

**BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES  
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

**308**

**TRAN11**

Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

6211-08-012

ÉTAIENT PRÉSENTS :

POUR LE BAPE : M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, président  
Mme MICHÈLE GOYER, commissaire

POUR LA CCEBJ : M. PAUL JOHN MURDOCH, président  
Mme MANON CYR, mairesse de Chibougamau  
Mme MELISSA BROUSSEAU SAGANASH, commissaire`  
M. JEAN PICARD, commissaire

**ENQUÊTE ET AUDIENCE PUBLIQUE  
SUR LES ENJEUX DE LA FILIÈRE URANIFÈRE AU QUÉBEC**

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**PRÉCONSULTATION**

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VOLUME 11

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Séance tenue le 5 juin 2014 à 14 h  
Neokweskkau Sports Complexe  
206 Main Street 1000, 3e rue  
Mistissini

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**SÉANCE AJOURNÉE AU 5 JUIN 2014 À 19 H**

**SÉANCE DE L'APRÈS-MIDI DU 5 JUIN  
MOT DU CHEF DE LA NATION CREE DE MISTISSINI  
Mr. RICHARD SCHECAPIO**

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**CHIEF RICHARD SCHECAPIO:**

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*Wadjia*... Good afternoon everyone. J'aimerais tout d'abord, premièrement, souhaiter la bienvenue à vous autres, la commission du BAPE, à Michèle Goyer, Louis-Gilles Francoeur, bienvenue à Mistissini. *Wadjia* John Paul Murdoch, Waskaganish, *wadjia*. Mairesse de la ville de Chibougamau, bienvenue à Mistissini. Jean Picard, bienvenue.

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So before we start, in our Cree communities in Mistissini here, and most Cree communities, to show our respect and our regards for the, our high regard for our guests, and today now it is, it is very, it is very important what today is, what is happening today, and I have many, many reasons to be grateful, and they are here to listen to us, and the various communities across Quebec that they are visiting. I would like to also welcome and acknowledge the presence of our Grand Chief, Cree Nation Government, Doctor Matthew Coon-Come, welcome. Welcome, this is your home, welcome to Mistissini.

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I am happy that he is here to participate, and I am thankful. I also want to greet everybody who is on the radio, who are listening on the radio and the internet, and I have very - I hope that there is many people that are listening, to participate, and this is being played and aired across all the Cree communities, so I greet you all, to all of you who are in the Cree communities.

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Comme je dis à toutes les fois que je salue, je souhaite la bienvenue à des gens qui viennent ici dans notre communauté : Welcome to the Cree Nation and Mistissini, home of the largest freshwater lakes in Quebec, bienvenue.

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**MOT DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA COMMISSION DU COMITÉ  
CONSULTATIF POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT DE LA BAIE JAMES (CCEBJ)  
Mr. PAUL JOHN MURDOCH**

45 **THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

So sitting here, we will discuss the roles of those that are here sitting with me. That is what we will start with. So there is actually two tables here, and two parties, and we talk about uranium. When the Quebec Government wanted to know how, the Quebec Government wanted to know  
50 how people, not just the workers, not just that we are - or those that are affected, we want to know what everybody, to look into the future to see if they will allow the mining of uranium. So the people I am sitting with here, my colleagues, they were required to go across all of Quebec.

Here, there is no company being represented. It is the general ideas of uranium mining. So  
55 they have the power, on behalf of Quebec, and because we are in our territory with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, that is where it is stated, and it is stated there that as soon as something is discussed that would affect the animals, the water, the land, or the people, that the Crees have to be, have to participate so that Quebec can't just represent itself and dictate what to do with our territories.

60 So with the BAPE when they were given a mandate they were mandated also to work with us because of their visits to the Cree territory, and at least a month prior we signed an agreement that would highlight our participation, that we can sit with them while they do their work, and that they are independent, and I will just, I will tell you a bit about when we met with them, because I  
65 hadn't fully understood their mandate.

So we will be coming three times to the Cree territory; this first one we want to hear you, we want to listen to you, what your concerns are, what you want to be informed of. The second tour, we will bring back information so that we can inform you of what you wanted to know, and the last  
70 tour, which is probably this winter, that is when you will be asked with all your inquiries and requests after you have been informed, and you will be asked your position. So the third time you will have the opportunity to vote on uranium, and it is not just here, it will be the whole Cree Nation, the whole Cree territory and Quebec.

75 So when we discussed this mandate I asked them if we could actually speak - when we invite people, when we call in experts, we will bring them the next time, and those who are more aware or more knowledgeable on these issues. I asked if we could actually, can we mention them now, and they said no because we don't know what people are concerned about, and what they want to know, and it is only after the first tour, and until everybody is given the opportunity to put  
80 their concerns and worries, then we can announce who we are going to go to for the expertise.

85 So the reason I am telling that story is to, it is, there is no hidden mandate. This is very much for you. It is what you want to know and the questions you have. We will write them down and we will address them, and we will look for the experts that will help us understand. We are not saying that - we can't say that we will be able to, or that we are going to try now to respond to everything, but eventually we will have a broader view and understanding of the peoples' stance across Quebec. So, that is our mandate and our duty. So I am going to let the gentleman speak. He is far more knowledgeable in the discussion of his mandate.

90 For those who, at the back, it looks like a Walkman, it isn't though. It is a translation device, and Pakesso is probably better at translating than I am. They are at the back. So, the other thing I wanted to say is that it is not just, it will be open for a while today for your concerns, and there will also be, it will be open until July, the 11th of July for you to submit your requests or questions. So some concerns are coming in now, and so keep in mind that you can use the internet to discuss or submit your inquiries.

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**MOT DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA COMMISSION  
D'ENQUÊTE ET D'AUDIENCE PUBLIQUE  
M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR**

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**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

105 Wadji! Bonsoir! Bonjour, Mesdames et messieurs! Et je tiens à vous saluer et vous dire qu'on apprécie beaucoup être dans votre communauté. Et je tiens aussi à saluer les internautes qui nous rejoignent à travers le Web ou les auditeurs qui nous suivent à la radio.

110 C'est en raison des inquiétudes qui ont été exprimées par différents groupes, par des citoyens, par des communautés, que le ministre du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs, monsieur Yves-François Blanchet, a mandaté, le 3 mars dernier, le Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, le BAPE, pour tenir une enquête et une audience publique sur les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec.

115 Ce mandat ne vise pas l'évaluation d'un projet en particulier; on ne discute pas de projet. Il vise plutôt à informer et à consulter la population sur les impacts écologiques, sociaux et économiques de l'ensemble des activités qui pourraient être reliées éventuellement à l'exploration et à l'exploitation de l'uranium au Québec.

120 Notre commission d'enquête a été constituée par le président du BAPE, monsieur Pierre Baril. Elle est composée de trois commissaires, soit madame Michèle Goyer, qui est à ma droite, ainsi que par monsieur Joseph Zayed qui malheureusement aujourd'hui est absent, et moi-même, Louis-Gilles Francoeur, qui a été désigné président de cette commission.

125 Nous sommes appuyés par une équipe de cinq analystes et nous bénéficions en plus des services d'une coordonnatrice, d'une agente de secrétariat et d'une conseillère en communication.

Dans sa lettre qui a défini le mandat de notre commission, le ministre précise, et je le cite :

130 « *Dans une perspective de développement durable, ce mandat portera sur les impacts environnementaux, sociaux et économiques liés à l'exploration et à l'exploitation de l'uranium. Plusieurs aspects pourront donc être examinés lors de cette enquête, notamment les enjeux liés à la santé et à la sécurité, qui sont associés à ces activités.* »

135 Le ministre ajoute que :

140 « *Le mandat de la commission porte sur l'ensemble du territoire québécois, dont les territoires visés aux chapitres 22 et 23 de la Convention de la Baie-James et au chapitre 14 de la Convention du Nord-Est québécois, et aussi au chapitre 2 de la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement. Je m'attends donc – écrit le ministre – à ce que les comités consultatifs prévus dans la Convention de la Baie-James et à la Convention du Nord-Est québécois ainsi que dans le chapitre 2 de la Loi soient associés à l'exercice de consultation publique afin de bénéficier de l'expertise de ces comités et de veiller à s'assurer qu'il n'est pas porté atteinte aux droits des autochtones dans ces territoires.* »

145 C'est pourquoi nous siégeons aujourd'hui avec des collègues, des vis-à-vis de la commission qui a été créée par le Comité consultatif de l'environnement de la Baie James.

