

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

308

TRAN59

Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

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POUR LA COMMISSION DU BAPE : M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, président
M. JOSEPH ZAYED, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEBJ : M. JOHN PAUL MURDOCH, président
Mme MANON CYR, commissaire
Mme MÉLISSA BROUSSEAU SAGANASH, commissaire
M. JEAN PICARD, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEK : AUCUN REPRÉSENTANT

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

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

VOLUME 4

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Mistissini

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SESSION ADJOURNED TO NOVEMBER 13, 2014 – 19:00

**NOVEMBER 13th, 2014
AFTERNOON SESSION**

5 **THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

Before we begin, we would like to ask someone to do the prayer for us, a tradition that we do before any meetings. I would like somebody to come to the front and do an opening prayer.

10 **REVEVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

(Prayer.)

15

**Mr. PAUL JOHN MURDOCH, PRESIDENT
JAMES BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

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Meekwech! I want to inform you how this meeting came to be. Today, we will be discussing the mining. We will be talking about the mining of uranium. I know here in Mistissini (inaudible) and a lot of – the position of Mistissini has been forwarded.

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The Government of Québec has over a year and to review the issues (inaudible) of uranium mining in... (no translation due to a technical problem).

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The Bureau d'audiences publiques have been mandated to review all issues related to uranium mining, environmental issues. Their mandate is to gather information throughout these public hearings that they will be submitting to the government.

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Madame Goyer apparently is not here at the moment – this is their job, it is their mandate, they are given one year. They have been mandated to tour the province, the province of Québec, to listen to the views and the people of the province of Québec, as well as hearing from different groups in... And in the end, they will be required to produce a report that will be submitted to the government by May of 2015.

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And then from there a position, a decision will be taken by the government with respect to uranium mining.

45 And in carrying out this mandate, it's the third trip that they have done to Eeyou Istchee. Then in September, experts were brought in to give us a clear understanding, explanations on the issues surrounding uranium mining. We were in Chisasibi as well, yesterday in Chibougamau, and today we are here in Mistissini.

We are here to gather your views and we are here to listen to your presentations, and to hear your voices. Once we are done with this, following this trip, we will be submitting our report and we will... (no translation).

50 When they performed the mandate, there were guidelines that they need to follow in performing their mandate. (No translation).

55 (Inaudible due to sound problem) ...the public to present their thoughts, their opinions on the uranium mining, to listen also to your opinions about the Matoush project, but we are not here for that specifically, we are only here for the uranium. And if you want to hear in English or Cree translation, you have to use the headphones.

60 The lady who is sitting at the back, you can submit your name to her if you want to share your opinion, your comments. We want prevent anyone from sharing their comments, because we want to hear a lot of people to put their opinions, to share their opinions, to share their comments. We will welcome every comment that is been made. So we ask that you consider other people that will want to share their comments and opinions because it will take time.

65 Before we continue, I will ask my colleague here if he wants to share anything.

**M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, PRÉSIDENT
BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

75 I thank you Paul John for this complete introduction. In fact, I won't have many much to add to this because you made a very complete picture of our mandate and the way that we proceed.

80 So, in the name of my colleague, Joseph, and myself, I want to tell you that we are very pleased to be here for the third time and we are here, as he said, to get your opinion, to have an idea of the way you see this question and we will take note of everything and it will part of our report.

I'll just remember you: if you want to give your advice on this whole question, you register in the back with the co-ordinator of our Commission, Ms. Rita LeBlanc. She will take your name and John Paul will call you when it is the time to do so.

85 So, I will close on that and I will leave to my colleague the way to handle the following.

**CHIEF RICHARD SCHECAPIO
CREE NATION OF MISTISSINI**

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THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH :

The first person to present will be Chief of Mistissini, Richard Shecapio.

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CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO :

First of all, I want to thank you for this opportunity to be able to bring issues related to uranium.

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As you know, here in Mistissini, it's been a while since we've had our discussions and putting our position with respect to this issue and I am thankful for the opportunity today to.

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[...] members also from the BAPE back to our community, our territory of Eeyou Istchee. I would also like to thank the members of our community for being here today and for their support on the issue that we are discussing.

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I also want to thank the people of Mistissini who are listening on the air and for all the presentations that will be on the air today. And for those who are able to attend this consultation (...) will be the question of prime importance for the Cree Community of Mistissini and for the entire Cree Nation.

115

First of all, I would like to say that Mistissini Crees are more united than ever on the question of uranium development on their territory. I am here today on my own behalf and on behalf of all those who have invested time and energy in reiterating our objection to any uranium exploration project.

120

In light of the current scientific knowledge in waste management, any exploration done today would fall short of the basic tenets of safe sustainable development. Moreover, we increasingly question the value and sustainability of uranium development projects and have no desire to see such projects on our territory or anywhere else in Québec. We firmly believe that uranium

exploration cannot be done without causing harm to the environment. This view is shared by a majority of the stakeholders who have appeared before the various phases of the BAPE hearings.

125 We obviously believe that the BAPE must consider the detrimental nature of waste generated by exploration and the lack of rigorous information on its long term effects, which is crucial for any project to meet the criteria needed to move forward.

130 In light of numerous presentations, BAPE should take these realities into account and make recommendations that would lead to a moratorium on uranium industry in Québec.

135 It is also important to reiterate that whatever decisions are made, no project can go ahead in the Eeyou Istchee without Cree consent. We will, therefore, use every possible means to protect the integrity of our land and our traditional way of life as well as ensuring a future for generations yet to come.

140 Mr. Francoeur and Mr. Zayed, you were no doubt already aware of our opposition to uranium exploration in Eeyou Istchee. On the other hand, while it may seem that everything has been said, this final phase of the hearings in Mistissini provides us with an opportunity to take a look back at recent events.

145 Recent events in the uranium sector in Eeyou Istchee, exemplified by our experience with Strateco's attempt to move ahead with the Matoush Project near Mistissini. I also encourage you to take the time to read the position paper we have submitted which provides an exhaustive description of the various stages and obstacles we have encountered in this matter. It will provide you with insight into our determination.

150 These steps were taken primarily to gain a better understanding of the real implications of uranium exploration and what we have observed to be its harmful effects on the environment. In 2006, Strateco began working on developing the Matoush exploration project in the Otish Mountains where our drinking water source is located, some 200 kilometers North-East of Mistissini.

155 In 2008, Strateco sent preliminary data to the JBNQA's Evaluating Committee to review the project information; based on this preliminary information, COMEV prepared its directive on the scope of the impact study to be done and sent it to Strateco.

