

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

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TRAN64

Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

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ÉTAIENT PRÉSENTS :

POUR LA COMMISSION DU BAPE : M. LOUIS-GILLES FRANCOEUR, président
Mme MICHÈLE GOYER, commissaire

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEBJ : AUCUN REPRÉSENTANT

POUR LA COMMISSION DU CCEK : AUCUN REPRÉSENTANT

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

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

VOLUME 9

Séance tenue le 19 novembre 2014 à 19 h
Eagle Village
Community Hall
Kipawa

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

SÉANCE DE LA SOIRÉE DU 19 NOVEMBRE 2014
MOT DU PRÉSIDENT 1

PRÉSENTATIONS DES MÉMOIRES

Mme MADELEINE PAUL ET M. HARRY ST-DENIS 1
Wolf Lake First Nation and Eagle Village First Nation

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE..... 18
Lake Preservation Society

M. PASCAL BIBEAU 26

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE..... 33

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX 36
Association pour l’Avenir Ressources Témiscaminiennes APART

SÉANCE AJOURNÉE AU 24 NOVEMBRE 2014 – 19 H

SÉANCE DE LA SOIRÉE DU 17 NOVEMBRE 2014
MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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Bonsoir Mesdames et Messieurs. Goodnight ladies and gentlemen. We are starting the second part of our public hearing in your community, where we are very pleased to be. I will just summarize the rules of the hearing. Usually, the people who have registered to present a brief have fifteen (15) minutes to present it, and the Commission, according to its needs, may ask additional questions.

15
People who had not advised the Commission of their intent of having to present a brief can do so by registering in the back to Mrs. Leblanc, and those people could present their verbal opinion at the end, and they'll have ten (10) minutes to present it, and we may also have questions to ask.

20
We ask the people not to react by applauding or manifesting their opposition to what can be said here. It's not a... how to say that, a popularity test the testimony here. We are just judging the things according to the value of the arguments that are presented to us. So those are the main rules, they're not very tricky, so I think that you will not have any problem with that.

25
We will start by hearing the presentation by the Wolf Lake First Nation and the Eagle Village, and for which we have both representatives here in front of us. So, if you want to present yourself, and you could go on with your brief. And be welcomed, both of you.

30

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL
Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

35
Good evening Commissioners, thank you very much. My name is Madeleine Paul, I am Chief of Eagle Village First Nation. Welcome to our community, and Algonquin territory.

As you know from the written memoire we have already submitted to your Commission, jointly with Wolf Lake First Nation, we are seeking a moratorium not only on uranium exploration and mining but also on exploration and mining of rare earth elements.

40 The first point I want to make is that even though our First Nations along with Wolf Lake and
Timiskaming First Nation assert aboriginal rights in title to our core and shared territories, our First
Nation is not consulted by the Government of Quebec about any proposed uranium or rare earth
45 mining exploration or development on our traditional lands. The Quebec Government hasn't even
seriously consulted either of our communities about Matamec's proposed rare earths open-pit
mine, which is the most advanced mining project on the territory, and it includes uranium. We had
to convince Matamec that it was in their best interest to address our concerns about the proposed
rare earth's open-pit mine by signing a memorandum of understanding with our First Nation and
with Wolf Lake First Nation.

50 This MOU did not give our consent to the proposed rare earth mining project, it only provided
for Matamec to consult us and fund our two First Nations to obtain independent advice and to help
us assess the proposed mining project. As a result of the MOU funding, our two First Nations have
completed a cultural assessment and a social-economic assessment of the proposed Matamec
Project, and we have a team of experts ready to assess Matamec's social and environmental report
55 if and when it is produced.

We do not have MOU's with any other mining exploration companies. However, we are
aware that some of the uranium exploration companies are now exploring rare earths on our
traditional lands now that Matamec has made a find and is planning to develop it. So I will address
60 our social and economic concerns about uranium and rare earth exploration mining on our
traditional lands, and Wolf Lake Chief Harry St-Denis will address our environmental and health
concerns in his presentation.

65 For your information, both of our First Nation communities have undertaken extensive
community vision and planning exercises in recent years. The core values of our members of our
two Algonquin First Nations can be briefly stated as: Our way of life is in harmony with the land, and
we look after the conservation, use and management of the land for our present generation and
future generations. The population of Eagle Village is three hundred (300), and approximately
70 another... three hundred (300) living in the community and six hundred and sixty (660) members
live off reserve. But many of our members who live away return on a regular basis to keep their
connection with our community and continue to exercise their rights on our traditional lands.

75 An active presence on and attachment to the land remain central to our Algonquin personal
and collective identity. We take the position that any assessment of the impacts of mining on our
people's land and resources use should not be restricted to the current and planned uses but also
the potential uses. We assert our title in rights to our traditional lands for our future generations
outside of any specific plans to the use of lands.

80

There are four Algonquin camps within a few kilometers of Matamec's proposed rare earth open pit, the road to the processing plant, the processing plant and tailing ponds. However, many more Algonquin people regularly use traditional lands in the area of the proposed mine. In fact, Brennon Lake, also known as Lac Sairs site is historically significant for both of Eagle Village and Wolf Lake, and warrants recognition as a heritage site.

85

The result of our cultural and social economic assessment already indicated that the proposed Matamec Rare Earths Project will have an irreversible impact on our quality of life, our customs, traditions, and access to and use of our traditional lands. Before any mine could be approved these impacts must be assessed, as well as the cumulative impacts from other activities on our lands.

90

While we have not finished our assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Matamec Rare Earths Project, we know the process location of the open-pit mine, the waste rock tailings that will include uranium, the new road construction, the processing plant and tailing ponds are all located very close to rivers, lakes, wetlands in several watersheds, critical of importance to our community.

95

Some of the key social issues we have identified in our assessment of this project are:

100

Algonquin values. Any assessment of the socio-economic and cultural effects of the project must be measured against its potential impacts on these high level value held by our people upon whose territory the project will take place.

105

Health. Overburden of the health care system, road accidents, increasing community use of drug use, violence, diseases related to toxins, either shipped to the mine or released into the land, air, or water.

Language. The inability to rebuild interest in Algonquin language, increased discrimination and tension over the language issue.

110

Education. Increased pressure on the school system and day care, worsening achievement by Algonquin children.

115

Jobs. Few or no job opportunities for Eagle Village or Wolf Lake members, skimming effect from Eagle Village and Wolf Lake businesses.

Governance. Inability of our Algonquin government to cope with the extra burden of consulting effectively with mining companies and mineral exploration companies, the permitting regime that will ensue, draining of community resources from other programs to deal with these

120

pressures, the possibility of undue influence in the future as the company seeks its social licence to operate.

125

Social fabric. Tearing of the social fabric and the patterns of mutual aid if the wage economy worsens inequities in the community uses up the time of important contributors to the traditional economy.