150 Le ministre enfin dans la lettre de son mandat que notre mandat se terminera le 20 mai 2015, c'est-à-dire l'an prochain. À la demande du ministre, le BAPE, notre organisme, a rendu public le 16 avril dernier, un document intitulé : « Étude sur l'état des connaissances, les impacts et les mesures d'atténuation de l'exploration et de l'exploitation des gisements d'uranium sur le territoire québécois.

155 Ce document, qui se veut une base d'information, a été préparé par des professeurs des universités Laval et de l'UQAM à Montréal, avec l'appui d'un réseau scientifique qui s'appelle le réseau DIVEX.

160 Il est important de vous signaler que ce document, que vous pouvez consulter sur le site  
internet du BAPE, n'a pas été préparé à la demande de notre commission. C'est un document qui  
a été préparé à la demande du ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la  
Faune et des Parcs et aussi par le ministère des Ressources naturelles.

165 Ce document est disponible, comme je vous l'ai dit, sur le site Web du BAPE où vous  
trouverez aussi pas seulement ce document, mais une abondante documentation que nos  
analystes ont inscrit en ligne pour que vous puissiez avoir une vue d'ensemble de tout le dossier  
de l'exploitation uranifère.

170 Je vous rappellerai ici que le BAPE est un organisme public et neutre qui relève du ministre  
du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques  
et il a pour mission d'éclairer la prise de décision au niveau du gouvernement par ses constats et  
les avis qu'il peut donner, et il le fait en appliquant une notion d'environnement qui a été établie par  
les tribunaux supérieurs. Et cette définition englobe les aspects écologique, social et économique  
dans une même vision.

175 Souvent, les gens disent : il y a l'environnement d'un côté puis l'économique de l'autre. Ce  
n'est pas du tout ce que dit la loi et ce n'est pas notre façon de travailler. Là, le mot  
« Environnement » et son sens, pour nous, c'est une intégration des dimensions écologiques,  
sociales et économiques, les trois.

180 Notre commission va aussi analyser le dossier de la filière de l'uranium en considérant les  
seize (16) principes qui sont contenus dans la *Loi sur le développement durable*. Et pour mener  
notre enquête, les commissaires possèdent les pouvoirs qui sont prévus à la *Loi des commissions  
d'enquête*.

185 Il y a plusieurs mesures qui sont prises pour assurer l'indépendance et l'impartialité des  
membres du BAPE qui composent la commission chargée de coordonner la réalisation des  
mandats que le ministre confie à notre organisme.

190 Pour exercer, notamment, les pouvoirs de la *Loi sur les commissions d'enquête*, les  
membres du BAPE, y compris les deux commissaires devant vous ici ont été assermentés devant  
un juge de la Cour supérieure. Il en découle que notre commission a un devoir strict, une obligation  
de neutralité, d'impartialité et un devoir de réserve et qu'elle doit agir envers tous les participants  
avec équité et dans le souci du respect mutuel. Et nous avons beaucoup d'autres obligations  
195 comme adhérer au Code d'éthique du BAPE, et cetera, nous avons beaucoup de déclarations à  
remplir pour attester qu'on n'est pas en conflit d'intérêt, mais je vous passe tous ces détails  
techniques et administratifs.

200 Comme vous l'a expliqué Paul John dans son introduction, nous sommes présentement dans une phase de préconsultation. Pour composer avec notre vaste mandat, notre commission a décidé en effet de procéder avec trois phases : une phase de préconsultation qui sera suivie, autour de septembre, d'une phase d'information et de questionnement et, plus tard à l'automne, autour de novembre, décembre, d'une phase de présentation des mémoires.

205 Dans la phase de préconsultation qui débute dans votre localité aujourd'hui, la commission se met à l'écoute des préoccupations des citoyens, des groupes, des associations, des entreprises, des industries ou des institutions publiques. Tout le monde peut donc librement nous saisir de ses commentaires, interrogations ou opinions sur le dossier de l'exploration et de l'exploitation d'uranium. On peut le faire verbalement, on peut le faire par écrit ou via le site Web du BAPE.

210 Cette phase va nous permettre de planifier les travaux de la phase d'information et de questionnement, de façon à mieux tenir compte de vos préoccupations quand on sera avec les spécialistes.

215 Alors, au cours de cette phase, la commission a siégé dans plusieurs villes du Québec méridional – on a commencé à Montréal, on a continué à Chelsea dans l'Outaouais, à Mont-Laurier dans les Laurentides, à Ville-Marie au Témiscamingue et nous serons la semaine prochaine à Sept-Îles, à Havre-Saint-Pierre, nous siégerons aussi à Québec et à Pointe-à-la-Croix en Gaspésie.

220 Et la commission va siéger notamment, en conformité avec son mandat – c'est-à-dire elle a commencé à le faire – à Chisasibi, hier à Chibougamau, aujourd'hui chez vous, et la semaine prochaine à Kuujuaq.

225 Dans ces territoires qui sont régis par la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord-Québécois, la commission va participer à des séances conjointes avec les commissions créées par le Comité consultatif de l'environnement de la Baie-James et en territoire inuit, par le comité consultatif de l'environnement de Kativik, pour examiner de près les enjeux qui sont propres à ces territoires ou à votre territoire.

230 Et ça, évidemment, on veut le faire avec les populations locales, ce qui explique notre présence ici aujourd'hui.

235 Les trois commissions vont travailler au cours de la prochaine année, ensemble, en vue de produire un rapport commun sur la partie des audiences tenue dans le territoire de la Baie-James et dans la région du Nunavik. Mais même si elles sont appelées à travailler ensemble – et ça, c'est d'un commun accord qu'on en a convenu – les trois commissions, crie, inuite, en fait du territoire



240 traditionnel cri, inuit et du Québec méridional, elles conservent chacune leur autonomie et la  
possibilité de produire des rapports distincts. Et nous avons aussi des démarches en cours avec  
les Nations autochtones du sud du Québec afin de déterminer les modalités de consultation avec  
ces Nations.

245 La phase de questionnement et d'information, celle qui va survenir en septembre, cette  
seconde phase de nos travaux se tiendra principalement à Montréal et à Québec parce qu'on va  
devoir travailler avec un très grand nombre de spécialistes et ce sera évidemment assez difficile de  
déplacer quarante (40) à cinquante (50) personnes dans toutes les localités où on aura  
évidemment fait la tournée de préconsultation.

250 Mais il a été convenu avec nos vis-à-vis en territoire cri et inuit, que nous commencerons  
cette phase de nos travaux en allant, avec un certain nombre de spécialistes, en territoires cri et  
inuit. Et après, on continuera à Montréal et à Québec.

255 Au cours de cette phase-là, même si ça se déroule à Montréal et à Québec, la commission  
entend, elle, s'informer sur les enjeux soulevés durant la phase de préconsultation, c'est-à-dire  
maintenant, parce qu'on va adresser vos préoccupations à ce moment-là aux personnes-  
ressources et aux spécialistes que nous allons inviter. Et la commission va tenir des séances  
thématiques afin d'approfondir certains enjeux particuliers. C'est-à-dire que par exemple, on va  
faire une session ou deux sur les transports, sur la santé, afin de dire... on va aborder les questions  
260 de façon homogène.

Les échanges, par contre, pourront être suivis de partout dans le Québec, ici comme partout  
ailleurs, en direct grâce à la webdiffusion sur le site Web du BAPE. Et de tout le Québec, les  
participants pourront adresser leurs questions par courriel lorsque la commission va siéger à  
265 Montréal ou à Québec. C'est-à-dire que si vous voyez des spécialistes intervenir sur un aspect et  
que vous voulez lui poser une question, vous pourrez, par internet, adresser une question et nos  
analystes nous les achemineront aux commissaires en avant.

270 Au cours de cette phase, nous avons aussi convenu d'un mode particulier de  
fonctionnement avec les commissions issues de la Convention de la Baie-James. Ce sera un  
facteur nouveau, elles pourront avoir un statut de participant privilégié qui ferait en sorte qu'elles  
pourront poser, via notre commission, des questions aux spécialistes afin de pouvoir, elle aussi,  
approfondir, comme nous, leur entendement, leur connaissance du dossier.