In early 2009, COMEV made specific reference to the need for the proponent to deliver an Aboriginal Consultation Plan. Shortly thereafter, the Mistissini Environment Department requested funding from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency so that community members could

160 prepare to participate in the review process of the first uranium project ever to be considered for
Eeyou Istchee.

165 On March 30th, 2010, the Cree Nation of Mistissini was awarded funds to seek outside
expertise. Within weeks, the first of two public hearings took place in Mistissini, conducted jointly by
the Federal and Provincial review bodies.

170 After careful review of ESIA submitted by Strateco, significant gaps in the information were
highlighted and discussed. On May 25, 2010 only weeks after receiving the ESIA and CEEA
funding, the Cree Nation of Mistissini hosted the first of two public hearings.

175 For us, it was blatantly obvious from the hearings that Strateco had provided very little
information about uranium, advanced uranium exploration, uranium mining, radioactivity and its
possible effects on plants, animal life, water and air. At that point, it was clear that we needed more
information if we were to make responsible decisions.

Over the summer, the Cree Nation of Mistissini decided to organize three public information
sessions to provide unbiased information about Strateco's advanced exploration project and
document community concerns.

180 Based on what we heard from experts, on November 22, 2010, I called the special meeting
to allow community members to state their positions on the Strateco Project to the Council of the
Cree Nation of Mistissini.

185 The following day, which was November 23, 2010, the second and final COFEX and COMEX
public hearing was held in Mistissini where I addressed the panel members and told them that
given the depth and scope of community concerns, the Cree Nation of Mistissini had no choice but
to reject Strateco's project.

190 The community survey on advanced uranium exploration and mine on Mistissini's traditional
territory was conducted from January 11 to 21, 2011. More than 650 individual responses were
collected with a large majority opposing uranium development. Following numerous open
discussions on moratorium on uranium, the Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini unanimously
adopted a resolution in January 2011 asking the Government of Québec to implement a
moratorium in Mistissini.

195 In August 2012, the Grand Council of the Crees declared a permanent moratorium on
uranium exploration, mining and waste disposal in Eeyou Istchee. In October 2012, the Canadian
Nuclear Safety Commission issued Strateco a five-year license for advanced uranium exploration

200 in Eeyou Istchee without our consent and with no regard for our point of view or previous statements.

On March 28, 2013, Québec announced it would not issue a certificate of authorization for any uranium project until the BAPE had submitted its report.

205 I am sure you will understand that this was an onerous process for us given that Strateco seemed to have the benefit of the head start. Well the process did not provide us with sufficient time and while little attention was paid to our vision in this matter, after consulting with our community and with experts both within and outside of our community, we made the right decision for our community and for the continued existence of our Nation and our land.

210 There is still a great deal of research to be done. Not enough guarantees can be given for the optimal safety or the possible rehabilitation of waste dump sites.

215 After all, what company, regardless of how serious their intentions, can predict and guarantee that it can operate and ensure optimal safety conditions over tens of thousands of years?

220 As Chief of the Cree Nation of Mistissini, I cannot accept such a project, however lucrative, without further guarantees; there will be no special social acceptance and the current context of uranium exploration shows that there is a reason to believe that the future of our territory and of Québec's largest lake, Lake Mistassini, is in jeopardy because of a desire to move faster than science and act solely in shareholders' interest.

225 We are open to development as evidenced by the many projects that have been established on our territory. However, on this question, the Mistissini Crees are opting for life and continuity rather than for profit and for short-term economic gain.

We believe your report must take these elements into consideration. Thank you for your attention. Thank you for this opportunity. *Meekwech!*

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

230 Thank you Chief. First of all, I would like to know, since you have mentioned that we need more research, that we need more guarantees, why are you in the position of asking permanent moratorium instead of just a moratorium?

CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

235 Following the results obtained from the community survey we had conducted in 2011, it was clear and evident by our people that the option that was favoured was a permanent moratorium.

240 And given the responses that we have been getting in our involvement with the review of ESIA on
the Strateco project, the Matoush Project, there were many occasions that we felt that very little
information was provided by the proponent.

245 There were a lot of questions and concerns that were raised by our people with regards to
the water downstream of the major rivers; the water table was also another great concern. A lot of
these information was not made available. The information that was available concentrated on not
a big parameter where the project was located. So without this data, you know, there was very little
information that was available for our people on the concerns that they raised.

250 But for a moratorium, our people, based on the results that we have compiled, opts for a
permanent moratorium. You know, we stand united with the whole Cree Nation when the Grand
Council declared a permanent moratorium on uranium industry in the Province of Québec.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

255 I would like to ask you just one more question. In your conclusion, it is written:

*“We anticipate that once Quebeckers learn what we know about the effects and the risks on
uranium mining, they will stand with us in our position to uranium mining.”*

260 What would you like that Quebeckers be aware about?

CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

265 A lot of our expertise that we were able to get, whether it's inside of our community or outside
expertise, a lot of the information of, I call it myself traditional experts, which are our own people,
have brought out a lot of important matters based on their observations of the livelihood that they
lived using traditional territory in the past and what they see, the changes happening today within
the territory.

270 We see the effects of climate changes. I believe, at the start of these hearings in June of this
year, we had one presenter who brought forward what happened at the Temiscamie River this past
spring. The water level was so high, you know, there was – it was one of the first times that we
have seen in years the water level being so high. As a result, it flooded and created a lot of
damages, you know, for our people as well, they're hunting in that area, their personal belongings.

275 This was a result of the environmental effects of the climate change. And based on the
observations as the main users of the land, we highly emphasize and recognize the expertise that
they possess.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

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Let me ask you one more question and a final question. Do you think that nuclear energy can reduce the impact of greenhouse emission with respect to climate change?

CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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I am not a scientist.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

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No, but you just mentioned the relationship between climate change and what people observes on the field, and I wonder if you can make any relationship between energy, greenhouse emission and climate change. Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

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I had a question but I think that you have already sort of answered it, because I had a two-part question. Like I said the first part, I think you have already answered, and the first part was: when the community of Mistissini – and I am not just talking about uranium in this case, say it's a conservation area or protected area or some project that Mistissini wants to do, that has something to do with the land, my question was going to be: who do you turn to for advice? Who do you turn to for guidance or, you know, when you are developing your project and you are wondering how to do it, and you're looking for information, who do you turn to? And I think you mentioned the Elders but I'll let you answer, and not just the Elders but the land users, but I will let you answer for yourself.

