

Judge Tosses Recusal Call From Hydrogen Protesters

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A **Newfoundland & Labrador** judge says he's been to **John Risley's** fishing lodge, but never with Risley, rejecting a call by protesters to recuse himself from a legal battle over Risley's proposed wind and hydrogen project.~





John Risley
(Andrea Gunn)

World Energy GH2, the aspiring wind and hydrogen producer where Risley is chair, won an injunction last year against a group of protesters (see 2023-05-05).

Six of the protesters have continued a legal battle to overturn the injunction, often challenging the authority of Justice **George Murphy**. They filed a legal application requesting Murphy recuse himself and that the court subvert its authority in favour of an alleged Indigenous tribunal.

In a decision released Thursday by the **Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador**, Murphy said he was under no obligation to defend himself against rumours and speculation, but would clear the air nonetheless.

He said he was an avid fly fisherman and had been to many lodges in

Labrador, including **Rifflin' Hitch**, owned by the wealthy **Nova Scotia** entrepreneur.

"I explained that the last time I was there was in 2007, approximately seven years before I was appointed a judge of the court. I also put it on the record that I had never been to the Rifflin' Hitch lodge, or any other fishing lodge or camp, with John Risley," says Murphy in his decision.

"In my assessment, such facts do not come close to meeting the objective standard for a reasonable apprehension of bias."

The plaintiff group could not be reached for comment.

The lodge, which Risley bought from now-federal cabinet minister **Gudie Hutchings** around 2004, has previously been a subject of political debate, following an **allNewfoundlandLabrador** report that Premier **Andrew Furey** and his father, then Speaker of the **Senate George Furey**, visited the lodge with Risley in 2021 (see 2022-10-19).

The provincial **Progressive Conservatives** demanded to see receipts, ultimately leading to a report from Commissioner of Legislative Standards **Ann Chafe**, who said Furey did not violate any legislation covering government members' code of conduct, as the trip was paid for by his wife (see 2023-08-01)

The protesters against World Energy GH2 — **Sylvia Benoit Ryan, Zita Hinks, Sheila Hinks, Amanda Cornect, Deborah Symonds** and **Alicia Drake** — also requested that their matter be heard by a jury of Indigenous peers, that the provincial government must begin consultations, including over paying for legal fees, and that the court must recognize a decision of an

alleged tribunal, the **Alliance of Indigenous Nations**.

Murphy rejected all of the claims.

"There was no factual or legal basis put forward in the application to support any of those claims for relief," he said.

Murphy said he had previously advised the protesters that he had never heard of the alleged Alliance and that he questioned its legal status. He said he was not provided any evidence that it is a body with any authority, is associated with a particular Indigenous group or community, or that it exists at all — other than on its website.

"It appears to me that these entities are similar to other similar entities which have been relied on to challenge the jurisdiction of various courts in the country using pseudo-legal type arguments," said Murphy.

The legal battle between World Energy GH2 and the protesters has at times been bizarre.

Several of the protesters at one point alleged to be represented by an individual going by the name **Spirit Warrior**, also known as **Glenn Patrick Bogue**, who became belligerent with Murphy (see 2023-05-05)

Murphy removed Spirit Warrior from the hearing, for which he appeared by phone. His law licence was suspended in 2017 and a 2019 **Law Society of Ontario** tribunal declared him unfit to represent clients due to mental illness.

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