275 Et dans la troisième phase, c'est-à-dire celle de présentation des mémoires, les citoyens, les  
groupes, les associations, les entreprises, les industries et les institutions publiques qui désirent  
faire connaître à la commission leur opinion sur les enjeux du mandat à la suite de tout ce qu'ils

280 auront entendu avec les spécialistes, bien, tous pourront le faire sous forme de mémoire, en nous indiquant s'ils veulent présenter leur mémoire de façon publique à la commission.

Ce sera possible aussi de ne faire qu'une présentation verbale, sans avoir un mémoire écrit et il sera aussi possible de déposer un mémoire écrit, sans venir le présenter de façon verbale devant la commission.

285 Et dans les territoires nordiques, nous participerons aussi à des séances conjointes avec les commissions crie et inuite pour recueillir les opinions de toutes les communautés.

290 Le rapport, qui va faire état de nos constats et de notre analyse du dossier, ainsi que les chapitres conjoints qui vont porter sur les enjeux des territoires visés par la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois, ce rapport sera remis au ministre au plus tard le 20 mai 2015. Par la suite, le ministre disposera de soixante (60) jours pour le rendre public.

295 Au cours de nos travaux, la commission entend faire preuve de la plus grande ouverture possible, mais dans le respect des personnes et des institutions, ainsi que dans le respect de son mandat qui porte, je le précise, sur les enjeux de la filière uranifère.

300 Et afin d'assurer une participation équitable à tout le monde, nous espérons qu'il n'y aura pas de manifestation dans la salle d'approbation ou de désapprobation à l'endroit de ce qui se dit en avant, de remarques désobligeantes, de propos diffamatoires ou d'attitudes méprisantes. On considère qu'ici c'est, comment dire, c'est un forum neutre où tous les gens ont droit au respect pour donner leur opinion ou faire état de leurs préoccupations.

305 Ce qui est dit dans cette audience est enregistré et les transcriptions seront disponibles sur le site Web du BAPE ainsi que dans les centres de consultations, environ une semaine après chaque semaine de séances publiques. Donc, dans à peu près quinze (15) jours, vous aurez, sur Internet, la transcription de tout ce qui s'est dit ici et à Chisasibi ou à Chibougamau.

310 Aussi, la webdiffusion, que ce soit en audio ou vidéo des séances publiques sur notre site Internet restera accessible en différé jusqu'à un mois après la divulgation du rapport de notre commission l'an prochain. C'est-à-dire que si quelqu'un veut se référer ou revoir une séance, ce sera disponible sur Internet pour encore à peu près un an.

315 Enfin, sur notre site Web, vous pourrez trouver un nombre croissant de documents, ainsi que les réponses que les personnes-ressources des institutions publiques et les spécialistes vont fournir en réponse aux questions de notre commission ou des autres commissions aussi.

Et une section sera réservée au public si des personnes, des groupes ou des institutions municipales ou autres veulent nous faire parvenir des documents pour les mettre à la disposition de tout le monde.

320 Je vais terminer en vous précisant une chose qui est importante. Nous entendons concentrer notre travail d'analyse sur les enjeux de l'exploration et de l'exploitation d'uranium et non pas sur ceux de la production d'énergie nucléaire, de l'armement nucléaire ou de la gestion des centrales nucléaires. Ça, ce n'est pas notre mandat.

325 C'est sûr, quelqu'un pourra se référer à ces questions s'il entend les aborder dans le cadre de ses préoccupations morales ou de ses préoccupations éthiques ou politiques au sens large. Mais nous, comme commission, il ne nous appartient pas de nous pencher ou d'évaluer les enjeux de l'énergie nucléaire et d'en évaluer les impacts.

330 Quant au programme de la journée, nous commencerons par vous présenter une synthèse vidéo du document d'information produit par le Groupe DIVEX dont je vous ai parlé au début. Ce document qui a été commandé par le ministère de l'Environnement et celui des Ressources naturelles, avec l'appui du groupe d'universitaires.

335 Cette présentation d'à peu près vingt-cinq (25) minutes qui donne un peu un aperçu du dossier et de sa complexité aussi, vous le verrez, sera suivie d'une pause d'à peu près dix (10) minutes au cours de laquelle vous pourrez vous inscrire à l'arrière au registre en vous adressant à madame Bourdages, afin de nous faire part de vos préoccupations. Donc, si vous voulez venir nous faire part de vos préoccupations, enregistrez-vous à l'arrière au registre et puis dans l'ordre  
340 des inscriptions, vous pourrez venir nous traduire vos préoccupations, vos commentaires ou vos opinions.

Chacun disposera d'environ quinze (15) minutes, et au besoin, les commissaires des deux commissions pourront demander des précisions pour éclaircir et bien comprendre votre propos.

345 Alors, je tiens aussi à préciser une chose, c'est que si, après cette réunion, vous voulez adresser des commentaires ou des opinions additionnelles à la commission ou, enfin, aux commissions parce que tout sera accessible aux trois commissions, vous pourrez le faire jusqu'au 11 juillet à midi, en utilisant le formulaire qui est en ligne sur le site Web du BAPE. Et ça permettra  
350 aussi à vos amis ou à vos connaissances, s'il y a des gens qui sont intéressés à nous faire parvenir des commentaires, mais qui ne sont pas là aujourd'hui, vous pourrez leur dire qu'ils peuvent aussi nous traduire leurs opinions ou leurs commentaires via le site Web.

355 Alors, je tiens, en terminant, à vous souligner le BAPE s'est donné une Déclaration de  
services aux citoyens, et qu'on met à votre disposition à l'arrière de la salle un questionnaire qui  
vous permet d'apprécier et d'évaluer la qualité de nos services. Alors, si vous voulez nous faire des  
commentaires sur le fonctionnement de notre audience, ne vous gênez pas, il y a un questionnaire  
à l'arrière et nous apprécions beaucoup les commentaires du public, ça nous aide beaucoup à  
360 travailler de façon plus efficace.

Alors, en terminant, je vous présente l'équipe de la commission d'enquête : à ma droite,  
Jonathan Perreault, un de nos cinq analystes et à l'arrière, il y a la conseillère en communication  
madame Bourdages auprès de qui on s'enregistre, la coordonnatrice madame Rita LeBlanc qui  
365 l'accompagne.

C'est madame Yolande Teasdale qui assure le travail de sténotypie de la séance et  
messieurs Grenier et Filteau, du Centre des services partagés du Québec, s'assurent qu'on nous  
entend partout dans le territoire du Québec, parce que c'est eux qui ont monté tout l'équipement et  
la sonorisation de la salle.  
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Quant à la qualité du service Internet, c'est monsieur Pierre Dufour, notre responsable de  
l'informatique au BAPE, qui gère la webdiffusion et qui était tellement heureux d'arriver aujourd'hui  
ici, parce qu'il a découvert que vous avez le meilleur système de retransmission par Internet. Alors,  
il s'est dit : il faut qu'on revienne, c'est trop efficace.  
375

Alors, là-dessus, je vous remercie de votre attention, puis je vais demander à Pierre de partir  
le vidéo d'introduction qui va vous résumer le dossier et, après ça, ce sera suivi de la pause.  
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**VISIONNEMENT DE LA VIDÉO PORTANT SUR  
L'ÉTAT DES CONNAISSANCES, LES IMPACTS ET LES MESURES D'ATTÉNUATION DE  
L'EXPLORATION ET DE L'EXPLOITATION DES GISEMENTS D'URANIUM SUR LE  
TERRITOIRE QUÉBÉCOIS.**

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**REPRISE DE LA SÉANCE  
CHEF DU GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS (EYYOU ISTCHEE)  
Dr. MATTHEW COON-COME**

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**THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

So before we start I will ask the Grand Chief to speak, and then Paul Gull, and then we will open the floor. Dr. Matthew Coon-Come.

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**Dr. MATTHEW COON-COME :**

Kwe! (Propos en cri non traduits).

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**THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR :**

Sorry, we don't have the Cree translator; he should be coming in shortly.

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**Dr. MATTHEW COON-COME:**

Well, wadjia! Good afternoon. I am the Grand Chief of the Cree Nation, as you all know. I am pleased to join Chief Richard Schecapio and this Council, of course, in welcoming the BAPE and the James Bay Advisory Committee to Mistissini.

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You have heard from many members of the Cree Nation over the past few days; we thank you for listening to the questions and concerns of our people regarding uranium mining. As you will later hear, the Cree Nation of Mistissini has a lot to say about uranium development. As you know, Strateco's Matoush Project is located 215 kilometres north of here in the Otish Mountains. It is the province's most advanced uranium exploration project, and it is located on the traditional family trap lands that are actively used by the members of this community.