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But the second part of the question was when you look at the Government of Québec and look at what Mistissini wants to do whether it's a protected area, whatever it is, is it your experience, as a leader of the community, that the government plays a supportive role? They are an ally or they are an obstacle or, you know, would you consider going to the government for guidance on how to proceed in development? So it's a two-part question: how it's done and what role the government plays?

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CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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With regard to any project that happens on our territory and also to me the projects that require the attention of our people, and in the case of many resource development, projects happen in our territory, part of the consultation process that we do involves not only one group of stakeholders but it involves various stakeholders.

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So we call on consultation meetings inviting anybody who is interested to come and with this consultation process that we implement, we provide as much information as we can and rely also on the feedback that we get from our people; and in most cases when it effects the land, when it effects resources, many occasions and almost every occasion our Elders and our users of the land play such an important role in providing that direction because, you know, they see it on an annual basis when they occupy the land and continue their practice of way of living, they see that.

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With regard to your other question, when we've looked at, during my time as Chief – now, I can go back to the past four years –, the Cree Nation of Mistissini has been only one of the communities that has received a lot of attention for development. We are looking at the construction of the extension of Highway 167 North, we've also looked at the Renard Diamond Mine, there is also other projects in the region that we are trying to get them going, like the Albanel-Temiscamie-Otish park project. You know, there is a lot of on-going projects, resource development projects.

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Of course with the uranium project as well, you know, it was something that, you know, we're here today and the way I have seen these projects, we were able to, I wouldn't say that no -- we are able to cooperate and collaborate and work together on these projects but with regard to uranium, we have seen that it could get challenging on the basis that we -- to try and ensure that our concerns or even the understanding of our way of life is understood by the rest of the Province of Québec.

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And I think that one important is to clearly understand and recognize the livelihood of our people, the way how our people use the land, how they continue to harvest, hunts and trap. This today still exists and in most cases, this is where the challenge usually comes is to try to make others and the rest of the province understand the value that we have in protecting the land.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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I would like to ask you a few questions. You said that no project should go on without the Cree consent. Actually, the treaty governing the territory says that you have different instruments to evaluate the project, and once they are evaluated, there is a final decision somewhere. But it's the government, the administrator of the Convention that makes this decision.

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What, in your opinion, is the difference between the consent and the veto? Because I don't see a veto in the treaty, there is a final decision by the administrator. Could you explain me your position when you say: "No project can go on without our consent"?

CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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Oh, I think what's important to fully understand, you know I take the experience that we have on the review of the Matoush Project. This project itself, our people raised a lot of concerns and when people raised a lot of concerns, it boils down to no social acceptance of the project. And with all the things that we've done, the information sessions that we've organized for our people, we come to a consensus with our people participating, and based on that we make a decision whether we would agree on a project like that.

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In the case of this Matoush Project, it was evident that this project was not acceptable with our people. So if it's not acceptable for our people, our project should not proceed.

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We've stated our concerns and the concerns that we've stated are not only concerns of the Cree, they are also concerns of other Quebeckers or other people around the globe. So, as you've seen in the past, the Crees have consented to many resource development projects. We looked at mining projects, hydroelectric projects, I would say a great number of projects were consented by Crees. But with regards to an issue that is questionable, uranium industry, it is something totally different.

375

I think you have heard so many questions, so many concerns in the past few months with regards to environmental effects, the long-term radioactivity and everything else. So based on that, when there is no consent and the reasons are valid, that's why I say this, there is no Cree consent on this project, on uranium itself.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

So in your opinion, it's kind of a moral and political stand. You know that the letter of the law or the treaty can be different, but you say: it cannot go even if it would be legally feasible.

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CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

If you look at the -- collectively as a Nation we've come together and reached our position done on a collective approach, not on one individual's approach, so there is a big difference. So it is not coming from an individual nor one community, but it's a collective approach, it is a Cree Nation approach and it's an approach where the Crees have declared a permanent moratorium on uranium.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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You stated at different moments in your written brief and in your presentation a few minutes ago that you think that related to uranium mining, there is no guarantee that an eventual mess, an eventual accident that could happen, you know, in a century, in two centuries, that there would be no guarantee to take care of that so that the people will have to live with it up to a certain point.

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If there would be such a system to guarantee that the clean-up would be done, what would be the price, and even if it happens on a very long-term basis, would it mean something to you and would it be different in your judgement?

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CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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In our case, in the case of Mistissini, we know exactly where the potential of uranium mining is located; it's in a location where it's fragile, it's in the Otish Mountains and a lot of major rivers, you know, the water source comes from the Otish Mountains. And also given that the prestigious that we have, the pristine we have on the Lake Mistassini itself which is the largest fresh water lake in the Province of Quebec, for anything our Elders have stated in the past, whatever that we should try, everything we do to try and protect the Mistassini Lake, for any type of scientific procedures or guarantees that may be available, given that, you know, the wisdom of our Elders and also the directions that we get from Elders, it would be very important for the Cree to agree that even if there was proof of any guarantees that they could contain the waste, it would be very difficult for us to, because of the location where the potential uranium mining is. I'm focussed, you know, on Mistassini territory alone.

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For other places where there is potential in the Province of Québec, I could not comment because I don't know the landscape of where the potential is. But to this date, I don't believe there is any area that was identified, where they could contain waste emplacement, contain the radioactive that stays there for thousands, and thousands of years, I don't believe that there is a solution on that.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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Could you tell me what in your opinion this present hearing on uranium has brought to your community?

CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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For one thing, in the past, in our past participation would the Federal and Provincial Review Panel, it focussed on one specific project; it focussed on the Matoush Project; same case with CNSC. Many times, the questions and concerns that our people raised were told: "We are not there yet. We are still at exploration phase." And based on that, it was a way for the proponent to find a way not to provide either that information or not respond to that question or the concerns.

445

Now, with this opportunity where the BAPE has been given a mandate to do a province wide review on uranium industry, it provides an opportunity for our people to raise these concerns, to raise these questions and to possibly get a feedback as well from the BAPE and to take into consideration all the comments, all the concerns that are raised not only by our people but everyone else who is participating in the BAPE hearings province wide.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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A last one; you said that you are not opposed to projects but you know that any project to which you will consent will have impacts. So, the territory will add up and the impacts will add up progressively, and it will change -- it's a kind of irreversible evolution. How do you see the future of this territory if you take into account the fact that there will be projects, you will consent, you will give your consent to many of them and progressively, it will change; how do you see that?

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CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:

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We have seen projects, many projects as a matter of fact on Eeyou Istchee. We have seen hydro development projects and we have seen the impacts that were created from those projects. We have seen also mining projects happening within the Eeyou Istchee and there, again, yes, there will be impacts for sure with resource development.