130

Traditional resource users. Destruction of the harvesting base and the habitat it depends upon, the loss of transmission and traditional practices for future generations.

Cabin holders in the mine footprint. Effective displacement.

Housing. Overcrowding, increase rent, more disrepair, increased cost of repairs.

135

Food security. Increased pressure on our traditional food sources, loss of food due to contamination and perceived contamination, poisoning of the food source for some people, poisoning of the drinking water sources, increased cost to obtain food, leading to poor nutrition.

Cash economy. Lost opportunity to expand and develop sustainable Aboriginal businesses due to the landscape and environmental degradation and skimming effect.

140

Transportation. More road accidents, potential spills, more time required to carry out daily activities.

Safety and security. Increased drug use and problems left by violence, less sense of safety, increased perceived discrimination due to race, gender and language.

145

These are the key social and economic concerns of our two Algonquin First Nations regarding the proposed Matamec open-pit mine, in particular in exploration and mining of uranium and rare earths in general.

150

In conclusion, after a detailed analysis of the available information on the various aspects of rare earths and uranium activities, our First Nations renew our firm and definite opposition to the development of rare earths and uranium industries on our lands.

155

Our First Nation therefore calls for a complete moratorium on the exploration and mining of rare earths and uranium on our traditional lands. Our First Nation also supports the brief on uranium industry issues in Quebec presented by the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Institute to the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, Inquiry Commission hearings on uranium industry issues in Quebec.

160 *Meegwetch.* Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

Thank you very much. So Chief St-Denis.

165 **Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:**

170 Thank you. Good evening Commissioners, thank you Chief. I just want to thank Chief Paul for her presentation on the lack of consultation with the governments and with our First Nations about the shared social and economic concerns about uranium and rare earths exploration and mining.

175 Just for your information, the population of Wolf Lake is about two hundred and five (205) members. Although we do not have a reserve, we have a recognized Indian Settlement at Hunter's Point, which is at the north end of Lake Kipawa. Most of the Wolf Lake members are dispersed among Kipawa, Témiscamingue, and North Bay and elsewhere across the country, like other First Nations, but we remain connected to the territory because members from our First Nation, just like Eagle Village, continue our traditional activities of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering throughout our traditional lands.

180 Archeological excavation at Lake Timiskaming narrows points to a continuous occupation of the Upper Ottawa River over at least the last five thousand (5000) years. It was our ancestors who lived in the Upper Ottawa and the Kipawa and the Dumoine basins. Algonquin peoples have been here for thousands of years, and we intend to be here for thousands more.

185 So it brings me to the main part of my presentation, which is the environmental and the health concerns for both of our members of communities regarding uranium and rare earths exploration and mining.

190 As Chief Paul has already pointed out in her presentation, the most advanced mining projects on our traditional lands is the proposed Matamec rare earths open-pit mine, which is very near the shores of the principal tributary to Lake Kipawa. We have been told that the rare earths deposit is mixed in with uranium and thorium. There are indications also that there is asbestos that is also... that's also present. The Government of Quebec has indicated that rare earth mines will be subjected to a BAPE. However, to date, there has been no consultation or accommodation by
195 Quebec with our First Nations regarding the process, and we are unsure as to the status of the review.

200 Mining has the potential to significantly affect the environment through releases of toxic substances to the air, land and water, and the creation of long-term liabilities. Direct disturbance to fish and wild life is also a significant risk, as there are displacement of other uses of the project area, and the disruption of uses in areas adjacent to the project and the long transportation corridors due to noise, visual pollution and dust.

205 Given the proximity of the proposed Matamec Project and other rare earths and uranium exploration activities to the historic and current areas of use by our peoples, and given our communities' financial interests in developments such as ecotourism and ecosystem services, we know that any mining is not compatible with our traditional and contemporary activities.

210 How much more significant will be the potential impacts of rare earths and uranium exploration and mining? In our memoir we have already provided your Commission with a map showing of our Algonquin current use around the proposed mining site.

215 As for our environmental and health concerns, we agree with the scientific analysis about radiation impacts on the environment and human health, provided to your Commission in the ANFQL Sustainable Development Institute's memoir. And we have included some of their analysis in our memoir as well.

220 Some of our key environmental and health concerns are we are concerned about the potential health impacts or elevated concentrations of rare earth elements, uranium and thorium, and emissions in the environment from mining and processing rare earth elements. We are concerned that the contaminants from the rare earth elements and uranium may impact the surface waters, the groundwater, that the dust emissions may impact plants, fish and the game that we consume.

225 Rare earth elements have not previously been mined and processed in Canada, and there are unique health and environmental impacts associated with the processing and waste from mining rare earths. It is also our understanding if the Matamec is approved it will be one of the first rare earths mines in Canada. Quebec has no government regulatory experience with this kind of mining and processing.

230 On November the 25th, 2013, during testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Resources, the senior staff of Natural Resources Canada confirmed it is a long way from being able to show how to manage tailings and effluents safely, or even be able to say how toxic rare earth effluents are. And National Resources Canada describes the environmental uncertainties of rare earths elements on its website, and I took this directly from their website. It says:

240 *“There are two aspects of environmental issues related to rare earths minerals productions. Many primary rare earth mineral deposits contain significant amount of radioactive metals, mainly thorium and uranium in lesser extent. The second aspect is the toxicity of the individual rare earth elements.*

245 *In aquatic toxicity testing of metals, the behaviour of the free divalent metal cation -- the species of metal largely considered to be the most toxic -- is well understood, particularly with respect to binding with natural organic compounds. These natural organic compounds are very important in determining toxicity to aquatic life because they bind to metal cations and render them unavailable. However, the same cannot be said for rare earth elements. The toxicity and behaviour of rare earth elements in natural environments has not been studied to any great extent, and given the trivalent charge of the many rare earth elements, it is largely unknown how toxic they are to aquatic species and how they interact with natural organic compounds.*

255 *Other data gaps relevant to this work pertain to the impact of rare earth elements mining in the North. Of the available information in the literature, none examines the effect of rare earth elements on Northern species. A recent literature review of the aquatic toxicity of rare earth elements by a research group at Wilfrid Laurier University identified some other critical data gaps, including the effect of manipulating water chemistry in rare earth element exposures. Our goal is to address some of these data gaps discussed above to further understand the behaviour of rare earth elements in the environment. Our goal is to determine the effects of the elements to Northern aquatic species. The overall objective of this project is to provide an 'end of pipe' view of rare earth element mining by investigating potential toxicity of effluent produced by leaching rare earths elements ores to aquatic species. The impact of altering water chemistry on rare earth element toxicity to determine the water pH, hardness and/or concentration of dissolved organic matter will be investigated. These metals are considered to be data poor, and any knowledge gained from this work on their behavior in the environment will help fill critical data gaps. With interest in rare earth mining being developed in Canada, these data gaps will help identify potential risk and environmental issues.”*

270 *So this was taken right directly from the website of Natural Resources Canada, and they acknowledged that they don't know very much about rare earth elements.*

275 *Quebec, Canada and Matamec are asking our two First Nations and the local Québécois population to take on a serious risk by accepting the Matamec Project in the face of considerably more uncertainty than with other types of mining. They want us to be guinea pigs, I guess. Natural Resources Canada staff mislead the members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources regarding the degree of federal oversight that rare earth mines would evoke. We know from our experience with the Kipawa deposit that the federal uranium and nuclear safety regulations will not be invoked, because the primary purpose of the mine is not to mine uranium.*

280 We still need a lot more technical information regarding the management of the potential
environmental impacts from the rare earths mining.

