

St. John's hopes to salvage coast guard radio station

[CBC News](#)

Posted: May 15, 2013 6:14 PM NT

Last Updated: May 15, 2013 6:06 PM NT



Merv Wiseman, a retired Marine Rescue Sub-Centre worker, said the St. John's Harbour is becoming a busier place, and now is not the time to eliminate the Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre. (CBC)

Officials in St. John's are calling on Ottawa to reconsider removing more coast guard resources from the city.

The marine rescue sub-centre was shut down last year. Now, the federal government plans to close the marine communications and traffic services centre in 2014.

Federal officials say the work done by three people at the coast guard radio station in St. John's can be handled by the two employees already responsible for Placentia Bay.

Retired search and rescue co-ordinator Merv Wiseman, Mayor Dennis O'Keefe, as well as officials with the city's port authority, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and regional fire department all feel that it's a bad decision.



Mayor Dennis O'Keefe said he hopes MacKay sees this case differently than the St. John's Marine Rescue Sub-Centre. (CBC)

They met at City Hall on Wednesday to discuss a strategy to get Ottawa to reverse its decision.

Wiseman said the harbour is becoming a busier place, and now is not the time to eliminate the communications centre.

"We have communications with the oil rigs offshore, all installations, the platforms, cruise ships, transatlantic shipping – all that's done from St. John's coast guard radio," he said.

"Can it be remoted to other locations? I don't think so."

The city officials are seeking a meeting with Peter MacKay, who is once again the province's representative in the federal cabinet.

O'Keefe said he hopes MacKay views this case differently than the closure of the marine rescue sub-centre.

"I know him from a previous life when he was the regional minister for Newfoundland and Labrador, and he's a pretty good guy, and seemed to be reasonable when given the facts of a situation," the mayor said.