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With regards to the issue that, you know, we are focussed today in these hearings, uranium, I believe there is a big difference in terms of the possible and the potential effects of uranium, and that has to do with the waste management, the waste that is left behind that remains radioactive for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. So just the long-term effects of those -- those we cannot, those kinds of potential and possible risks that will harm our environment, that will harm the animals and the plants that we depend on and may also pose a threat to the livelihood of our people; as you know our people are users of the land. So there is a big difference in terms of the waste that is left in there and remains radioactive when it's uranium industry.

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480 So yes, there will be impacts for sure as we have seen in the past, like the hydroelectric projects, we have seen huge impacts in there. But there again, the Crees collectively stuck together and consented to many projects within Eeyou Istchee but they have also said no to some projects, one of them being of course the Matoush for the Crees in Mistissini, and the Great Whale River in the Whapmagoostui territory.

485 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

490 But my question was more a way to have your vision of this because you know, the Cree population globally increases from year to year and rapidly, so it will more and more harvesting, projects will multiply and I want to understand if -- will it be possible to maintain enough wilderness to perpetuate your culture and traditions?

500 **CHIEF RICHARD SHECAPIO:**

495 The territory, we look at the territory, again focussed on Mistissini territory, we have over 80 traplines occupied by different families, family units, and it's obvious that we are going to see the growth in terms of the population, you know, depending on the people, how they wish to pursue like what we see today. You know, some choose to go for employment, some choose to practice their way of life, you know, continue the livelihood that our Elders have lived on dating back years and years, but I look at the -- there has to be a balance in terms of resource development projects in the future.

500 Today it's still very important, you know, that we create a balance where there is protection to ensure that our livelihood in the future continues for the generations and generations to come and at the same time, of course there will be other projects that will be brought forward.

505 Now, we look at the Plan Nord, a 20-year plan proposed by Québec. Of course, there is going to be possibility therefore in our economic development. But it should also be really understood that our people still maintain that strong culture, the strong language which many aboriginal groups across, you know, have unfortunately lost their language.

510 But today we see our children, three or four years old, still communicating with our own language; that itself is a prime example that our culture and our language still very vibrant and very strong in our community. And it would be very important for us to continue to protect this and encourage this as one way to protect the Cree way of life. But there has to be a balance in the future; we look at economic development, we also look at our way of life.

515 Like I said, we do not oppose projects, we are open to development but in the case of uranium, our position has been firm since 2010.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

520 Thank you. That was my last question. Paul John?

Mrs. MANON RICHMOND
Mrs. PRICILLA BOSUM

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THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

Manon Richmond from the Cree Woman of Eeyou Istchee Association.

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Mrs. MANON RICHMOND:

Hello everybody. Good day. My name is, like Jean Paul said, Manon Richmond. I am here with a Board of Directors which is Priscilla Bosum. We are here to present you a statement that was prepared by our President which unfortunately was not here. I apologize if we did not submit on time but what is important is that we are here and we are going to share with you what was the research and what we think about uranium.

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Mrs. PRICILLA BOSUM:

On behalf of the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee, we are happy to have the opportunity to become involved in the decision making process by providing you with our opposing views on uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee territory.

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(Mrs. PRICILLA BOSUM AND Mrs. MANON RICHMOND READ THEIR PRESENTATION)

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So on this, we would like to say thank you for listening to us. And this was prepared by our President and endorsed by the Board of Directors.

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We are not specialists but if you want to ask us how it is to be out there on the land with our family, that we could answer your questions on that.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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I would like to know if the information you've got about – let's take as an example, the Deline in the community of Deline, you said that during decades, they continued to pay a high price. During the hearings we had in September, we were told by many witnesses that the safety rules

that were applied in those times, in fact there were almost no safety rules, so everybody was, you know, exposed to uranium in a way that is not permitted today.

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In many mines, today, there are not even workers; there are robots that control from the surface so nobody can be exposed to radon in those areas. They are working in a clean ventilated room at the surface. But this is an exception, that's for the richest mine. But there are many, many new techniques that present today this type of exposition for the workers. Were you aware of that or not?

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Mrs. MANON RICHMOND :

I was not aware. I know there are lots of technologies out there but I am aware that this still happens on the land. No matter what, it's still happening out there on the land, and this is why we are here today. For us, the land is important to leave it as is and keep it protected and safe because that's where we get the health it provides for us. It gives us many things. We harvest lots from it and that is where we have healthy life style.

570

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

So I understand that you are not confident in the evolution of the technologies in the evolution of the safety standards, you don't believe in that, you don't think that it can be contained, it can be controlled, you don't think it is possible?

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580

MRS. MANON RICHMOND:

Well, there is always room for improvement in technologies. So back then, we had the technology and today we see the problems that, well there were no safety measure and we had that technology, and today we see all the problems that it is. So there is always room for improvements, so I would not trust those technologies for the land or from uranium mines.

585

You have anything to add Priscilla?

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Okay. I get your point.

Mrs. MANON RICHMOND :

595

Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

600 I thank you very much.

Mr. THOMAS COON

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THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

Meekwech! Thomas Coon, Cree Trapper's Association.

610 **Mr. THOMAS COON :**

Waachiyaa. Just one correction Mr. Chairman. I do not represent the Cree Trapper's Association, it is wrongfully registered.

615

(Cree no translation.) I want to say hello, *Waachiyaa* to the distinguish guests and members of the panel. I too like to welcome you to our community of Mistissini and to Eeyou Istchee. As you know you heard me before, we are blessed with a beautiful lake; Mistassini Lake is the largest natural lake in the Province of Québec and I hope you will come and visit us in the summer time so we can tour the lake. It is a 120 miles long and 40 miles wide, it's going to be a nice tour.

620

I want to thank you for holding the hearings in our community on a very important subject, uranium. Decisions that will be made on the crucial important subject by the Government of Québec will affect not only this generation but generations to come, both the Crees and non Crees, both natives and non-natives.

625

My name is Thomas Coon. I am a former Vice-President of Cree Trapper's Association but I do not represent the Cree Trapper's Association at this hearing. But now, I am semi-retired and slowly working my way back to the land.

630

Before I went to residential school at the age of seven, I was raised on the land, 200 miles north from here. I was at residential school for five years only and I went back to the land for 12 years on a full time basis as hunter, trapper, fisherman and a harvester. The land was always in my heart and the people of the land.