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Mistissini is ground zero for the risks of uranium mining in Quebec. The environmental risks of uranium mining are not theoretical concerns for us. If Strateco's project had been permitted to proceed its plan was to eventually build a mine at the Matoush site, along with a mill where a processing plant. They planned to exploit the mining site until the profitable ore had been exhausted, the uranium yellowcake would be extracted and sold, and the radioactive tailings would be left behind. When the profits had been made we know that the company would quickly be gone, and the tailings would remain a source of risk and contamination for thousands and thousands of years.

435 The risks presented by these tailings would be borne by the people of Mistissini, and I dare  
say with the downflow of the river from the Otish Mountains from Temiscaming to Lake Mistassini to  
the Rupert River, this diversion, too, would affect Eastmain, and of course Wemindji and then  
Chisasibi flow into the La Grande River.

440 The risks would be borne by our traditions, the hunting way of life, we have exercised since  
time immemorial. If contamination were to occur the families that use these trap lines would no  
longer be able to rely on the animals hunted and trapped there. They would not be able to pass on  
the tradition to their children, as it had been passed on to them by their ancestors.

445 This is a risk that concerns us. This is the risk that causes Cree men, Cree women, Cree  
Elders and Cree youth to come before you this week, to express their concerns, and this is why I  
say to you the environmental risks of uranium mining are not theoretical concerns for us. The  
environment is an integral aspect of our way of life, a way of life that has existed for as long as the  
people of Mistissini have lived off this land.

450 I often say I am the son of a hunter, fisherman, and a trapper, and my mum and dad are here  
sitting behind. I was sitting with them a while ago - naturally was - this past winter in our hunting  
ground, just checking it out, where we turn off, right to our left is where the Matoush Project is. So  
you can imagine the concerns we have if we can continue to hunt, fish, and trap in that area.

455 You see, the Cree Nation of Mistissini has been clear about its opposition to uranium mining  
since long before the BAPE mandate was issued. In 2011 it passed a resolution requesting that  
the Government of Quebec implement a moratorium on advanced uranium exploration and  
uranium mining on the traditional territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini. I know that the people of  
Mistissini did not reach this decision lightly. Mistissini, like the Cree Nation in general, is open to  
460 responsible development projects in its territory.

465 The Cree Nation recognizes the natural resources potential of our traditional territory. Mining  
and other development projects have the potential to benefit the community, whether through  
impact benefit agreements, by employing Crees, or by stimulating the local economy, but when the  
risks outweigh the benefits, and when the risks threaten our culture, our traditions and our way of  
life, we do not hesitate to say no. I will say that again because it is very important. We are not in  
favour of - we are in favour of responsible development on our territory, but we do not hesitate to  
say no when our way of life is placed at risk.

470 The Cree Nation of Mistissini followed a lengthy considerable process to reach its decision to  
oppose uranium mining. It is clear to me that Mistissini's position on uranium mining reflects the  
will of the people of Mistissini. It also reflects the will of the Cree Nation as a whole. In most of the  
battles that have been fought by the Cree Nation there is usually one Cree community that has led

475 the way on the front line and in the trenches. For the Great Rail, Hydro-electric Project this  
community is Whapmagoostui. In this case, for uranium, it is Mistissini. During the Canadian  
Nuclear Safety Commission hearings in June 2012 the people of Mistissini came out in droves to  
speak out against uranium development. They have adamantly and successfully taken up the  
cause to prevent uranium mining on our territory, on their territory.

480 Mistissini's position is supported by the Cree Nation as a whole. I know that you heard this  
message in Chisasibi and in Chibougamau, and you will hear it throughout the next year. I would  
like to tell you more about nine recurring concerns raised by the people of Mistissini during the  
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission hearings on the Matoush Project. All of them are relevant to  
485 the study that the BAPE is now undertaking. I urge you to ensure that all of these concerns are  
properly examined by your experts as part of the broader independent study on uranium that is  
required.

490 First, there is the incompatibility between the uranium development and the Cree values and  
culture and the way of life. It is critical that the timeframes at issue be clearly confronted and  
discussed. The environmental risks associated with potential contamination have to be understood  
against the reality that the tailings will be dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years. The  
necessary requirement for continuing containment and monitoring of the waste is a heavy burden  
on future generations. For the Crees, this is inconsistent with our rule as stewards of the land.

495 Second, there are concerns that our water supply could become contaminated. Mining  
operations can enter groundwater systems, which eventually enter rivers and lakes. The Otish  
Mountains area provide water which feeds into Lake Mistassini. The waters of Lake Mistassini  
drain into the Rupert River, part of the waters of the Rupert River flow to Nemaska and then on to  
Waskaganish, but as a result of the hydro-electric development of our territory the watersheds are  
500 also heavily interconnected. A portion of the waters of Rupert River have been diverted and now  
flow into the Eastmain River, and then ultimately into the La Grande River, which flows past  
Chisasibi. This is not just a water that eventually reaches our communities, it is also water on  
which the animals, fish, and the plants rely. Contaminated water can have far-reaching  
consequences on our communities.

505 Third, the issues surrounding the contamination and storage of radioactive wastes are in and  
of themselves a major concern. None of the experts can point to a containment method or  
structure that can be counted on for a thousand years, let alone tens of thousands of years. No  
society has any experience of man-made structures that have lasted that long.

510 Fourth, we have major concerns regarding site de-commissioning, and the costs associated  
with this process. We understand that there are laws and regulations in place that require mining  
companies to undertake a particular process and put aside guarantees for the de-commissioning

515 process, but many de-commissioning projects have in practice had significant problems. There are  
many, there have been many examples in Canada where the funds set aside for mining site  
cleanup have been completely insufficient. The Federal and Provincial Governments have been  
left to foot the bill, and long delays have resulted from squabbles between Governments as to who  
should have to pay. We are concerned that de-commissioning is often seen as an afterthought  
520 since mining companies have already gotten everything they wanted out of the deal, and if the  
companies still exist at the point the environment issues are identified they no longer have an  
incentive to properly clean up the site. This is a particular concern for uranium, as the mining site  
will remain a source of risk for thousands and thousands of years.

525 Fifth, the inter-generational institutional challenges that uranium development creates needs  
to be considered. How will we communicate the risks associated with radioactive waste to people  
living here thousands of years from now? How do we ensure that the institutions that are required  
for supervision and maintenance of radioactive waste are maintained and funded across  
generations? Recent experience shows that Quebec society has not been able to reliably monitor  
and maintain the structural integrity of its bridges or highways in downtown Montreal; this does not  
530 instil confidence.

Sixth, the yellowcake. The yellow cake, waste rock, and tailings will be transported across  
our territory on our roads. There is always the risk of accidental spill during transport. We refer you  
to the recent accident at Lac Mégantic as an example that you can never predict how, when, or if  
535 an accident can occur, and the results can be catastrophic.

Seventh, economic projects. Economic projections, excuse me. Economic projections of the  
viability of uranium mining must be reviewed. We have real doubts about economic projections put  
forward by proponents of uranium mining in light of the current price of uranium and the recent  
540 trends in the uranium sector.

545 Eighth, there is the effect on Mistissini's economy, and in particular, the tourism industry. The  
proximity of exploration efforts and potential mines near the Alabanel-Témiscamie-Otish National  
Park will affect the ecotourism outfitting jobs that would otherwise be available to Mistissini youth.

Ninth, it is the notion of social acceptability. Social acceptability means different things to  
different people across Canada, I mean across Quebec, but it certainly means that you have to  
consider the perspective of the population most directly affected by the issue at hand. In this case,  
we Crees are the people most directly affected by uranium mining and development. There are  
550 other sources of energy production, including sources that are less speculative and less risky, but  
we Crees do not have another territory and Eeyou Istchee is all we have.



555 I mentioned nine issues, nine concerns for them to, for you to consider and to respond to in these inquiries. The first one is the effects if Quebec approves this industry, the dangers to the Cree culture and territory, and the transport of these minerals.

560 The second thing I mentioned was the water, the potential damage or contamination of these waters in every aspect of the construction of these mines, and all the aspects of the waters and watersheds and some that flow to, those that flow through the Otish Mountains, we all know where they go, and it goes through our lake here in Mistissini towards Waskaganish, the Rupert towards Nemaska, through Eastmain, and finally through Chisasibi. All our water goes through Chisasibi. So, the effects to the animals and the fish and anything that survives off our water.