285 Matamec also has a long way to go to establish trust and a positive working relationship with
our two First Nations. Neither Canada, Quebec or Matamec have the social license or the free
informed consent of our two First Nations for this project to proceed to the development phase.
Like the Tsilhqot'in B.C., we have never signed a land cession treaty. We regret that the
governments of Quebec and Canada have failed to meaningfully consult our two First Nations
290 about the proposed project before it advanced to the current pre-development phase. However,
our two First Nations will make our own decisions in the end about whether we consent to this
project or not. Our two First Nations also object to the Government of Quebec's investment into
this proposed mine without any consultation with our communities.

295 After a detailed analysis of the available information on the various aspects of rare earths
and uranium activities, the Wolf Lake and Eagle Village First Nation renew our firm and definite
opposition to the development of rare earths and uranium industries. The Wolf Lake First Nation
and the Eagle Village First Nation therefore demand a complete moratorium on the exploration of
mining of rare earths and uranium. The Wolf Lake and Eagle Village First Nations support the brief
on the uranium industry issues presented by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable
Development Institute to the BAPE in commissions and hearings in Quebec City.

300 So thank you, Commissioners. Miguish. Merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

305 I thank you very much for your presentation, both of you. We could go to the question
period. Michèle, vous voulez commencer? Make a try.

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

In French too, if she's a bilingual, so...

310 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Oui.

315

LA COMMISSAIRE:

320 Je vais vous poser la question en français, mais c'est par respect pour la communauté ici
que j'aurais voulu pouvoir la traduire. Peut-être monsieur le président pourra le faire si c'est
nécessaire, et vous pourrez répondre en anglais si vous préférez.

325 Dans votre mémoire, Madame Paul, vous nous dites un des impacts que peut amener une
compagnie minière uranifère, puisque ça pourrait être ça, pourrait avoir des impacts sur le langage,
la capacité de conserver la langue. Et vous dites « inability to rebuild interest in Algonquin
language ». Can you explain it a little bit more, about what is the link between language and
mining activity, because it could be another type of development but mining.

330 **Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:**

Well, first of all we understand that the language for the mining is not going to be English, it's
going to be French. And that's not our first language, the first language that's spoken in the
community is English, but we also have already lost a lot of our Algonquin language. So, having
335 more people, we're not going to have that... we're not going to gain that back. And what I mean
also by that is there's more tension. When people speak our language, others don't like it. So
there's more tension when people speak, you know, traditional languages. So if some people are
speaking that it's going to create more discrimination. So it's not a good environment for our
people.

340 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

On page 2 of your presentation you say that "both our First Nation and Wolf Lake have
undertaken extensive community vision and planning exercise in recent years". Could you give us
345 an idea of what is that vision and this planning exercise? What are you planning for your territory?

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

Well Wolf Lake, about maybe three or four years ago, we had sent out a questionnaire to all
350 of the members of what they would like to see in the future, how would they like to see the land,
what type of development would they like to see, what kind of jobs would they like to have in the
future. And the results of that were more activities associated with the land, with environmental
type tourism, ecotourism type development. Not working in the mill like Tembec, or not working in
the mine. They were more focussed on the outdoor type, you know, activities that were compatible
355 with their way of life and, you know, with having a good, you know, a good, clean living. So we, we
did all of our research and we have begun to act on that already.

360 Wolf Lake, like we have a business now, a tourism business at the west end of Lake Kipawa,
that we own. We own the Algonquin Canoe Company, which is at Long Sault Island. I don't know
if you passed that way. If you come from North Bay you would have passed the Algonquin Canoe
Company. We own that.

365 We also own a place at Swisha, it's another outlet for servicing this part of the territory for
canoeing, you know, planning trips for visitors. And mining is just not compatible with that. And, in
fact, it's our view that in the long run it will destroy it. And everybody knows when that... in this
mining, especially the Matamec Company, it's such a short-lived project, it's going to be here for
about thirteen (13) years they estimate, and when it's done, they're going to pack up and move
somewhere else. They're gone. And then it's the people that live around here that's going to be left
370 with the... with all of the tailings that we'll have to deal with, and the future generations will have to
deal with, for thousands of years according to the data that I've seen. Especially when you're
talking about tailings ponds and, you know, and the under... we don't know. Nobody knows what,
how the groundwater works here. And the mine is so close to the river that we have identified as a
canoe route for our customers, it's right there, it's right at the doorstep. And it's also on a... right
near a big... the main, most important fishing spawning habitat, you know, on the Kipawa reservoir.
375 It's just a few kilometers upstream from that, from that fish spawning area. So it's very damaging
for future generations, and for our plans for development.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

380 A bit further in your presentation you say that:

*Any assessment of the impacts of mining to our people's land and resource use should not be
restricted to current and planned use but also to potential uses.*

385 Are those potential uses what you just presented to us that would fit with the vision of your
people? Or if you think of other types of development?

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

390 Well, during that exercise we've looked at what are the other possibilities for developing and
for employment opportunities for the people. There's, you know there's the forest industry, you
know, which has been displacing our people, you know, for the last couple of hundred years. And
so now we look at... you know, we have done an exercise where what is there to develop. And
there's not, there's not much else. It's the beauty of the area that will draw people from, you know,
395 all over the country and, you know, and other countries as well. And if there's any mining
development happening, I think that, you know, that will end that future development for our people,
and then there's, you know, there's nothing left.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

400 But when you think of ecological activities or things that are more fitting with your, let's say
traditional practices, we think of fishing and hunting. We were told recently by one of our guests
that the outfitters were closing doors, that the number of fishermen is decreasing since twenty (20)
years in the area. So have you checked if this vision fits with the real economic tendencies that we
could observe on the market right now

405

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

410 I think the old type of doing business for sure, you know, it's starting to phase out. What we
have to offer as Aboriginal people, it's a different experience than just the traditional, you know,
outfitter, where they supply a cabin and a boat and motor, maybe... in some cases not even a boat
and motor. The lot of the tourists they come, they bring their own boat and motor, they know where
the fish, and all they do is complain about not catching any fish, and... you know. And so that type
of tourism, I think, is slowly fading. But what we are trying to do is make a shift in that.. with our
business at Camp La Lucarne, and that's to attract ecotourism, ones that want to do the
415 sightseeing, you know maybe camping, canoeing, kayaking.