635

Today, I sit before you. I do not represent any organization or a group of people. I represent myself and the land and the nature and the inhuman habitants of the land which are the animals, the birds, the fish, and the water, the air and other little creatures, plants, flowers that cannot speak

640 for themselves. They too need all the protection they can receive from human beings like us. If we don't protect them, no one is going to protect them. If we don't speak for nature, the Mother Earth, who is going to speak for her and protect her? She has sustained us, she has provided for us in so many ways: farming, agriculture, hunting, fishing, and trapping. She has provided us with fruits, vegetables, meat, and everything that we needed on this earth to survive. She has provided us with our daily needs and blessed us richly.

645 Sometimes we forget to look back and count our blessing. The blessings that the Mother Earth has provided for all of us; it is our turn to protect her. The Crees have grown and lived off the land since time memorial; they have raised their children from the land. Today the land is still occupied and used by the Cree people.

650 The James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement was negotiated in the early 70s, executed in 1975, was to protect the land and the traditional livelihood of the Crees. Following the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement, other agreements were negotiated and executed with the same spirit and the same intent which was to protect the land and all his creation.

655 I personally witnessed an important incident. When the Cree Elders toured the James Bay Hydro Project at its completion in the early 80s, tour organized by Hydro-Québec, they came off the plane like if they all went to a funeral. They all had tears in their eyes as if they had lost a loved one. There are no words that can comfort when one loses a loved one. There were no words that could comfort these Elders, what they saw and what Hydro-Québec has done to their lands; a land
660 that has provided life for them and for their families for so many years.

My late dad was the same when he visited his trapline for the last time; he had tears in his eyes. These were the tears of sadness. He knew that he would never visit his trapline again; a land that has sustained and provided for him and his family of 14 children. Just like trying to find
665 comfortable words for the loss of a loved one, there are no words that can describe the love for the land that the Cree people have; a land that has provided for them for centuries and centuries, and still provides for them today, and will provide for them into the future; a land is their hope into the future.

670 The majority of the unemployed people in Canada and the majority of the unemployed people in Québec are the First Nation's people. In order for them to survive in the future, the land is the only hope for the unemployed First Nation's people. Welfare is not the answer. Northern Québec is the last frontier; together, all Quebeckers including the Government of Québec must now make a stand to save the last frontier.
675

680 We must not allow destructive forces to destroy the beauty of nature that we are all blessed
with. We, when I mean we, I mean the Cree and non-Cree, native and non-native, are the stewards
of the land, and we must do our job, our duty and our responsibility to protect it for your
grandchildren and my grandchildren. More than we know, we may be faced with the greatest threat
to our lives; uranium can do a serious harm. Uranium can do more damages than what we can
imagine or think. We do not need uranium to survive. We can live without it. Uranium pollutes,
damages environment, causes damages to human health, causes damages to the health of our
wildlife and causes damages in many ways and many forms than we can ever imagine.

685
690 Despite all the information I have personally learned about uranium, I am not convinced that
uranium is okay and safe. There is no safe uranium. In the past, we survived without uranium and
we can live into the future without uranium. We do not need it. I plead to the Government of
Québec and I plead to all Quebecers to ban all uranium activities within Eeyou Istchee, to ban all
uranium activities within the whole Province de Québec. We do not need it, we can live without it.

Thank you.

695 **THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:**

Meekwech Thomas.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

700 Thank you for your (sound problem). ...uranium. So despite the research, despite the
technology, as I understand your position, you will never find that uranium would be safe. Is that
right?

705 **Mr. THOMAS COON:**

You are right. There is no safe uranium.

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

710 Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

715 You said something like the land is a kind of a last resort to the people who have no job or no
revenue; is it what you said in your brief?

Mr. THOMAS COON :

720 Yes. Yes, the unemployment is still a problem in the Cree communities. It's not only in the Cree communities, it's throughout the whole Province of Québec and right across Canada, the majority of the unemployed people are the First Nation's people so what is the hope? The hope is the land. To go back to the land.

725 Today, this community still depends on the land quite a bit with their traditional food. The walking out ceremonies, the feasts, the funeral, the feasts on traditional gatherings, it is all traditional food. So this community and other First Nations depend largely on the land in the future for them to survive.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

730 But the other night in Chisasibi we were explained that it's more and more costly to go for big games in the wilderness and that less and less the people who has no job or that are unemployed can afford to make a trip to go and get moose, caribous, you know, for the big games. They can hunt small games around the community but it's different for big games. So, is it the same around here?

Mr. THOMAS COON:

740 We are so fortunate to be the Crees of Québec, and also we are so fortunate to have a Land Claims Settlement called James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. Section 30 of James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement provides an income security for the Cree hunters and trappers; that assists financially the Cree hunters to go back on the land. Thanks to that agreement and thanks to the Government of Québec, thanks to the negotiators who have negotiated that agreement; it helps and enables the Cree hunters and trappers to go back on the land. But there are many other First Nations' people in Québec and in Canada who do not have a Land Claims Settlement as there is for the Crees. They are less fortunate, they face more hardships than we do.

745
750 Yes, it's a costly activity. It's a costly activity to be on the land but like I said there is no word to describe the love of the land for the Cree people. It is the love of the land that forces you to go back to the land.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

755 Okay. That's fine for me.

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO

MR. JOHN PAUL MURDOCH :

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Meekwech Thomas.

Titus Shecapio, Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association.

765

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Good afternoon and welcome to Mistissini. My name is Titus Shecapio and I am here to make submissions on behalf of the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA).

770

COTA was officially incorporated in year 2000 but its origins go back to the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement. When our leaders negotiated the JBNQA, they had a vision of Cree control over tourism development in Eeyou Istchee.

775

The JBNQA created the legal framework to make this vision a reality and paved the way for a creation of COTA as a treaty obligation under Sections 28.4 and 28.6 of that Agreement.

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COTA's mission is to develop and implement our collective vision for a world-class sustainable tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee that is in harmony with Cree culture and values and that involves a partnership among Cree communities, institutions and businesses.

785

The tourism industry in Québec is already thriving and has great potential for growth. We believe that Eeyou Istchee can be part of that growth. Tourism and export industry that can bring in dollars from outside of Québec and Canada to stimulate the growth and grow the economy of Québec and more specifically in Eeyou Istchee.

790

In 2011, 12.4 billion dollars were generated from tourism within Québec. The government itself generated 1.5 billion dollars in revenues from tourism. It was the fourthly industry in the province in terms of exports. The majority of tourists who currently visit us are from Québec. But we are confident that we can attract visitors from the rest of Canada and Europe as well.

