

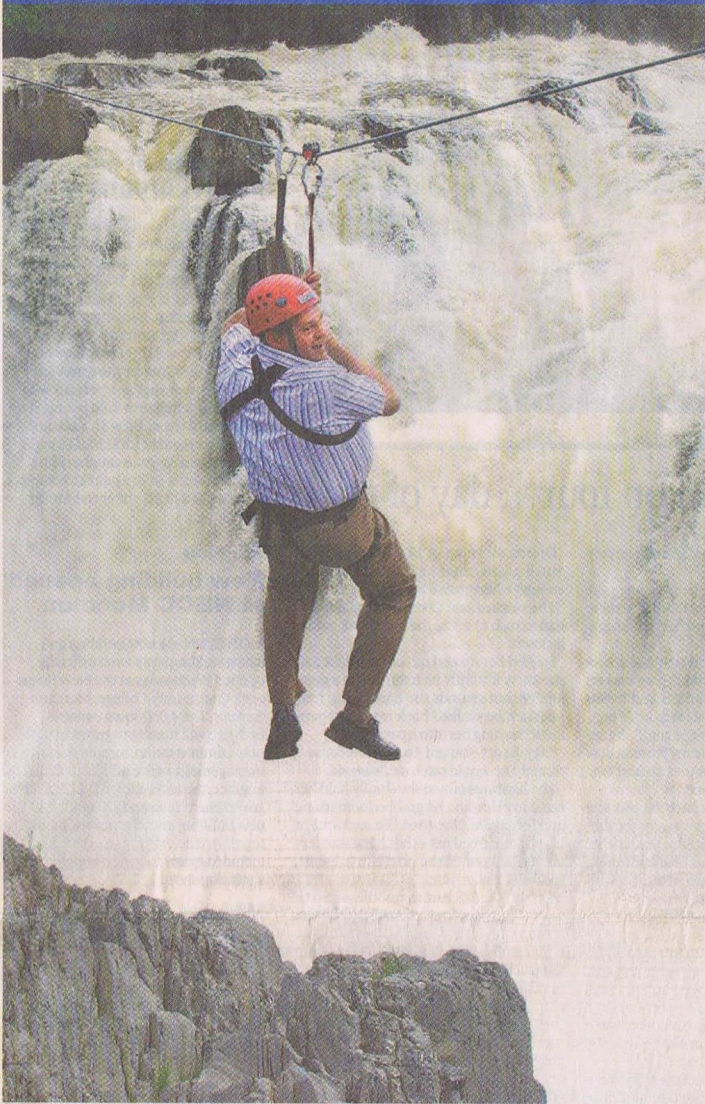
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ALWARD, CABINET ZIP INTO GRAND FALLS



Premier David Alward zip lines across the St. John River gorge at Grand Falls on Wednesday. The premier and his cabinet colleagues met outside of Fredericton. See story, page A3 PHOTO: ADAM HURAS/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Premier supports minister's stand backing no ban on hydrofracking

ADAM HURAS AND GREG WESTON
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

GRAND FALLS — Premier David Alward on Wednesday stood firmly behind comments by Energy Minister Craig Leonard that there will be no ban on hydrofracking in New Brunswick.

"We are doing the work that we need to do to ensure that we have the regulatory system in place to assure New Brunswickers that we make sound decisions," Alward said.

"That the development protects

things so important such as water."

The premier made the comments after a cabinet meeting in Grand Falls on Wednesday, and just moments before taking up an offer made by Grand Falls-Drummond-Saint-Andre MLA Danny Soucy to crisscross the Grand Falls gorge by zip line.

The prospect of natural gas exploration has been opposed by some local residents and environmental groups, citing concerns that the chemicals involved could cause health problems and contaminate groundwater.

But Alward maintained that shale gas could be New Brunswick's hope for the future.

"We made the commitment as part of our campaign platform that we would look at the development of shale gas in a responsible way," Alward said. "It is not a question of moratorium; this is a question of continuing to work with different stakeholders.

"We believe this is a tremendous opportunity for New Brunswick, it can be a real game changer, but only if we can do it in a

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