And those are the people that will improve the economy of the region, not the old fishermen
type. Because all they come here, all they do is they rent a cabin. They bring their own boat,
motor, gas, food, everything, and they take the fish, and that's it. But with the new type of tourism,
420 with the families... If there's anybody that can make you spend money it's families, it's kids. You
know, they want to go to restaurants, they want to go, you know, maybe water skiing, so that's the
type of tourists that we're trying to attract in the future. And as Aboriginal people I think we have an
advantage in developing because we have our culture to share with the tourists, which the other
tourists that are currently operating, you know, don't have. Everybody's looking these days for a
425 different type of experience, more value for their money, more educational type, you know,
experiences. So that's what we are trying to promote and develop.

425

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

430 I just want to add something else there too. For potential uses, you know, for our future
generations, we have some people that self-sustain themselves from the land as well. Trappers,
you know, we have people that trap in that area, and they rely on, you know, trapping as a source
of income for their families as well. So that too is not just hunting and fishing for us, there's trapping
and other activities that we do.

435

LE PRÉSIDENT:

440 Okay.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

445 Just to clarify, because you said, Mr. St-Denis, on page 2, about compatibility with development as ecotourism, we know that any mining is not compatible with... traditional, but contemporary future activities, so activities now, actual ones. So, you say "any mining", as uranium and rare earths, or "any mining" like any kind of mine?

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

450 Well, any, any kind of mining, I guess, but in particular we're focussing here on uranium and rare earths. But for me and for, you know, the people of Wolf Lake, any type of mining would not be compatible with our, you know, with our development plans for the future, because you can't do any type of mine without it having an impact on the environment. It's not possible. There is always
455 tailings, there is always... always issues, like noise pollution, which will have an impact on our way of life, not only our traditional practices but also our future development plans, so... And you're right when you say "any mining" is not...

LA COMMISSAIRE:

460 I didn't say it, you write it.

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

465 Yes, okay. Well, okay, you asked the question. But that's right, I stand by that.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

470 When you consider that the three communities succeeded in having agreements with companies, what they call ERA, "Entente...

LA COMMISSAIRE:

475 Répercussion...

LE PRÉSIDENT:

480 ...répercussion avantage...

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

485 Yes.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

490 ... so the community gets good results from it, you know, and enough so that they sign an agreement, you know. I am trying to understand if this type of development, if this type of arrangement would have an interest to you.

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

495 For me... maybe, you know, the Crees signed agreements, impact benefit agreements with, you know, with different companies. The problem with those types of agreements and mining, it's a non-renewable resource. There is an end to it. There is only so much ore, so much gold, so much whatever that they're mining in the earth. When that's all gone, what are those communities going to do? No one is going to want to visit their territory, they won't be able to attract tourists to their territory, and their traditional way of life will be, will be gone because, you know, of what the industry leaves.

500 We don't want that. But we have... if we develop tourism, it's renewable, it can go on forever, but even that has to be managed properly. But signing impact-benefits agreements could benefit maybe myself, maybe the people that's sitting in here, but it won't benefit the future generations, because there's an end to it. When it's... because it's a non renewable resource, mining. Any of the, you know, gold or whatever, you know, should be left where it is in the ground. That goes for uranium and for rare earths elements.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

510 And it should not solve one problem that you mentioned when you say that there is an increased sense of hopelessness for youth unemployed? It could not contribute to reduce that problem?

515 **Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:**

Pardon me? I didn't...

LE PRÉSIDENT:

520 When you say in the brief, I mean, it's from Madam Paul here, that: "Education: There is an increased pressure on the school system and day care worsening achievement by Algonquin children". And also: "Increased sense of hopelessness for youth unemployed."

525 Does... an acceptable mining activity could reduce this hopelessness for youth unemployed?

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

I think it will increase hopelessness.

530 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

It will increase?

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

535 Because in our area, our people aren't going to be the ones hired at the mine. So... because, for one thing, the working language is going to be French, we're all English-speaking, and they're not going to be specific qualified people that's going to be... they're gonna get low-end jobs, it's not everybody that going to be hired there. You know, they need... they're specialists, they're specialized in certain things to work in the mines. Our people don't have that training.

540 And I just want to come back to something else when you... your previous question about IBA's. The Crees, they have a lot more land than we do. We don't have a big, big area like they do. Ours is limited, and we're trying to, like Chief St-Denis said, preserve it for the future generations. So I just wanted to add to that previous comment.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

550 Yes, it's an interesting point, you're right. You say also in your brief, Mrs. Paul, that when you speak about social fabric, you say that it could create... it could exacerbate inequities in the community. Could you explain that?

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

555 Social fabric, tearing of the social fabric and the patterns of mutual aid if the wage economy worsens and it creates inequalities. So if, you know, people that work at the mine, they have better jobs, better paid, our people are less... it's going to tear more the community part. Because, like,

560 we already have seen some of the effects at Tembec, you know. Some people work at Tembec,
they get better paid, some don't, and they don't... not everybody gets jobs. Like our... if you look at
Tembec, we have fifty (50) people max that work there, out of nine hundred and some. So it's the
same issue that's gonna happen with the mine. We're not going to have, you know, a hundred
(100) of our people that's gonna go work at the mine. We may have five. It's... that's the tearing of
the social fabric. So our core people, and our values, we want to maintain that, and the more of
those things that come to our community, the more that rips us apart.

565

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

I guess also when you're looking at mining, mining is a "boom-and-bust" industry, you know.
I think it's... when it opens up, there's a boom. Everybody... the rent goes up, prices go up, housing
570 goes up. But in this case, after thirteen (13) years, that's not a long time, and that's when the bust
comes. Then the mining company is gone. We're left with all of the environmental consequences,
housing prices drops, everybody, you know, moves out.

The miners, they move out. Us, we're still here. And then what do we do? What do our
575 people do? We can't develop our tourism, because it's going to be ruined by the fact that this mine
has opened up and possibly contaminated Lake Kipawa. And so what... how do we attract people
to our territory after? How do we promote the area once the damage has been done? And this is
for thousands of years, because this is... and nobody really knows for how long it takes for this...
you know, for it to... to clean itself up, you know. Mother Nature can work wonders, but when it's,
580 when it's against something as devastating as, you know, uranium and rare earth elements and...
you know, even Mother nature, I think, has her handsful.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

I'd like to ask a last question to both of you. You said that you call for a complete moratorium
585 on exploration and mining. So, in fact, I have two questions. What is so bothering with
exploration?

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

590

What... okay.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

595

It's the main impact that you have quoted...

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

600 Yes. Because...

LE PRÉSIDENT:

605 ... are related to exploitation, not to exploration.