795

COTA wants the BAPE to understand that tourism is essential for the Québec economy, tourism industry. Tourism in Eeyou Istchee is also vital for the Cree economy. This is the third time that the BAPE has visited our region during its inquiries into the uranium industry. I am sure that during your visits you have noticed how beautiful this vast northern land is. When people first visit Eeyou Istchee, they are eager to explore its rivers and lakes, its dense forests and open

landscapes. They want to take in everything this magnificent northern wilderness has to offer. And so, our region has great tourism potential.

800 I believe that as a sustainable resource that will have positive effects for all Cree. This potential should be exploited to the fullest. While our land also has natural resource potential, we should not have to choose between natural resource and the tourism industry. We must strike a balance in which both can co-exist. Allowing uranium activities on our land, does not allow for such a balance.

805 To be fair, COTA supports the Grand Council's position in opposing uranium development in the Eeyou Istchee for three main reasons which I will explain to you.

810 First, uranium activities could threaten Eeyou Istchee's natural beauty and the Cree lifestyle which depends on this land. As I mentioned, tourists are certainly drawn for this natural beauty and the local activities they can participate in here. But our target market also includes those tourists who are interested in uniquely aboriginal tourism experience. They want to learn about and participate in the Cree culture and way of life and they want to better understand how we live in the natural environment.

815 In order for those experiences to be authentic, the natural ecosystem must remain intact so Crees can carry on our way of life now and long into the future. In other words, long-term sustainable development of the Cree Tourism Industry will depend on an intact natural environment, yet uranium activities carry unknown risks for this environment. These activities, if permitted, could jeopardize the most essential requirement of a vibrant tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee, our beautiful pristine land.

820 Developing Cree parks and protected areas is also an important part of creating a sustainable tourism destination in Eeyou Istchee.

825 One of the main priorities for visitors seeking at an authentic experience is to visit protected areas and heritage sites. If uranium activity takes place near parks and protected areas and the waterways that run through it, this could negatively impact the ecosystem of these places. It could also be a detrimental impact on the fauna that lives in and migrates through these parks. For these reasons, COTA opposes uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee.

830 Second, uranium mining could lead to a negative perception about tourism in Eeyou Istchee. Uranium mining poses a threat to tourism in Eeyou Istchee. In the tourism industry, perception is everything. How the various target markets perceive Eeyou Istchee can be the difference between a potential client for a fishing trip or a cultural stay in Eeyou Istchee, and that client deciding to go
835 somewhere else.

If potential visitors perceived that uranium mining is going forward, this could have a strong negative impact on the future of tourism. We have already experienced the impacts of negative perceptions on the tourism industry here with the Rupert River diversion project. Our clients have expressed their beliefs that fishing was no longer good along the entire length of the Rupert River.

840

Hydro-Québec made effort to mitigate these perceptions but the perceptions persisted and there was still a very real, very negative impact of the project.

845

Instead of growing a customer base and putting energy into attracting new clientele, we have to focus on improving perception of the quality of fishing for both new and existing clients. This is another reason why COTA opposes uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee.

850

Third, uranium activities in Eeyou Istchee could lead to job losses in the tourism industry. Tourism is more than just outfitting, jobs in tourism will be important for Eeyou Istchee due to the high number of youth in the Cree population. Young people should be able to have the option to stay in Eeyou Istchee to work. Cree youth will also be encouraged to learn from the Elders in order to be able to share their knowledge with visitors.

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In a study conducted by Aboriginal Tourism Québec, three of the most important benefits of aboriginal tourism in Québec were job creation, better understanding of culture, traditions and heritage and a high sense of belonging amongst aboriginal people.

860

Uranium development threatens these opportunities and we do not want it to deprive our people of these important benefits. Therefore, this too is why COTA opposes uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee.

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COTA opposes uranium mining on our lands for all of these reasons; above all, we oppose uranium mining because it is contradictory to the values of COTA and of the Cree Nation. The Cree Nation stands against uranium mining and reinforces the Cree values and the Cree way of life that tourists are looking for experience.

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Uranium mining only offers short-term profits; conversely sustainable tourism development that respects the Cree culture and the land offers the possibility for future generations to earn a living from the land in the many diverse employment opportunities that tourism provides for many years to come.

Thank you.

875

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

Do you think that uranium mine could lead to a worst impact comparing to another kind of mine for the tourism aspect?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Yes I do.

885

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

Can you explain the different reasons? Why do you think that the negative impacts would be higher?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Well, if uranium does get into our water system which is a big resource for tourism, it could spread out because the waterways, the headwaters of the Mistassini Lake come from near where the proposed uranium mining site is.

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COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

I know that each country and each region is quite different from the other one but I wonder if you have looked to worldwide studies in these countries having uranium mining, and did you see what we can observe as impacts of the presence of these mines on the tourism?

900

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

To be honest, I haven't seen any other studies on uranium from other countries.

905

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

Okay. Because I just want to know why, you already answered to the question but I think that if you can give some more words to allow us to better understand your position. If I had, for example, a mine of copper just beside Mistassini Lake, would it be easier in terms of impacts on tourism?

910

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Every type of mill has different impacts, I can say.

915

COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

Yes, obviously every mine would have an impact, but would it be higher with uranium comparing to a copper mine?

920

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Yes, I believe so. It would.

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COMMISSIONER ZAYED:

Okay. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

930

You said that tourism gives long-term jobs compare to uranium mining which would give short-term jobs in terms of time, you know? Would you accept the idea that those jobs are sometimes very fragile, depending on the international economy? Because when the economy is high maybe people spend more but when the economy is low, I imagine, it affects radically the tourism industry.

935

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Well, I guess it would depend on what product you offer because having Cree tourism products are unique so I think that would play a major benefit for the Crees.

940

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

You mean that it will be completely independent from the economic situation? That you still will have the same level of interest and the same number of customers even if the economy is low? It's not fluctuating in terms of jobs and customers?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

I guess it would depend of the type of markets that you have as well.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Could you explain?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

960 Like in terms of market place, there is a big market within the European market. People are interested in the Cree culture and like for the part of Québec, it's mainly fishing clientele. So, I guess it would depend on the products that are available.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

965 I know that in some parts of Québec, you know, like the hunting in Anticosti, it depends very much on the international economy, especially the United States' economy because many of the customers are coming from those countries, and so I am surprised that you seem to say that here it has no effects, the economy there.

