



Statement from Mayor and Council: Water Bomber Capacity in Labrador West

Over the past week, Labrador City has been directly impacted by a significant wildfire event that has required the activation of our Emergency Operations Centre, the declaration of a State of Emergency, evacuation measures, structure protection efforts, and a sustained multi-agency response.

First and foremost, Mayor and Council want to acknowledge the tremendous work of Forestry officials, the Incident Management Team, water bomber and helicopter crews, ground firefighters, the Labrador City Fire Department, RNC, Ground Search and Rescue, PEOC, Red Cross, IOC, Town of Wabush Fire Department and all partners involved in this response.

The resources that were positioned in Labrador West during this incident made a meaningful difference. Having air assets, Forestry personnel, ground crews, and structure protection resources available in the region allowed for a faster and stronger response at a critical time.

This event has also reinforced a point that Labrador City Council has been raising directly with provincial representatives: **Labrador West needs dedicated seasonal water bomber capacity stationed in the region.**

The Mayor and CAO met with Minister Pleaman Forsey during his visit to Labrador West alongside Wabush Mayor and Town Manager to discuss the importance of having this capacity in the region. Later, meeting with the MHA, Mayor and Council were clear that the current wildfire risk facing Labrador West requires a serious discussion about the long-term positioning of wildfire suppression resources in this region.

Labrador West is surrounded by forest, located a significant distance from other major response centres, and is home to critical infrastructure, mining operations, transportation routes, power assets, industrial activity, and residential neighbourhoods that are all vulnerable when wildfire conditions escalate.

When a wildfire starts near our community, response time matters. The ability to launch quickly from Labrador West can make the difference between a fire being contained early and a fire becoming a much larger regional emergency.

This is not about taking resources away from other parts of Labrador or the Province. It is about ensuring that wildfire response planning reflects the geography, risk profile, and economic importance of Labrador West.

Mayor and Council believe that a dedicated water bomber stationed in Labrador West during wildfire season must be part of the Province's future emergency preparedness planning.

We also recognize that this broader conversation must include the Town of Wabush, neighbouring communities, industry partners, emergency responders, and the Province. Wildfire does not respect municipal boundaries, and regional preparedness must reflect that reality.

As this current fire response continues, our immediate focus remains public safety and supporting Forestry and emergency response partners. However, once the immediate risk has passed, Labrador City Council will continue to advocate strongly for:

- A dedicated seasonal water bomber presence in Labrador West;
- Increased wildfire suppression capacity in the region;
- Additional wildfire equipment and structure protection resources;
- Support for FireSmart and wildfire resilience planning;
- A regional approach to emergency preparedness across Labrador West.

This past week has shown what is possible when the right resources are in the right place at the right time. Our goal is to ensure that Labrador West is never left waiting when every minute matters.

Mayor Jordan Brown,
Labrador City