565 The third thing is the - when they say that they are going to contain this, the contaminants, is the containment. They are still, nobody has the expertise or the knowledge of how to store such a thing for such a long time, especially at the level of contaminants.

570 Four, when a mine is finished, and we have seen that there has been debates and battles - the company that sets up a mine, once they are done with their mine they abandon it, and who is going to fix that? Even though there are laws, they have to. Even though there is laws that they have to do it, eventually it involves the Federal and Provincial Governments, and they don't assume the responsibility of these mines, the leftovers, and those that built the mine have now abandoned and they have gained everything there is to gain, they have made the profits that they needed to make, and so now it falls on us, and if it is approved in Quebec that there should be more standards.

575 And the fifth issue, concern, is that there is no absolute way to manage the contaminants; who will take care of it, how they will be taken care of, how it will be stored safely, and for all these contaminants, and who is going to fund that, who is going to pay for it? We have seen, even in the south, even those that are experts and know how to manage this, even those that think they have mastered, and you look at the bridges and roadways in Montreal, even those fall apart, and we are supposed to trust them when they say we will take care of this water, we will store it, and how are we supposed to trust it, or how can we have faith in it, especially in the potential dangers?

585 The sixth, I know that those that are translating - the yellow cake. I don't know what they call it, but you saw it in the video here. That has to be transported. Wherever the mine is it will come from that mine; it will have to be transported from that mine, and where will that go? We have heard what happened in Lac Mégantic, the tragedy in Lac Mégantic. Nobody knows when these tragedies can strike, and nobody can say that it will not happen here because we - we can't be given that guarantee, even with supervision.

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595 And so with the transport and the vehicles travelling on our roads and highways the seventh thing that I brought up, the mining company is a prospect. The companies always say that it will be self-sufficient, but we think that there should really be more studies or inquiries into when the mine is up where are they going to get the ore, the stone, the mineral, and especially with the markets.

600 So we want to know, we want to know if it really is profitable or viable, and the eighth thing, we have seen it in the video, that there is five, five different places where they have found deposits for the stone, this mineral, and where we are here in the Otish Mountains we have decided that we will be putting up a National Park, and for the land to be preserved here in Mistissini and in Chibougamau and in Waskaganish, Eastmain. We have these protected areas. We have dictated where these areas are going to be, and they are going to be affected, so if they are affected all the jobs that would be affected by this, so if people know that a mine is going up then people won't come up for tourism. They are not going to come and visit our territories, and therefore there won't be any tourism work because this will be affected.

610 I want to know that you guys should look into that, and the ninth thing that I mentioned, we have been asked often if we approve or disapprove of something, and I think that, I think it is those that are affected the most that should be listened to, because if something doesn't affect you, like for example those in the south, it is easy for them not to consider, but for us we are here and we - it is easy for us not to approve of this. It is easy for them to actually not be worried about it because they won't be affected, and this is - even those that are far inland or to the west or the east I believe, they won't be affected but we will be affected, and so I think our concerns should be at the forefront, and considered the most because of the effects on us.

615 And the environmental matter states that if it is suspected that an action or a policy may cause harm to the public or to the environment despite the absence of scientific consensus that the action or policy is harmful the action or policy should be avoided. This is the case with uranium development. There are a lot of unknowns, and a lot of uncertainty. What we do know is that these risks may, despite mitigating measures, transform into very real threats, and these threats will have an immediate and direct effect on us Crees because we live here, we drink the water, we eat the animals here, and there are a lot of unknowns and unknowables, but the risks are clear. That is why the Cree Nation has said no to uranium. With that, I thank you very much.

625 **LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

630 Est-ce qu'il y a des questions chez nos collègues à côté? Non? Ça va? C'est tellement clair, votre propos, qu'on n'a pas de questions à vous poser. Je pense que votre position est effectivement particulièrement claire. Alors, merci Monsieur Coon-Come.

**Dr. MATTHEW COON-COME :**

Merci, bienvenue.

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**CHEF DU CONSEIL DE BANDE DE WASWANAPI  
Mr. PAUL GULL**

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**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

Can you hear me? Yes. Hello, greetings to all the people that are listening; I want to say wadjia to all the people that are listening, too. My name is Chief Paul Gull, I am from the Cree community of Waswanipi; we are situated about an hour and a half south of Chibougamau, and for us there are impacts on uranium within our area.

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I will list some of them, and then maybe just tell you where we are, where Waswanipi is, straight along the rivers of Opiwaca, Chibougamau River, and Waswanipi, and we have an iron bridge there when you pass by there. That river leads down to Waswanipi Lake, to Gull Lake, then to Olga, to Matagami, then Nottaway River and then to James Bay, and we have many concerns regarding the transportation of uranium, and if there is a spill it will just add things to what is already happening in my community.

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I don't know if you, the BAPE, has ever heard about the spill on Slam Creek. It has been four years now, and I have a concern because it has been four years I have not received a report from MNR on what happened, and if we have a spill over here is it going to take four years to get answers? So that is the concern that I have, and these are concerns, some of these concerns that I have are real to us. It is actually happening now. Just to give you an example of the spill at Slam Creek, in Chapais, that summer there was no fish on the river from Obatogamau River all the way down to Waswanipi River in a two-month span. So I checked with certain experts what happened to the fish. Some people, researchers, said they might have went into the little creeks where the spill was not, did not go in, but we couldn't prove that, and I still have, to this day, have not seen the results of that spill.

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The only information that I got was from people that were actually looking for the fish; they were setting up nets, or - so we wondered what happened. I asked another expert or environmentalist, and I said what do you think happened? He said that spill was so thick that all the fish must have went in the bottom, because we could not find - I could not find that. I have a - we have our family trap line at Waswanipi Lake that all this water from Chibougamau River like leads to Waswanipi Lake. We could not find any dead fish or carcasses along the shore or

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anything. So what probably happened is because of that silt that was floating down it just buried the fish right under the, right under the river rafts, I think.

675 We know if you add the situation we are in today, even I heard Ouje-Bougoumou speak yesterday and they were, and even a non-native was concerned about the Dore Lake Mine and the situation that they have there that was, one non-native said I find fish in my - I have a cottage on a bay and I find fish on those bays. From Dore Lake all the way down, all that river goes down and meets Chibougamau River and goes down towards Waswanipi. So the concern is very real in terms of, in the transportation of this yellowcake as Matthew calls it, and we are aware of the potential of uranium in the Otish Mountains. I go to mining conferences every year, and I have heard talks about the potential it has, but we do have concerns, and a lot of questions. So, I am just going to go over all the questions that I have.

685 And the first one is what are the health concerns of uranium mining on the local population? Another question is just - I am just going to list them as I go because they came in as just a thought process. What is the lifespan of this potential mine? Like, I am not even sure, I haven't even heard what the lifespan could be. In terms of health, at what dose does one person receive, what dose of radiation or - received - be determined as safe? I mean, I have no clue. How long will the tailings stay radioactive that is extracted from the ore? So, how long will the tailings stay radioactive? What are the health and safety concerns of the people in the immediate vicinity who might be affected by the spread of radiation from the tailings and tailing ponds?

695 During transportation what are the precautionary measures that are taken to ensure the safety of the local population? And I heard these concerns either from Chapais, Chibougamau, and Mistissini. As most of the people know, I love to go fishing. What are the global health environmental impacts on increasing background radiation and water contamination? The last question is still a concern for Waswanipi Eeouch. I have explained the watersheds from Chibougamau River have far-reaching effects. Like Matthew mentioned, the water from here flows towards Chisasibi. Us, it flows down, and everything comes - from Chibougamau down comes our way. So we know all the effects of water on mining.

705 One of my biggest unanswered questions is still, still a wonder to me, and somebody has mentioned it to me several times and said what are the natural uranium leakages? Has there ever been a study done on - we know that somewhere in the future there is going to be a natural uranium leakage. Has there ever been a study done regarding a natural uranium leakage? For us in Waswanipi we have socially accepted most hydro-electric projects, forestry, and mining and other projects that are sustainable to our people and our way of life.

710 In the future we are continuing to do so, but it was very hard to try and get the forestry companies even to recognize our trap line system, our trap lines. It was only through the Mario

715 Lord case which our lawyer really liked because it was Lord vs. The Queen. And that was the, we liked that because we worked with those forestry companies. I mean, at the beginning they didn't, they so didn't understand that some - at one place there was four forestry companies cutting in one person's trap line, and it just wiped it out. Four different companies. That was a situation we got changed from the Paix des Braves.