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

970 Well, we have seen the U.S. economy has dropped but we are picking up on the Quebec market, so we are picking up on other markets when other markets are coming down.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

975 So you can compensate.

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

980 Yes.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

985 Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

990 I have a follow-up question to that question. I guess it relates -- I just want to make sure I understood clearly because in the brief at one point you said that with the introduction of the Rupert Project, instead of focussing on the developing tourism products, you had to focus on trying to fix the damage, I guess, or the perception.

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

995 Yes.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

1000 So you try to fix the image. So I am wondering if it is not related to the discussion meaning, you know, COTA is a bit behind on the development of the product why the market issue is not really a concern at this time.

Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

1005 Well, going back to the Rupert River, because when we used to go to tradeshow, a lot of the people from the general public used to have negative perceptions thinking that ever since the diversion happened that the Rupert River was no longer a place to fish. So instead of trying to attract clients, we mainly had to promote its reputation telling the general public that it is still fishable, that people can still go on the Rupert River as well.

1010 So it's questions like those that most persons arise when we go out.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

1015 I had another question. I mean, it was nice to see a submission from COTA, and I am wondering, does COTA find itself in a situation where it is reacting to projects? Like, for example, let's say the Rupert Project, you know COTA has to react to it. I am wondering, are there any opportunities and if there are, what your assessment of those opportunities is? Does COTA have the opportunity to submit to the government or to submit to, whether it's regional government or provincial government its vision or its plans for tourism development in the region?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Yes, they do.

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THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

Could you describe it a little bit? Like what chances COTA gets to tell the Government of Québec its vision of the territory?

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Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO :

Well, we recently worked on a long-term action plan. So that document was submitted to the government through Tourism Québec, to give them a brief overview of what COTA is currently working on.

1035

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

Meekwech!

1040 **Mr. TITUS SHECAPIO:**

Thank you.

1045

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

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So now I would like to ask Reverend George Westgate. You do have something you would like to share.

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

1055

Good afternoon, and welcome to Mistissini and to everybody who is here. My name is George Westgate and previously I have lived in the Province of Ontario and I am a New Anglican priest in the community, at the church, here in Mistissini, of St. John the Evangelist.

1060

I am not speaking to you today as an Anglican priest nor am I speaking to you as somebody who is very eloquent and knowledgeable of the topic at hand other than the fact that being the newest member of the community of Mistissini, I feel like I am the least likely to say anything.

1065

I am not Cree and nor am I aboriginal. But I am proud to be a Canadian and I have grown up in a farm community in southwestern Ontario and I was brought up by my parents to love and respect the land and when I got older, I ended up working in a community, in Northern Ontario, in construction, in Elliot Lake, Ontario.

1070

During that time that I lived there, I worked alongside the miners and the people in the community and I heard their stories. It is not something that you will find in history books, it is not something that you will find in the papers. One man, when he was talking with me, told me that he hunted and fished all of his life in the community of Elliot Lake when he was growing up. And then, the mines came in. And he ended up getting a job working in the mines. He thought that he had the world by the tail, he was given a promise of a new job, coin in his pocket.

1075 After he retired from working in the mines, he developed cancer. After I moved away from the community, I came back to Elliot Lake to his funeral where his daughter told me that: “Dad had a pension from the mine and mom is set up, done in for life. She’s okay, except for one thing: all the money in the world won’t bring mom and dad back together again.”

1080 Uranium has been going on since the Second World War, mining and discovering it, since we found out about the atomic bomb. It was then discovered as an alternative form of energy. The community of Elliot Lake was there in both explosions. It started off with a big community and then it grew up into the atomic boom and the mines bursted.

1085 But then the mines closed but then they came back again. In between each of those times, that community evolved. First of all, it was the mining community. Then, it became a tourist attraction, then it became another mining boom. But when the mines closed for the last time, it has now become a retirement home for many people.

1090 We have done an awful lot of injustice to the people who have been working in the mines. Many of them were hired but they did not know the dangers. When uranium is in the ground, it is harmless but then when you start digging and picking at it, you are opening a Pandora’s Box. The gases inside the rock when they are split open are released and these are harmful and they can get into the person’s lung causing cancer and asthma.

1095 When the mine first open in Elliot Lake, the corporation hired people between Sudbury and Thunder Bay with all the promises of the big corporation. They promised big wages and a get rich quick scheme, but they did not tell them everything. And many of these communities never heard the word cancer. But afterwards, the illness became prevalent in their communities. They were never told of the risks. Many of the mines were not well ventilated at first but with new technology, the improvements, even then, the air was never clean and it still got into their lungs.

1100 The waste from the mines called tailings is full of radiation and it destroys the land. These mine tailings are the waste from the mine and they contain radiation that burns the lands that is no longer fit for years, and it is evident between the half an hour to 45-minute drive from the town of Elliot Lake to the community, and you can see where the land is no longer fit for any use. And when the rains came down it then washed into the rivers and the streams and the lakes which then went into the fish.

1110 The fish and the geese, the wildlife they don’t know the boundaries, they don’t see the danger signs but they still feed on the land that they are accustomed to and they end up eating and drinking the water and the food and then when the people eat the water and the food or the fish and the game, it then causes their illness and their contamination as well.

1115 Many of the native people around Elliot Lake developed cancer and many of them had never worked in the mine a day in their life, but it was due to the fact that they had eaten the contaminated food of the land.

1120 May the people here who live in Mistissini eat the wild game and the fish, and it is my hope and prayer that they would not have to suffer with the illness that the community of Elliot Lake had to bear.

1125 As I said, I worked in construction and the company that I worked with, we were told to put ventilation into the basements in the mines, where every year they would test in the ventilation in the basements to make sure that there was no radiation and the mine was twenty or thirty miles away.

1130 The lakes and the rivers and the streams around the mine were all contaminated. We have had real disasters beside Elliot Lake. In Port Hope, Ontario, which is located close to the city of Toronto, the Canadian Government torn down many of the buildings used in the uranium process of the plant. Despite the warnings from the American Government of the radiation dangers, the Canadian Government used the building materials to give away to anyone who wanted them. And when they built the schools and the homes in Fort Hope, Ontario, they caused a lot of problems. No warning was given to the people then about who – who would live in them.

1135 In 2005, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission hired consultants to do an emergency response evaluation of the community. They found 44 structures were considered to be highly radioactive and the structures were constructed prior to the 1960s.

1140 As I said earlier, I am the newest member of this community and every morning since I have arrived, I have had the wonderful pleasure of opening up my eyes to see a beautiful lake in front of my mirror and in front of my house. I would not wish to trade that view or go back to the city of Scarborough.