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

610 If the Government of Quebec grants a permit to explore, how can they not grant a permit to mine after? You know? That's... so that's the issue there. And because we are, the First Nations, according to the most recent court cases, the Tsilhqot'in decision, they have a duty to consult. And in Ontario, they have to consult us at the exploration stage.

615 The Quebec Mining Act does not allow for that. So there are people that are... we don't know who. We know that there are dozens of companies out there that are exploring. We don't know if there could be damaging old grave sites or... or whatever, you know. So that is... the law today, and in Quebec, they should change their law to make, to have consultations at the exploration stage, and not just at the development stage. Because once a mine gets to a certain stage, it's hard to stop that after.

620 When they have been issued permits for this, when they have spent millions of dollars, then you try to stop that after, you know? The mining companies themselves could sue the, you know, sue the government. So, to me, it's safer to have everybody's involvement right from the start, and everybody has their say right from the start. And it's the Quebec Government's duty to make sure that that happens.

625

LE PRÉSIDENT:

630 And if, in the worst imaginable case for you, the Government authorizes a project like that, what will happen?

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

635 That will remain to be seen. We have people that have said that they will... they will do anything to protect, you know, their territory. We represent people. We take our directions from people. There are some very... you know, there are some people that are very committed to this, you know, to this territory, not just First Nations people, but all people, Québécois alike. And so we

hope it doesn't get to that level. And one way to make sure that it doesn't is by imposing this moratorium.

640 **Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:**

I would like to just add to your question about exploration. We've already seen impacts on the territory from exploration companies. You know, we see, they go in, they cut trees, they open up the territory more than it's already opened, they leave oil spills in the bush, and we don't even
645 know where they are because they don't inform us. Then when our people go in the bush, that's when they come across some of these activities. They're either going through someone's trap ground or hunting ground, you know.

So those impacts are already there. And we've seen with Matamec, they've done a lot of
650 drilling, poured samples pulled out of rocks, stuff left in the bush. There's no respect for the land. And that goes against what we believe in. We respect the land and we put back what we take. And what exploration companies is not respecting the land. We've seen the effects of other companies, just, you know, clear cut, everything's gone, dug up, and it's left there. There's no
655 restauration to the land the way it should be, or the state they found it in. That's some of the impacts that we've lived already and, you know, when it comes to a mining, like Matamec, that we are totally against, you know, speaking on behalf of some of the people that, you know, from my community, they would go to great lengths to make sure it does not occur.

660 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Quite clear. We thank you, both of you, for this effort and the substance that is in both your brief and presentation.

665 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

In the memory.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

670 Yes, in the brief itself, So thank you very much. And we'll call on now for...

Mr. HARRY ST-DENIS:

675 Okay, thank you Commissioners.

Mrs. MADELEINE PAUL:

Thank you.

680

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Thank you very much. I will call now the Lake Preservation Society, and I think the Society is represented by Mrs. Mary McKenzie. Mrs. McKenzie. Thank you very much, Mrs. McKenzie.

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Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

Okay. Hello members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak today and present concerns regarding uranium and the rare earth mining in Quebec on behalf of the Kipawa Lake Preservation Society. My name is Mary McKenzie. I am a concerned citizen and have resided most of my forty-eight (48) years here in Kipawa, and I hope to continue.

695

I first heard about rare earth last year when Matamec came to our community in April 2013. When I heard the words "radioactive", "sulfuric acid", the "impacts", "ancestry land", well... where this rare earth for the proposed mine site is is my husband's trapping ground. This is our ancestry ground that we were forced out of years ago. I am an active member and the secretary of the Kipawa Lake Preservation Society. Our chair, Christina Morrow, could not be here today, but if you have questions regarding information, please email at savekipawalake@gmail.com. I've been active in paper petition, the online petition, I've been selling bumper stickers, lawn signs, t-shirts, friendly protest, talking to people, and there's a lot of people that are against this rare earth.

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Today I will be presenting a shortened version of the written brief that we submitted on why we believe there should be a moratorium on uranium and rare earth mining in Quebec. Tonight I will only highlight a few of our main concerns and recommendations.

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The goal of the Kipawa Lake Preservation Society is to see the long-term health of the Kipawa watershed. Because originally the tailing ponds were supposed to be behind Beauchêne. They moved them up to Lac Sairs, that's Brennon. Brennon Lake is up, and like a lot of people figure it's no man's land. But we do see a lot of people up here that use the lake for hunting, fishing, canoeing, picking berries, anything, because we have a camp up there. Like I said, it's my husband's trapping ground.

715

720 Our organisation has many concerns about the possibilities of uranium mining and the rare earth mining in Quebec. Currently, the largest threat to the environmental health of the Kipawa watershed is the possibility of mining. There is a fairly advanced proposal for a rare earth mine along the shores of the Kipawa river and the upstream of Kipawa Lake. Rare earth ores are often associated with radioactive elements like uranium and thorium. Mining of rare earth elements poses many of the same risks as mining of uranium. While rare earth mining is new to Canada, uranium mining has been done in the past with devastating results.

725 The radioactivity associated with these ores leads to chronic health problems and the development of cancers in humans and wildlife. In the past uranium mining has caused severe environmental damage and high cancer risks rates in neighboring communities. Increased cancer rates near uranium mines have been well documented in Ontario uranium miners, as well as among Navajo populations near uranium mines in United States. Wastes from both types of mining are stored in tailing ponds. If you take for example Mount Polley that happened a couple of months ago, it erupted, all that stuff was coming down, salmon were going up. That would be the same situation here, the tailing ponds could erupt here, and it could affect our fish on the Kipawa River.

730 Wildlife interact with the tailings and bio-cumulated radioactive and toxic substance in their tissues. Radioactive substance such as uranium and thorium are associated with rare earth ores, and while these concentrations may be considered small in the ore, they become concentrated within the tailing ponds. Thorium and uranium persist for thousands of years, creating over thirty (30) radioactive decay products. such as Polonium, Bismuth, Radon. They are incredibly harmful and cause serious health problems such as cancer.

740 Procedures used to obtain rare earths are very damaging to the environment and far from being green. In the past, ninety-seven percent (97%) of rare earth supply worldwide was from China, although they have cut exports due to extreme damage to the environment and human health. While environmental laws in China are not as strict as they are in developed countries, rare earth mining has not been carried out safely anywhere in the world. Proper handling and disposal of uranium and thorium continue to be a major challenge for the rare earth industry. While Canada does not have strict environmental laws in comparison to China, Canada's laws were not written with rare earth mining in mind. The Metal Mining and Effluent Regulation, or the MMER, were not designed to manage or regulate all of the contaminants of concern in rare earth mining. The MMER does not consider thorium or uranium harmful substances, and does not place restriction on the release into the environment.