720 But in conclusion, also, we will not accept any projects that undermine our rights and our way of life, or that has unknown impacts on our children, and that is fundamental in our community; we always try to look ahead at what we are going to leave our children. Just as an example, I just want to mention that because somebody else brought up parks, we had 53 trap lines in Waswanipi and we have one more, one more that has not been cut, and we are asking - it is in the Broadback River Valley. Yes, there is a cabin there and nobody wants to answer can we have a park there, and we are not - we are not only trying to protect it for our future generations, but we also want to say to our children this is the last old-growth forest in our region, and that is the only reason why we want to keep it, but it is also there is - the water there is, you can still drink it. You can just take your cup and have a drink, and the fish are - there is - all the, all the fish that you know in Quebec you can get them in that area, but it is something that is still unknown if we are ever going to get that. Some people wanted to trade caribou for a job, a woodland caribou for a job. That was a concern  
725  
730 for me. The concern is not woodland caribou only, the concern is the future of our children.

735 However, my final remark is we will stand by and support the Cree Nation of Mistissini and its people. Wherever they will go we will be right behind you because for us I am just saying let's protect this land for our children. Merci beaucoup.

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

740 Mr. Gull, I would like to have one question for you. When you said that you are interested in knowing what would be the level of natural leakage do you mean in the whole territory, or around here, or in the area of the project Matoush? What do you mean?

**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

745 Well, for this process I would be concerned about - I am asking that question because --

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

750 For the whole?

**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

Because it is the Otish Mountains.

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**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Yes, but for?

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**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

I don't know if there was any other studies where they discovered uranium, and they had a natural leakage. I don't know if there was ever any studies along that line ever done.

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**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Yes, but for which section of the territory do you want that --

**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

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Well, I want to know if there will be a natural leakage at Otish Mountains.

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

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If there will.

**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

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Let's say some time in the future will there be? Has there been a study ever done, whether it is internationally or somewhere in Canada?

**LA COMMISSAIRE GOYER:**

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On va pouvoir tenter de trouver des exemples d'autres mines comparables puisqu'il n'y a pas de projet puis on ne travaille pas sur un projet en particulier, puis il n'y en a pas de projet particulier. On va tenter de trouver des réponses d'autres types de gisements ailleurs, qu'est-ce que ça pourrait faire, puis pour vous expliquer qu'est-ce que pourraient être les impacts puis ce que les experts nous disent qu'on peut faire dans ces cas-là puis on va tenter de vous apporter ces réponses-là. C'est bien ce que vous souhaitez?

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**CHIEF PAUL GULL :**

795 Natural leakage anyway, I mean something is bound to happen, whether it is an earthquake  
may move it a little bit and then it might all pour out, you know? I am just, that is just a big concern  
in the future.

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR :**

800 Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres questions chez mes collègues de la commission d'à côté? So we  
thank you very much, Mr. Gull.

**THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

805 I would like to ask Johnny Loon to speak.

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**Mr. JOHNNY LOON**

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**Mr. JOHNNY LOON :**

815 Hello. My name is Johnny, Johnny Loon, and I am a father of four, four kids, beautiful kids  
actually, and... My name is Johnny and I have four children. Today I have a lot of concerns just  
thinking about you guys coming here. There is a lot of things, mixed emotions, you know? There  
is a lot of things that I am actually worrying about, and I hope for the future. Yes, I can say I love  
my wife and kids and my community and the people in it, and Quebec, and the people in it. I am  
not just going to be talking for one person, for the whole Quebec, because I did a little study on  
some of the waterways, just a... I looked a bit at the waterways and the rivers, and their flow. How  
820 many minutes do we have? All right, great, because the other guys used to cut me off, so.  
Anyway, okay.

825 First of all, you know, I was raised up in my trap line over there near Nitchequon way up  
north, and I was brought up from there, and this was the first time I ever went there again, this  
March, 2014 with a snowmobile, and that feeling, I don't know if you ever expressed it, that feeling,  
you know? I never went to a prison, but that is how I feel in my community at times, in a prison cell,  
but when I went there I was like totally free, you know? Everything was gone, all the worries, but  
then deep down inside in my heart I remembered my kids and the generations to come. Am I  
going to be the last person to see my land, or can we pass the knowledge, the practises we have to  
830 our kids and the generations to come? That is something you have to consider, really consider,  
because I am talking about not just being Cree, human life here in Quebec, and why I brought that

up was just a little story, how I am connected to my land, how I am connected to the people, to life itself, just a little - anyway, so when I looked at my land the rivers flow from Otish already. Actually, the rivers flow because it is - Otish Mountains are high, right, and river - water flows everywhere. 835 Actually, it flows north, west, east, south, and for the other part there there is a river called Mistissini River, it flows from there also. It goes down to Saguenay/Lac St-Jean. So, they will be affected, and my people will be affected, and people from up north will be affected. It is a big thing, and just with that, and Paul Gull just mentioned that just that little, little mine over there in Chapais got busted a few years ago. It went a long way, you know, it went pretty far. I mean, how much 840 damage can it do, uranium tailings? It is going to be a lot.

One thing I can say is no laws, no policies can contain something. Nothing can contain the weather, the water flows. No laws can contain that. I have seen that there is, on the video you guys showed I am concerned about that video. It kind of, anyway, it leans more in favour of mining 845 uranium; that is what I understood in that video. There is no, it doesn't say that we cannot, it sounds like they are pushing to have a uranium mine here. That is what I am concerned of. The people that came here before that said like just you guys the way you are sitting, were always - sounded like, they sounded like they are for uranium mining. Everything. And I haven't heard any Eeyou Council come in here saying we are for you guys, we are going to help you guys, we don't want any uranium here. So it is something to think about. 850

There is other things that I wanted to touch upon. Yes, and the other thing I have been always looking at is when something happens in our land, our territory in Quebec, every time there is going to be a forestry, a tree cut down, a mining, or other development the first thing I see all the 855 time is the people, the town that is closest to the project, and do you know what? Our town is never the first ones. Our Cree communities are never the first ones on that paper; it is always a French town, like Chibougamau, Chicoutimi, or other places like that. So, people from outside don't know there is other people living there that inherit the land, you know? If you read those newspapers you will see what I mean, and I want us Crees, and other people around the Cree territory to be recognized, our concerns of why we don't want uranium in our backyard. 860

When or how, how can we say this? Which no can they not understand? *Non* in French or *no* in English or *namoya*? The first time we heard that when we said no it could have stopped right there; why the other stuff, because we are not changing our minds, and that is a fact, because I 865 want my kids to practise what I have practised back out on the land. I want the other generations to practise, because they need to feel what I felt when I went back to my trap line, the freedom, back to my home. It is something, something you have to experience through living with nature. Excuse me. And some, most of the time when I look at my, the history of the Cree people, the First Nations and other nations that have been pushed around, not just the First Nations, the Africans 870 also, they have been pushed around. When are we going to be recognized? Like, in the



newspaper I said our community is never mentioned first, it is Chibougamau, that is like 200 and more kilometres away from what is going to be happening.

875 Of course scientists will say well, it won't touch that part, but what about the people that live  
right next door to it, you know? Or people - one thing, one thing I have noticed was in science, you  
know, they think more highly of animals than the First Nations. I have heard once in forestry, I don't  
know what's it called, a salamander, some special frog or something out in the forest; they said if  
we see that in one of the trees that hectare, or I don't know how many hectares you cannot touch  
because its habitat will be... you know? What about the Crees, the First Nations and other nations,  
880 you know? Caribou, woodland caribou is on the verge of extinction. We live with them, and we are  
humans also. That you have to really consider. That is what I am concerned of, for the  
Government or other Councils to overthrow our stand when we say no.

885 So, scientists out there, you have to consider the woodland caribou and the First Nations and  
the people around the Otish Mountains, not just the area here, the whole Quebec I know, because  
the other concern I have was what are you going to use it for? People say it is going to be isotope,  
or another power plant for it, but if there is a spill along the way, or if somewhere down south if one  
of the generators melt down, a big meltdown or something, and that uranium came from my  
backyard, you know, I will feel terrible because I let it go.

