

Dedicated search and rescue air base for Labrador step closer: SEA-NL

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Seaward Enterprises Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (SEA-NL) congratulates board member Merv Wiseman for spearheading a resolution approved this past weekend by the Liberal Party of Canada to designate a search and rescue (SAR) air base for Labrador.

“Labrador is one step closer to having 5-Wing Goose Bay designated a SAR air base that will save lives,” says Wiseman, a member of SEA-NL’s executive, and outspoken advocate for stronger SAR services and fishing-vessel safety.

Passed unanimously on May 6th during the Liberal Party of Canada’s national convention in Ottawa, the resolution urges the federal government to immediately designate 5-Wing Goose Bay as a SAR air base, which would include stationing one of the military’s Cormorant SAR helicopters there.

The Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is not compelled to follow through on the resolution, but the pressure is escalated as the resolution becomes official party policy.

Labrador's entire coast is void of a primary dedicated maritime or air resource station to conduct SAR missions — one of the largest areas in Canada without one.

National Defence runs Canada’s fleet of Cormorant SAR helicopters, including those based in Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Gander.

A petition was circulated earlier this year to have a Cormorant based at 5 Wing by Jeanette Russel, whose son Marc and friend Joey Jenkins were lost in September 2021 while fishing off Mary’s Harbour, Labrador aboard the *Island Lady*, a 26-foot boat.

SEA-NL passed a resolution at its founding convention in February 2022 that Fisheries and Oceans dedicate a primary Canadian Coast Guard ship to Labrador, and that National Defence assign a Cormorant helicopter to 5 Wing.

“For as long as the entire Labrador coastline is void of a dedicated Canadian Coast Guard ship, and a dedicated Cormorant helicopter to carry out primary SAR missions, the issue must top all agendas,” Wiseman said.