750 Since the release during mining activities is not associated with the nuclear fuel cycle, they are not regulated by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The MMER imposes maximum daily discharges limits on arsenic, copper, cyanide, lead, nickel, zinc, total suspended solids and radium 226. Other contaminants of concerns are not regulated, another loophole with Schedule 2

as posted by the Council of Canadians in the MMER of the Federal Fisheries Act, that allows metal mining corporations to use lakes and rivers as toxic dump sites. Once added to Schedule 2, healthy fresh water lakes lose all environmental protections.

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The processing of rare earth ores is often done on site and requires strong acids and bases, most often sulfuric acid, hydraulic acid and lime. These chemicals must be transported to the mine site, putting other areas at risk should a spill occur. Matamec has stated also that their clean-up crew is in Montreal. Montreal is four to five hours away from here, and that can do a lot of damage. I was told too much lime for clean-up is toxic to the earth also.

765

Rare earth mining has never been carried out in Canada, but there have been environmental disasters in other developed countries. Mountain Pass rare earth mine in California was shut down in 2002 because of the environmental concerns. The mine released over six hundred thousand (600,000) gallons of waste water containing thorium into the nearby desert. Local groundwater has been contaminated with radium, thorium and strontium.

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We have serious concerns over the mining of rare earths and other ores near pristine watershed such as Kipawa Lake. The mine site would be located right beside important fish spawning areas for lake trout and walleye. Lake trout and walleye are the main sport fish, and their populations are already at risk. The feasibility study on the Matamec Mine has already been stating that the mine will damage fish spawning habitat. Mines in the watersheds will have a negative impact on outfitting operations. It will disrupt canoe routes and make the area unattractive to tourists. Kipawa Lake is currently a beautiful wilderness area, not a mining district. Mining and tourism don't mix, and tourism is very important for the local economy. It's always been the hunting, the fishing, the tourists and the outfitters that brought in our money, and if we lose them, we'll lose a lot of money.

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The mine also would put the safety of drinking water at risk, as many communities are located downstream of Kipawa Lake and rely on these watersheds for drinking water, Timiskaming, Ottawa River, *et cetera*.

785

As previously mentioned, there are serious health concerns associated with these types of mining, and we feel as though the concerns over radioactivity are being downplayed by the company. Yes, everything around us emits some sort of radiation, but when it is an issue, when it exceeds levels that can cause illness and cancer, for uranium and rare earth mining this is certainly the case, the levels may be low in the ore, but will be concentrated in the tailings. And, as Chief St-Denis had said, you don't know how long thorium or any of that stuff will be around. It could be years, thousands of years.

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800 The social acceptability of the Matamec Mine has been mentioned often, but never
addressed properly. The company mentions this often in references meetings, but has not
addressed opposition such as petitions, protests or even concerns and question from the public.
The fact is the Matamec Project is not socially accepted among Kipawa Lake users and many
members of the local communities. Yet the MRC of Témiscamingue voted in favour of the project
in 2000, without accurate information on environment risk or an assessment of social acceptability.
Vote was based on information provided by Matamec in full sessions rather than unbiased info.
We had seventeen (17) out of twenty (20) mayors that voted yes for this, and they probably never
even visited Kipawa Lake.

805 The risk of uranium and rare earth mining projects far outweighs the benefits. Even with the
best safety precautions, accidents in environmental disasters happens. Once polluted, they can try
to clean it up but it will never be the same. Matamec states that they have no intention of polluting,
and will follow all government regulations. Accidents do happen. They can't guarantee their project
won't impact environment or human health.

810 Often, governments are too lax on polluting companies, it's often easier to pay the fine than
prevent the pollution. Not mining is the only guaranteed way to protect the Kipawa watershed
wildlife and local residents. The vast majority of mine projects are located in remote areas, away
815 from large city centres, but often near First Nation communities. Because these communities often
rely on fish, wild game, wild plants and local drinking water sources, mining in First Nation
territories is a real concern. Should local wildlife, plants and water become contaminated, these
communities are directly impacted, either by loss of the resource or significant health problems
should they continue to use their resource. When wildlife fish, plants are no longer safe for human
820 consumption, they can impact health of these communities and their traditional way of life.

825 The social acceptability of mine projects in the local community where they are proposed
should be of most concern. However, all too often, we see projects approved despite local public
opposition, and very real threats to local human and environmental health.

830 For both uranium mining and rare earth mining, there is a lack of social acceptability and
significant public opposition due to the negative impacts on the human health, the environment and
the tourism industry and the lack of social acceptability. Our suggestions are for the moratorium on
uranium mining to remain in effect, and for an immediate moratorium on rare earth mining. Rare
earth mining and uranium mining present significant risks, environment, human health, tourism,
and provide few benefits to those living in the region where these activities take place. It is socially
unacceptable to expose communities to these sorts of devastating impacts for the sake of
producing nuclear power which is anything but clean or safe, or in any order to produce green
835 technologies that are anything but green.

Given the uncertainty and lack of scientific evidence that rare earth mining can be done safely, rare earth projects should not be allowed to proceed. We have to come up with new technologies and ideas that avoid the mining of radioactive elements and rare earths. Thank you.

840 So what I was saying was where this proposed mine site is, it is my husband's trapping ground. We have a camp, and not too far from there there is his ancestral ground. Years ago, his side of the family, and there's lots of members in the community that was forced out of the community, they were brought down here. Well, there is a graveyard up there, there is... it's homestead to a lot of people. And it would break my heart if this mine went through, and I will do
845 anything to stop it. Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

850 We thank you very much. I'll call the... Okay. I was ready to go over my questions.

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

Okay.

855 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

At the first of your presentation you said you did a lot of petitions, you met with a lot of people. Is that petition an official one or it's something...

860 **Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:**

Yes, it's official. It's by the Green Party. We have a paper petition, I have an online petition that is still ongoing.

865 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

Okay.

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE :

870 We have been talking to a lot of people, we get a lot of information online. I spoke to a lot of people in the community, like elders, and that's what they want, is they want us to preserve their homestead, because they have family that's buried there. Even though the graveyard, there's trees over the graveyard, it's still family. And a lot of people have asked me, and I said I'll do what I can.
875 Like I said, this proposed mine site is on a ZEC. ZEC generates money, protects the animals, and

on the other hand we have a park. Same thing, generates money, protects the animals. There's no balance there if you put a mine in. I don't see a balance.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

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What I want to know is that petition is not only the Native community, it's... all the community can add to that petition? I mean it... it's giving...

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

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You can look on our site...

LA COMMISSAIRE:

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It's giving an image of all the population here?

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

895

Yes. Yes.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

Not only Natives?

900

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

Yes, it's English and it's French, and you can look on the Kipawa Lake Preservation Society - - excuse me -- and we have, we have lots of things on line also. Like I said, I'm just a concerned citizen, I... yes, exactly. And I'd just like to, I'd like to have a place for my kids to go later on too. Because, like I said, my husband's family was forced out of there. He's in there trapping right now. We don't know what's going to happen, and we don't know where our kids are going to go. I don't know.