890 And something, one thing I want to tell the Cree people is, and other people around Quebec,  
yes, Crees are very rich because we have a big land, it is true, and we are - and also we are the  
bank tellers for that and there is things we are going to let go and things we will not let go, and that  
is one of them. Uranium, it cannot be withdrawn. It should not be withdrawn from our land. I know  
895 there is a lot of uranium out there, not just Quebec, everywhere in the land, and when I listen to that  
it leans more to okay, it is okay to go ahead, and everywhere when you read the scientists their  
recommendations how we can proceed with everything, you know? Yes, I can see you guys have  
papers, bachelor's, master's. On the other hand, yes, right now I have a high school diploma, but  
when it comes to my land I have the master's. You got it?

900 So that is, those are my concerns. You know, right now I feel like I don't want to leave the  
table until I really convince you guys that you will support our answer, which is no, to uranium. That  
is how much concern I have for my family. I will say my family is the Cree, and other nations  
around Otish Mountains. You know, everybody will be affected by it, not just us. That is why we  
905 stand to say no, because we don't want to be responsible for it, and we don't want to get raped  
again, like in the past. Like I said, we got pushed around because - one Elder I heard took it up,  
like when mining forest - a mining company comes here, yes, the mining runs for - the most years  
would be 20, not more. It is usually less, five to 15 years. What happens after, you know? Nobody  
would like it if I come to their backyard and say I am going to mine here right now, and I will give  
910 you two dollars for every million dollars I got from making that money, and after that five years, you

915 know, every year you get two dollars, you get ten dollars after that and I will be rich. Hell, that is nothing. That is something. It is not, it is not right to do that at all, and what is the mining company going to be doing? The same thing I just said; it is going to take everything so - I know uranium is really high on prices at the moment, so they are either going to push for it, so please, consider our generations to come. Not just our Cree Nation, but your generations to come, also. This land is, this Eeyou, some day land is going to be not too many, you know? Population is growing, so we shouldn't waste everything.

920 So like I say, I love everybody and I respect everybody. I am not upset at anybody, I am not angry at anybody. I want everybody to think about their own lives with love. That is why I can't, I can't give up my love, I can't surrender my love, and it is not just mining. That is our option. There is more options to it, development. There is more we can do than just mining uranium, to make our lands beautiful, with tourism. That thing will be forever, not just five years, all right?

925 So thank you so much. Any questions?

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

930 No? I think your message was as clear as it was warm and really meaningful. So, I thank you very much. I think we understood very clearly what you meant. Thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

935 (No translation)

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**Mr. SAM PETAWABANO**

940 **Mr. SAM PETAWABANO :**

Thank you. My name is Sam Petawabano, I am from the local Elders Council in Mistissini.

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

945 So we are very lucky to have you. You opened the meeting, and you are closing it.

**Mr. SAM PETAWABANO :**

950 Yes.

**LE PRÉSIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Perfect.

955 **Mr. SAM PETAWABANO :**

960 Thank you. I was asked to speak for what are our concerns, and what we, how we would be affected with this uranium mining. When I look at the, when I look at uranium, especially at the Otish Mountains, it is just like a sleeping giant. I just don't want to say, I want to say don't wake the giant. Our way of life, that is what I want to say, so I don't want to speak for very long. I won't take up much of your time because Mistissini does not support uranium mining in our territories.

965 Our concerns, our main concerns is the health of our people. If uranium, there is too many people that will be affected because we see that the Otish Mountains, that is where the snow falls the most or accumulates the most, and so there is a lot of water that comes from there when it melts. We heard with this spring what happens in Temiscaming.

970 The Temiscaming River, there was a big flood and a lot of peoples' homes were flooded, and is that what is going to happen here if, if something comes through? There is like the tailings or contamination from this ore, this mineral. Can it actually be recuperated or fixed? There is nothing you can do when there is that much water or flood. Fish, water, land and the air we breathe in. Is there anybody here who can tell me we can contain this? Is there anybody that can tell me you can contain it, the air that we breathe in, or the wind? I don't know if there is anybody who can do that, and that is where I saw that the radon and the dust that is carried in. Is that the way it is going to be? Will the contaminants just be able to basically go where the wind blows? Can somebody say that that can be contained? Is there anybody who can guarantee that?

980 I have seen it, whether - I think it is the area - that the birds are, there is a lake over there where they travelled to a lake once in the fall, passed the lake once, and they saw that there was a tailing, and it was all geese, I believe, and I don't even know if it was unhealthy, but is that the way this is going to be, where they will be storing the tailings, and can we prevent the waterfowl or the birds to land there and then leave?

985 Even though you say, even though you want to guarantee that this can be contained with a small lake known as a tailing, can that actually be contained, that the - to be absolutely contained? Life will be destroyed in many ways. We can't say that things will not be affected and give that guarantee. All the valuable teachings and lessons come from the land, including our language and traditions. All these things will be destroyed. Not too long ago, maybe about two, three nights ago my children came to our house and we started talking about this. I looked at my little  
990 granddaughter, she is not even two years old yet, and I was looking at her and I said am I the one

that is going to say yes to the thing that will destroy her? No, I don't think so, because for sure we do not support uranium mining in our territories.

995 I have heard many people say they don't support it, that is what I wanted to say. I didn't want to speak very long, thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

1000 Thank you, Sam. I will ask now for Thomas Coon, and then after Thomas speaks we will take a break to eat and then we will have Sophie Gunner and Mary Macleod will have the priority when we come back, after Thomas.

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**Mr. THOMAS COON**

**Mr. THOMAS COON :**

1010 First, I want to say that I am very grateful to be given this opportunity to speak a little. I want to thank the membership panel. I have a written brief; all these items are my notes for my talk today, and I will try to do that within 15, 15 minutes. I want you to convey a message to the Government of Quebec, and that is thank you for putting a moratorium on uranium. Now the moratorium will allow us to learn more about uranium. Now we have time to talk. Unfortunately, we have only got one year or less than that to talk about a very important issue that will not only affect  
1015 the Cree and the land which they depend on, it will also affect non-Cree generations.

We, the adults today, have a solemn duty, and our duty is to protect the last frontier of the province of Quebec. Truly, northern Quebec is the last frontier. The jobs that we create today, the projects that we initiate together in partnership should not hurt the next generation. I want to truly  
1020 say uranium is like cancer; there is no cure in cancer, and there is no cure in uranium. Uranium kills, uranium pollutes. Ever, I hope it will never, I hope the Government of Quebec will never issue a licence to authorize any uranium activity in Eeyou Istchee. If ever the Quebec Government issues a licence to go out and - any uranium activity in Eeyou Istchee, it is a licence to kill, it is a licence to pollute, to pollute the beauty of what the creator has created for all of us, for all human  
1025 beings. That is why it is our solemn duty to protect what the creator has blessed for us with.

The land itself and all its creation is a blessing not only for the Cree but other non-Crees. We welcome visitors in the Eeyou Istchee, we welcome visitors in the Lake Mistissini. Mistissini Lake is the largest natural lake in Quebec, and we are so blessed, privileged, to have the largest natural

1030 lake in Quebec, and we welcome any southerners, any visitors in the Eeyou Istchee to come and see what are we trying to protect so we will learn, they can learn from us and understand us.

1035 I think I have used up five minutes of my 15 minutes. We have our own unique, unique way of living. We have our own unique tools. We have our own unique culture and language, we have our own unique way of life. We have many similarities with the people of Quebec, the French-speaking people. Quebec wants to protect their culture and language through Bill 101; the Cree want to protect their language and their culture in different ways.

1040 I want to share with you a little story. I don't know how many people recognize this and this; the Cree people will recognize this. This is a bow, this little part is the tip of the bow. I want to tell a little story about this. When my mother passed away in 1978, my grandmother, this is how I knew that she passed away. This is the communication that she used, and you are going to ask me how is that, how could my grandmother communicate with me that she left this world? Then I was a full-time hunter, hunting, fishing way of life was my life. My grandmother was 100 miles away from; I was 200 miles north of Mistissini from here. October 8th. Maybe you will know that there is different types of birds that the Cree depend on for a living. There is a certain bird we call partridge, and I come to a bunch of partridge with only six inches of snow. I started to shoot them, one probably that distance, only three feet from the ground, the bird went down. I picked up the other birds. That little tree standing all alone, I could see where the bird has fallen in the snow. Any object that you throw in the snow you will see where it has landed, so they are easy to pick up. When I went to pick up that bird there there was no bird, no bird, only the tip of the bow.