1145 But when we start messing around with uranium there is more negative effects that outweigh the positive outcomes, and it is my hope and prayer that you would turn around and say no to uranium in Mistissini. It affects the health and safety of all Canadians. It affects the environment and the land where we live and the air that we breathe. The Federal Government and the Provincial Government have known this and yet they turned a blind eye to the truth when they see the dollar sign and the outcome.

1150 God commanded us to care for the land; it is our gift and our heritage from him to pass on to our children. When I arrived in Elliot Lake, people told me that their life was much better before the uranium mines and they wished that they were not known as the uranium capital of Canada.

1155 Instead they believe that they should have been better in caring for the land and they bear the shame that they could not save it.

1160 They have paid the price with the high cost of lives that have been lost and land and water uses that they could not preserve. The native people lost hunting and fishing grounds and they lost their self-respect. My prayer is that that would not happen here in this community.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1165 After they close for the first time the plant in Elliot Lake, you said that it became a tourism attraction?

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :

1170 They, to make money, to try to build up the town, they used, they went to the tourist trade, yes.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

1175 How could they promote that?

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

1180 They promoted it because the mine was -- as I said the mine is here and there are three lakes in between where Elliot Lake, the community, is. So they were still able to use that as their selling point. It wasn't a big trade off and it wasn't a long lasting trade off because at that time there was still not all of the information given to the people of Elliot Lake about what was going on and all the dangers that they would be facing. And it wasn't until after the second closing that all the horrors stories came about and came to fruition.

1185 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

1190 Were they insisting or using as a selling point the fact that uranium for the first atomic bomb came from there or this type of marketing slogan?

1195 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :**

No. They were still trying to make some strength or some kind of awareness of what they were doing and what had happened and I think that because of the problems or the horrors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they didn't want that to be their tourist attraction.

1200

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

You said a few things that are interesting me about Port Hope. In Port Hope, they process what is called the yellowcake coming from the mine, and it's not a highly radioactive material that goes out from there. You know, it's kind of one of the basic first step of the concentration of uranium. I think that what was going out of the plant there was considered as low-level radioactivity, not high level like what you get from nuclear plants, you know, it is kind of in-between, I would say.

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REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

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It was still enough to turn around and close the schools and close the houses that were there in the community.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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That's what I want to understand.

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

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Yes.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

I was also told that they used the material like the sand, a kind of sand that was spread everywhere used for parking lanes and things like that.

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REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

They were using the sand even in the sand boxes at the schools that the children played in.

1230

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Oh.

1235 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :**

Yes. Yes.

1240 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

And now that the government has a plan to make the clean-up of that city, even if it's low-level radioactivity, are you aware of the amount of money, the importance of the budget that they have to devote to this type of low-level radioactivity?

1245 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

Yes, and the scary part is that they still have the mess to clean up in Port Hope, it's not totally cleaned up.

1250 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

It's not.

1255 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

No.

1260 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

And do you know what the budget for cleaning is?

1265 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

Not offhand.

1270 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

No?

1275 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :**

No. But I do know it's an awful lot of money but still, the amount of money to clean up that community is going to be a long lasting effect.

1275 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

And what was the effect on the community? Did it motivate people to run away, to leave the town or?

1280 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

For many of them, yes. Some of them left the community, others had nowhere else to go, it was their only home. That was where they lived. The scary part was that it took them so long to convince anybody that there was a problem. And when they did turn around and talked to people to tell them that they had a problem, everybody turned a deaf ear or thought they were totally crazy. And then when they finally did find out, the last thing that they wanted to do was to admit that they were the ones that caused the problem.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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And did the opposition, the most critical part of the population on this question, did they raise those problems a long time ago or if it was a recent knowledge they have on that?

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :

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I would say it was in the mid-90s when they started making the awareness.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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Okay.

REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

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And it was not until 2000 and they are still trying to get total compensation for it but that's still a long process that's in the air. I mean, some of it is still before the Government of Ontario right now as we speak.

THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

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Okay. And is it mainly around the plant or if it's the whole city which is affected?

1315 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :**

It's a large part of the community because you are talking about 44 houses and you are talking about more than one school.

1320 **THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:**

Okay. Interesting. And you say that there was a huge reluctance from the two levels of governments to recognize the problem?

1325 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:**

Neither one of them wanted to admit that there was a problem. The Government of Canada was the one that originally was decommissioning the plant and selling them the material. And the Government of Ontario was the one that was finally financing their efforts and so neither one of them wanted to turn around and say: "Oh yes, we made a mistake."

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

But you are speaking about decommissioning the plant; when you say so, it means that it has been close and from what I know, there is still a plant working there and concentrating...

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REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

Yes, but there was parts of the plant that was closing, so when they decommissioned parts of the processing plant, they took the material from that plant when they were decommissioning it to build and using it for building material for the houses and for the schools.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Okay. And that's why the problem...

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REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE:

That's where the problem comes down today.

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THE PRESIDENT FRANCOEUR:

Okay, that ends up my question. So I thank you very much for your testimony.

1355 **REVEREND GEORGE WESTGATE :**

You are welcome.

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Mr. CLAUDE COONISHISH

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

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Claude Coonishish.

Mr. CLAUDE COONISHISH :

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Waachiyaa. I am glad to see the mayor of Chibougamau here. What I wanted to talk to you about -- the presentations we all know the position of Mistissini, people do not agree to uranium mining and I too, I am against uranium mining.

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What I know is that the mining process is no good and we hear that uranium is supposed to be used in the process of making bombs.

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I didn't have much more I wanted to say. I know that it's called -- the mining has adverse effects. We don't know how the uranium metal will be used, if it they process it, if it's sold overseas and then, if that is the case, then we too are accomplices to those sales of uranium overseas.

Camp Matoush is on our trapline. 40 years ago, my dad knew about that mine. I was the steward of that land, he told me to be respectful to the land. And I am concerned because as a steward of the land where our family's trapline is, I too become very concerned about the impacts on that uranium mining will have on our people and on the water and the land.

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That's it, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT MURDOCH:

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Although we don't have any percentage right now, we will continue again at 7 o'clock for this hearing's presentation. We will stop for now and will have supper and we will reconvene at 7 o'clock.

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SESSION ADJOURNED TO NOVEMBER 13th, 2014 – 19:00

1400

I, YOLANDE TEASDALE, Official Bilingual Court Reporter, duly sworn as such, do certify that the foregoing is a true and faithful transcription of the evidence herein to the best of my skill and ability, THE WHOLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW

1405

AND I HAVE SIGNED:

1410

Yolande Teasdale
Official Bilingual Court Reporter