905

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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In your brief you discussed what is, in your opinion, the social acceptability. If we would be conducting a scientific poll in the Témiscamingue, would you expect that a majority would be in favour or against this type of mining?

915

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

920 Well, I spoke to a lot of people and there's a lot of people that's against this mine, because that's what they're saying, it's going to be a short-term economic gain for Matamec. We're the ones that are at loss here. That's... and a lot of people are against it.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

925 Yes, but you say a lot. But would you say that... would you expect that in the global area that you would have a majority against? Or if there could be...

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

930 I'd say about eighty-five percent (85%). I've got a lot of signatures, and I sent in a lot of signatures, I went house to house, I've talked to complete strangers on the road. I'll talk to anybody.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

935 So your feeling is that most of the people...

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

940 Yes, there's a lot of people that are against this. Because that's what they're saying, it's a short-term economic gain for Matamec.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

945 Okay.

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

950 We have nothing to gain. It's going to be here for thirteen (13), fifteen (15) years. But there's a lot of people, they said if this mine goes through, there's a lot... we're going to lose a lot of people, because people said they'd move away. A lot of people have mentioned this.

955

LE PRÉSIDENT:

960 Okay. We had some scientific who told us that the government, if he authorizes this type of project, or rare earths mining project or uranium project, that all the radioactive contaminants should be retrieved from the tailings, not leaving what they left now, but to extract everything.

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

965 They can't guarantee that. They can't guarantee they're going to take out a hundred percent (100%) radioactive stuff. You can't. Not... not... maybe even a hundred (100), two hundred (200) years they can do a new technology, but not now. The way Matamec has it is they're gonna go in, and everything is gonna... they're gonna create jobs, they're gonna come in, get in, clean up and get out of here. That's basically.

970 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

So you don't think it's possible?

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

975 No.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

980 Okay.

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

985 And I will do, and I will be at the blockade if there... and I will start a blockade too. I'm just... you know.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

990 I don't have any other questions. Ça va?

Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:

995 I can leave?

LE PRÉSIDENT:

Yes.

1000 **Mrs. MARY McKENZIE:**

Okay, thank you.

1005

M. PASCAL BIBEAU

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1010 Thank you very much. So I would call the third presenter, Mr. Pascal Bibeau. Is Mr. Bibeau here? Is it Mr. Bibeau?

M. PASCAL BIBEAU :

1015 Oui.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1020 D'accord, d'accord. Vous voulez nous faire une présentation? On vous écoute pour en faire un résumé. Allez-y, vous n'êtes pas obligé de tout le présenter, nous l'avons et nous allons l'étudier, ça c'est sûr.

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

1025 C'est ça, je me rajoute à l'improviste, là, je me suis inscrit à la dernière minute. J'avais déjà déposé mon mémoire sur le site, à madame Leblanc.

1030 La plupart des préoccupations que j'ai ont été couvertes aujourd'hui par les autres intervenants. Même madame Chantal Tremblay, qui a présenté le sien plus tôt, m'en a emprunté quelques parties. Donc je vais plus résumer mon opinion par rapport à la filière uranifère au Québec.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1035 Allez-y.

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

1040 Hier, je soupais avec ma mère puis elle me faisait part de son désarroi suite à une visite qu'elle a faite à l'hôpital. elle est allée voir son cousin Gilles, qui va succomber sous peu, là, à un cancer du poumon, un cancer à petites cellules. Notre cousin Gilles, il a oeuvré toute sa carrière dans une mine à Elliot Lake, une mine d'uranium en Ontario. Je sais qu'il n'y a pas de... c'est dur de faire des liens.

1045 D'ailleurs, j'ai été à Wendake en septembre dernier, on s'est vus là-bas. Vous avez vu bien du monde, donc vous vous souvenez sûrement pas de moi, mais qu'est-ce que j'ai pu comprendre des instances, il y avait un panel, là, d'experts, il y avait... la Santé publique était là. Bon. Ils se sont adressés à nous puis ils disaient que plus souvent qu'autrement, les données ne permettent pas de conclure. Hein? On l'a entendu souvent, là, de la part des experts. Trop souvent, c'est impossible d'établir des corrélations entre l'exploitation de l'uranium et puis des problèmes de santé
1050 C'est pas rassurant, mais...

1055 Par contre, il ne faut pas que ça soit considéré comme une absence de risque. C'est pas parce qu'on n'est pas capable de conclure... ce que j'ai compris, c'est que c'est à peu près impossible de faire des études en laboratoire, là. Il faudrait prendre des bébés puis les tenir en laboratoire pendant soixante-dix (70) ans, puis les exposer, là. Ça fait que dans le fond, si je comprends bien la situation, c'est que les données ne permettront jamais de conclure, d'établir des corrélations entre l'exploitation et l'exploration d'uranium et certains problèmes de santé.

1060 Par rapport à ça, je veux mentionner aussi que je partage en tout point la vision des Premières Nations en rapport à la filière uranifère.

1065 Au niveau de l'environnement, on a vu dernièrement, là, plusieurs cas de digues qui renaient des parcs à résidus miniers qui ont cédé. Il y a Mount Polley en Colombie-Britannique, plus près il y a Chapais voilà une dizaine d'années, là. J'ai pas l'année exacte, là, mais j'ai vu les photos puis le rapport du ministère de l'Environnement, là. J'ai aussi assisté voilà quelques années à une présentation d'une minière à Val- d'Or, qui nous montrait avec fierté leur nouveau parc à résidus miniers. Je le qualifierais de 2.0.

1070 C'était les nouveaux parcs, là, qui étaient construits selon les dernières normes. Par contre, je suis retourné deux ans après la présentation avec un ami, puis c'était facile de voir à l'oeil nu qu'il y avait des fuites sur les digues. On voyait, on voyait la matière colorée s'écouler des digues. Donc, c'est pas... c'est pas rassurant. On nous parle de parc à résidus miniers, de nouvelles normes, de nouvelles façons de faire. J'ai pas envie non plus qu'on serve de banc d'essai par rapport à ça.
1075

1080 Par rapport encore aux parcs à résidus miniers, j'ai évalué des.. certaines présentations qui avaient été faites, là, par monsieur Leclair, de la Commission nationale de sécurité nucléaire qui nous parlait de modèles de gestion. Il était question de pompage d'eaux contaminées, de la filtrer, c'était en circuit fermé. Mais Madame, Messieurs les Commissaires, j'aimerais bien rencontrer l'expert qui va être capable de me garantir que dans cinq cents (500) ans, ça va être encore en opération, là, ce système de pompage là, puis de filtres, puis... C'est des échelles de temps, là, qui sont énormes, puis on n'a pas de garanties.

