in the search. Shortly afterwards, people were told that there was no helicopters available, partly due to a need to be able to respond to another call if it may had arisen.

4) The use of a Cormorant helicopter to pick up Minister Peter MacKay, in July 2011, from a Gander Fishing Lodge, to transport him to Gander International Airport, begs one to question the priorities of Search & Rescue.
Prime Minister – a review of Search & Rescue capabilities, procedures and priorities in this province is needed – now! Such a review would indeed not only benefit the province of Newfoundland & Labrador but indeed, the entire country of Canada.

I appreciate your time and timely response to this important concern.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Phil Wood
Mayor

Cc: Hon. Peter MacKay – Minister of National Defense
    Hon. Peter Penashue – Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
    Mr. Scott Andrews – MP District of Avalon
    Hon. Kathy Dunderdale – Premier - NL
    Mr. Glen Littlejohn – MHA District of Port De Grave
    Mr. Churence Rodgers – President – MNL
MAY 10 2012

His Worship Mayor Philip Wood
Town of Bay Roberts
P.O. Box 114
Bay Roberts, Newfoundland and Labrador
A0A 1G0

Dear Mayor Wood:

This is in response to your correspondence of February 14, 2012, addressed to the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, regarding the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador. I welcome the opportunity to respond, and I regret the delay in responding.

I would like to express my condolences on the recent tragedy of Mr. Burton Winters. This story has touched Canadians across the country, and my thoughts are with the community of Makkovik, Labrador, during this difficult time.

I would also like to convey my sympathies for the families of those lost in Cougar Flight 491. The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) worked diligently throughout the duration of the Cougar Flight 491 search operation, providing critical support to the Canadian Forces, who are responsible for tasking aircraft and coordinating responses to aeronautical search and rescue incidents.

The Canadian Search and Rescue system comprises hundreds of federal, provincial and local partner organizations, each with their own distinct mandates, responsibilities and resources to contribute to search and rescue. CCG’s mandated responsibility and area of expertise is maritime search and rescue. Ground search and rescue is conducted under the jurisdiction of the individual provinces and territories, and is delegated to various emergency response organizations for operational response.

As you are aware, search and rescue coordination services of the Marine Rescue Sub-Centres in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, Quebec are being consolidated into the existing Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (JRCCs) in Trenton, Ontario, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.
An implementation team, made up of officials from both CCG and the Department of National Defence, continues to work to implement the consolidation decision and ensure a successful transition. The maritime search and rescue coordination responsibilities of the St. John's Marine Rescue Sub-Centre were successfully assumed by the JRCC in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as planned, on April 25, 2012. Canadians continue to receive the same level of service, and measures are being taken to ensure that local knowledge is retained and that coordinators in the JRCCs possess the appropriate language profiles.

I would like to reaffirm the CCG’s commitment toward ensuring maritime safety in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as in the rest of Canada. Maritime safety is, and will continue to be, the number one priority of the CCG, and we recognize the critical importance of these safety services to Canadians.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Ashfield

cc.: The Honourable Peter MacKay, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
     The Honourable Peter Penashue, P.C., M.P.
     Mr. Scott Andrews, M.P.
     The Honourable Kathy Dunderdale, M.H.A.
     Mr. Glenn Littlejohn, M.H.A.
June 13, 2011

COPY

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Building
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

The purpose of this letter is to convey to you my grave concern regarding the planned closure of the Canadian Coast Guard Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre located in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.

You are, by now, no doubt aware that this centre is responsible for 2,500,000 square kilometers of ocean and some 29,000 kilometres of coastline and that it responds to a multiplicity of marine user groups operating in one of the world’s most challenging operating environments. This centre also handles the highest proportion of distress incidents in Canada. Since 1979, the fishing industry has experienced 193 at-sea fatalities, while the offshore oil and gas sector has lost 110 workers in at-sea fatalities. Closing this centre and removing twelve experienced mariners, who have an intimate knowledge of the Newfoundland and Labrador marine environment, understandably, causes concerns about response times and, hence, the safety of those reliant on this vital service. Centralizing services in Halifax, with different and fewer staff, is seen to be a step backwards and a diminishment of service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who derive their living from the harsh North Atlantic.

My Government finds the rationale for this decision incomprehensible. Simply put, the highest number of safety incidents, in combination with the large geographical area and harsh environmental conditions, make a compelling argument for expanding the St. John’s centre, not closing it. Prime Minister, you should also be aware that the reduction in search and rescue capabilities in the North Atlantic Ocean is contrary to the spirit and intent of the recent findings of the Offshore Helicopter Safety Inquiry, which was established by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board to determine and recommend improvements to the safety regime for offshore workers in the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area. It appears that this decision was made without a full appreciation of the important functions performed by these workers and the distress that a reduction of this service would cause among seafarers, their families and communities.
I respectfully request the decision be reversed to allay the serious and legitimate concerns that it holds for all Newfoundlanders and Labradors and to preserve the federal government's capacity in this critical area of federal responsibility.

Yours sincerely,

KATHY DUNDERDALE
Premier

cc The Honourable Peter Penashue
    The Honourable Clyde Jackman
    The Honourable David Denine
June 30, 2011

Dear Premier:

Thank you for your letter of June 13, 2011 and your subsequent call on June 22, 2011, expressing your concerns regarding the planned closure of the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre located in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Following the Strategic Review process at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, it was determined that consolidation of the sub-centres would have no impact on search and rescue coordination, response and coordination capabilities and response times. The Government of Canada expects that consolidation will improve safety efforts by aligning these sub-centres and clarifying levels of responsibilities. Consolidation will not affect other Coast Guard services or operations. There will also continue to be local responders in the region, who provide valuable knowledge of the area to Search and Rescue Coordinators.

Marine safety services are a priority for the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada understands the critical role played by the Canadian Coast Guard in ensuring the safety of seafarers in the Atlantic Region.

I am forwarding a copy of our exchange of correspondence to the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, and the Honourable Peter Penashue, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada, for their information.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

The Honourable Kathy Dunderdale
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
A1B 4J6
JAN 16 2012

Honourable Keith Ashfield
Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E6

Dear Minister Ashfield:

Non-Responsive
While I understand your department has been directed to reduce its current budget, I believe these are important initiatives which should be fully maintained. We were very disappointed with the decision to close the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's. We do not believe the cost savings associated with this decision justifies the closing of a valuable office dedicated to assisting with search and rescue in this province. As your department seeks to meet this obligation, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss any changes to current programs and services which might impact this province prior to a final decision being taken.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

DARIN T. KING, PhD
M.H.A., District of Grand Bank
Minister

c. Honourable Kathy Dunderdale, Premier

Honourable Peter Penashue
Minister responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador

Honourable Nick McGrath
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
JAN 30 2012

The Honourable Darin T. King, M.H.A., Ph.D
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
A1B 4J6

Dear Minister:

Thank you for your correspondence of January 16, 2012, concerning Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) program delivery in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Non-Responsive
Regarding the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's, new communications technologies allow for the consolidation of search and rescue coordination services in St. John's and Quebec into existing Joint Rescue Coordination Centres. By consolidating these services, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) continues to provide the same level of bilingual, on-the-ground Search and Rescue operations – more efficiently and effectively.

I would like to reaffirm the CCG's commitment toward ensuring maritime safety in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as in the rest of Canada. Maritime safety is, and will continue to be, the number one priority of the CCG, and we recognize the critical importance of these safety services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and all Canadians.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Ashfield

Cc: The Honourable Peter Penashue, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Kathy Dunderdale, M.H.A.
The Honourable Nick McGrath, M.H.A.