1055 I am a hunter. I ignored it. I ignored it. I looked for the bird, I could never find it. A month after, the same experience; the bird has gone in the snow this time. This time there is two feet and a half of snow. I am on snowshoes now. Again, I dig, I could pick up the other birds, one bird missing, only the tip of the bow. Again, as a young foolish eager trapper I ignored it. I ignored this little plant, I ignored it. I went on my way.

1060 A month after, the third time, the third time. The third time it happened; this time I picked up this little piece of tip of the bow and I put it in my parka pocket. October, November, December. We were in a little tent, my father-in-law, his name was Kenny Manscombe, my brother-in-law, Robbie Manscombe and me; three of us in the little tent. I cooked some of the birds that I killed. There is a candlestick between my grandfather and me. When he was ready to blow that candlestick I said just a minute, just a minute, and I held this through the candlestick, and I asked my father-in-law what is that. He looked at it and he said it is the tip of the bow, which is true. The very tip there it has got three pointers, the tip of the bow.

1065 I told him what happened in October, November, and this evening three times. For a while he didn't say anything, then finally he told me. Thomas, a woman, a lady, the job of a woman is to

1070 collect the bows to maintain the camp. The partridge, a woman will seldomly hunt big game or  
trap, they only hunt small game, rabbit and partridge. That bird is a partridge, this is a bow. A  
woman is trying to import, pass an important message to you. Someone that loves you, someone  
that cares for you, someone is trying to pass an important message, and I asked him what is the  
message. He told me you have to wait.

1075  
1080 At that time we had the Hudson Bay pick up our fur, and the Hudson Bay manager was  
scheduled to come in January. This is in December 22, to resupply our camp and pick up our fur,  
and when the Hudson Bay manager arrived at our camp I remember this; when he got off the plane  
he was looking, looking for someone as he got off the plane, and he spotted me. Instead of  
shaking the hand of the Elder first he went directly to me. Now I am going to know what the  
message is, and he told me Thomas, Thomas, I am sorry, your grandmother passed away October  
7th, and October 8th was the first incident. That is an example of a special relationship that the  
Crees have with the land, with God's creation. The creator has allowed my grandmother to pass  
an important message to me, that she now has left this world.

1085  
1090 To make a point I am going to share you another story. My dad now has been gone seven  
years. I never knew that it was going to be his last visit to his trap line. When we went up in the fall  
I have always taken my mum, my dad to our trap line, every fall. My mum is still alive, thanks to the  
good Lord. My dad has passed away seven years ago. Eight years ago, I never knew that was the  
last trip we were going to make together. We were there for three weeks, and when it was time to  
go home they took the plane straight to Mistissini and before we took off on the camp, as we taxied  
out on a single Otter aircraft he asked his little grandson: Tommy, Tommy can you tell the pilot, who  
was a non-native pilot, when we are airborne from this camp can you circle twice, can you circle  
twice? And the pilot said yes, and as they took off they went higher and higher and higher and  
1095 higher, circled three times that campsite. My dad only looked out the window, only looked out the  
window as they circled the campsite. He looked at the hills, he looked at the beauty of God's  
creation, he looked all the surrounding three times, and then the pilot asked little Tommy, the  
grandson: ask your grandpa can we now take our direction, and as Tommy tapped his  
grandfather's shoulder, and dad turned around, he was all in tears. Tears. Two-hour flight from our  
1100 trap line to Mistissini, all in tears, two hours. When he got off the plane we had to help him out.

1105 And we wondered why, why did dad shed a tear? He never told us. He never told us, but I  
knew. He never told me, but I knew that was his last visit to his happy hunting ground. He will  
never see it again; that was his last trip, and surely enough that October he was diagnosed of  
kidney failure. He had to be in haemodialysis three times a week. He could never, never visit his  
trap line again. That was his last visit. That is why he shed the tear.

1110 Another experience in Wemindji back in 1980 when the Hydro project was finished in 1975.  
 Hydro organized a tour for the Elders that was the CRA Annual General Assembly, and I happened  
 to be there, and it took two aircrafts to give them a tour, of Elders from the different communities,  
 especially from Wemindji and Chisasibi. I happened to be down the river after the meeting, just  
 walking along the shore when the two planes arrived. I went and asked the Elders how was their  
 1115 tour, how was the tour? So, I helped the pilot tie the plane down and I opened the door. Much to  
 my surprise I helped the first Elder down the step, he was in tears. The second Elder, he was in  
 tears. All the Elders were in tears, and I could not ask the question I wanted to ask: how was the  
 tour? The same plane, the same thing. All the Elders were in tears. The old lady with her kerchief  
 wiping her tears, I could not ask the question I wanted to ask: how was the tour?

1120 Why did dad shed a tear? Why did the Elders shed a tear when they see the reservoirs?  
 That was for the love of the land. The land that has sustained them, the land that has supported  
 them, and the Cree has been on the land since time immemorial. The Cree still depend on the  
 land today. There is 30 percent of the Cree that have a full-time occupation as hunters and  
 trappers and fishermen. That is why we do not support uranium.

1125 If I had my way, if I was the sole decision-maker on uranium today uranium will be banned in  
 the Eeyou Istchee. There would be no uranium activity whatsoever in the future because that land  
 is so precious. The land is so delicate. The land is how our people have survived from. With all  
 the equipment that I have here; very briefly, a drum, that is a unique symbol, a unique tool. If you  
 1130 look at the drum, that is all from the hide and wood, all from God's creation. A different style, the  
 Cree. Again, all from animals, all from creation it is made. It is made from God's creation. What is  
 the purpose of the drum? I got 15 minutes; maybe my 15 minutes is up. Unique, it is a very unique  
 symbol. It is a very unique tool, and only Elders drum in the Eeyou Istchee. It is a communication  
 tool, a communication tool to the creator, a communication tool to the land, and it is a  
 1135 communication tool to the animals.

You are not guaranteed that you will catch everything, that the hunt is going to be good every  
 year. You are not guaranteed. Just like a fisherman; you are not guaranteed they are going to  
 catch trophy fish today or fish today. It is the same. Before the hunt starts that is when they drum,  
 1140 or if we have a successful hunt we will have a feast and after the feast we play the drum to give  
 thanks to the creator for all the blessing, and especially for its creation, and not only the Cree but  
 also the non-Cree.

The Crees have survived on the land for generation to generation. They have made their  
 own equipment, a beautiful little toboggan, and I use this and we are walking now with my little  
 1145 grandson. They have made their own snowshoes in order to go buy the bread and the butter on  
 the table for their families and their grandchildren, with a little tool we call môhkatâkan, carving  
 knife, you can make these items.

1150

Wepahâkonâkan, snow shovel; when you hunt, fish, and trap a very important item. The tip of this wepahâkonâkan, the shape of it, can tell you the direction that the moose is going, or the caribou is going, the tip of that. There is a way to do it. The Cree have managed with beautiful snowshoes like these. You will notice they are beautifully decorated because this is what helps you to travel from one area to another, to try to find the food that you need to put on the table for your children and your family, to support your family. Beautifully decorated.

1155

Things made of hide, caribou hide and moose hide, a walking-out custom. The Cree are dependent on the fur for their livelihood. The Cree have, from God's creation they have made their own clothing, beautifully made caribou hide mittens with fur trimming. Moose hide, they have used moose hide everywhere. Since my time is up, and I cannot explain everything the way I wanted to explain, I am going to leave this CD to the panel members. This CD was shot in 1972 by National Film Board of Canada. This CD is called 'The Cree Hunters of Mistissini', our people who lived on the land sparsely. This is an education documentary so people can learn more about the Cree way of life and get to understand more why the Cree want to protect the land.

1160

1165

There are too many uncertain risks, there are too many unknowns about uranium, there is too much at risk. Just like cancer, it kills. Uranium kills and pollutes. Thank you very much.

**THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

1170

The gentleman that I am sitting with wants you to know he is very thankful for speaking with us. Thank you, Thomas. So we are going to take a little break now for supper, and then we will be back at seven o'clock. I will ask at 7:00; Sophie Gunner will be asked to speak, and then Mary Macleod. There are other people that wanted to speak that put their names down, so we will start at seven o'clock.

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**SÉANCE AJOURNÉE AU 5 JUIN 2014 À 19 H**

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Je soussignée, YOLANDE TEASDALE, sténographe officielle, certifiée sous mon serment d'office que les pages qui précèdent sont et contiennent la transcription exacte et fidèle des propos recueillis par moi au moyen du sténomasque, le tout selon la loi.

ET J'AI SIGNÉ :

1195

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Yolande Teasdale,  
Sténographe officielle

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