1085 Un autre point qui m'agace beaucoup par rapport à ça c'est... il y a une dame qui en parlait plus tôt, là, les minières ont démontré trop souvent qu'elles préfèrent payer des amendes plutôt que de se conformer aux lois et règlements. Donc, rendu là, il y a aucune loi et règlement qui nous met à l'abri.

1090 Dernièrement, là, à Malartic, on parle souvent de Malartic parce que c'est un exemple de mine qui est supposée être à la fine point de la technologie, de respecter tout, mais on entend souvent aux nouvelles que la minière Osisko fait pression sur le ministère de l'Environnement pour avoir des dérogations pour pouvoir soit augmenter les temps de dynamitage, aller, sortir des paramètres qui sont établis par la loi, ils demandent une dérogation.

1095 On demande des dérogations pour pouvoir produire plus de poussière, pour pouvoir faire plus de bruit que la loi le permet. Puis on met souvent de la pression, je veux dire les minières mettent souvent de la pression sur le ministère de l'Environnement. Ils impliquent la population, les travailleurs, en jouant la *game* qu'il y en a qui vont... il y a des emplois tout le temps en jeu, puis c'est... Ça veut dire que même si on établit des lois puis on établit des paramètres, il y a toujours de la pression par rapport aux industriels, par rapport aux minières pour sortir de ça, avoir une dérogation, comme on dit. Puis c'est une autre chose qui n'est pas bien bien rassurante.

1105 Puis même la neutralité des instances gouvernementales sont à questionner parfois. Quand on regarde, là, la bévue du ministère de l'Environnement dans le dossier de Cacouna, le port... pas pétrolier -- oui, pétrolier, là, dans la maternité de bélugas, là, les permis ont été émis, là. Oup! Par après on s'est rendu compte qu'on avait fait une erreur. Mais, tu sais, c'est juste pour démontrer mon sentiment d'inquiétude par rapport au fait qu'on n'est pas à l'abri. Il n'y a pas une loi, il y a pas un règlement qui va nous mettre à l'abri, parce qu'il y a toujours un fin finaud qui va essayer de contourner les lois et règlements, ou qui va essayer de trouver des flous là-dedans. C'est... ça aussi ça m'inquiète beaucoup.

1115 Je me suis aussi documenté beaucoup sur la chaîne de décomposition de l'uranium. Je vous dirais que d'apprendre que ça peut prendre plusieurs milliers d'années à se décomposer, ça m'a fait réaliser qu'il y a pas juste moi, mes enfants, mes futurs petits-enfants qui vont être pris à gérer ces problématiques-là. C'est beaucoup plus loin que ça. C'est du très très très long terme.

1120 Du côté économique, on a tellement de ressources renouvelables à exploiter qu'on pourrait, selon moi, s'abstenir d'exploiter ce genre de ressources controversées. Je suis d'avis que cette industrie, l'industrie uranifère, elle ne bénéficiera pas à l'ensemble de la société, mais plutôt à une poignée d'individus inscrits en bourse. J'irais jusqu'à dire que j'anticipe plutôt une facture sociale au niveau des coûts de soins de santé puis des coûts environnementaux suite à l'exploitation d'uranium.

1125 On s'est débarrassés de l'industrie de l'amiante, de l'exploitation de l'amiante, parce qu'on a jugé que c'était, c'était trop dangereux, ça ne cadrerait pas dans nos valeurs de société. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi qu'on essaie d'amener l'uranium, là, sur la table. Selon moi c'est des choses qui sont assez similaires. Faut pas faire l'autruche non plus.

1130 Donc, Madame, Messieurs les Commissaires, je me suis tellement documenté sur la filière uranifère que je pourrais vous en entretenir pendant des heures, là, puis là j'ai dix minutes. Je vais terminer en disant que quand on apprend à développer des projets sur les territoires publics, des territoires qui appartiennent à la société, il y a toujours trois aspects à tenir compte: l'économique, le social puis l'environnemental. Puis trop souvent, bien, on voit le premier, là, l'économique, qui éclipse les deux autres. Ça, on l'a vu, ça.

1135 Donc, après une analyse fine, là, des informations disponibles sur les différents aspects des activités uranifères, je réitère ma ferme et définitive opposition au développement de cette filière. Je demande donc un moratoire complet sur l'exploitation et l'exploration de l'uranium. Je demande et j'insiste aussi que le rapport que vous ferez au gouvernement sera tenu en compte et ne sera pas tabletté comme on a vu par le passé, rendant tout cet exercice inutile.

1140 Merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1145 Je vous remercie de proposer qu'on ne tablette pas notre rapport. Ça fait plaisir pour les commissaires d'entendre ça. Michèle, avez-vous des questions? Voulez-vous commencer?

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1150 En fait c'est difficile de poser des questions parce que vous nous avez fait un ensemble de constats par rapport à vos propres lectures, et vous avez pris la peine d'aller rencontrer les experts pendant la deuxième phase, au moment où on était à Wendake. Vous nous avez fait mention de ce que vous avez relevé. Est-ce que j'ai bien entendu ce que vous dites quand vous dites: Dans le fond, pour moi, trop d'incertitude de connaissances pour prendre le risque, et trop de déviance des règles pour faire confiance?

1155

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

Oui.

1160 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

Est-ce que c'est ce que j'entends de l'ensemble de ce que vous nous avez dit?

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

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C'est l'idée... Oui. Par rapport à l'incertitude des règles, des fois je sens qu'il y a deux poids, deux mesures. Je sentais un peu qu'on... on s'est fait entretenir par les experts de la santé publique, que vu qu'on ne permettait pas de conclure, on ne peut pas dire que c'est néfaste. C'est ce que j'ai ressenti, là.

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Par contre, dans un autre dossier, juste pour faire un parallèle, on va prendre la cigarette électronique. Santé Canada nous dit qu'il n'y a pas d'études assez claires pour conclure que c'est pas néfaste, donc ils nous conseillent de ne pas l'utiliser. Puis ce que j'ai senti par rapport à l'uranium, bien c'est qu'il y a pas rien qui nous permet de conclure que c'est néfaste, donc on peut se lancer là-dedans. Tu sais, c'est ça, c'est... des fois je trouve que c'est des... c'est deux poids, deux mesures, c'est deux discours différents. Mais quand on... quand je suis pas certain, moi, je veux dire, si je ramène un mode de gestion à une très très petite échelle, au niveau de ma famille, mes enfants, quand je suis pas certain de quelque chose, soit que je vais m'assurer d'être certain avant de passer à l'action ou que je vais m'abstenir.

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LA COMMISSAIRE:

Donc, si je retraduis ça, ce que vous demandez à la Commission c'est: À la lumière de ce que vous allez ramasser comme information, si on n'est pas capable d'être certains nous aussi de dire, bien... Il faut avoir des certitudes. Ce que vous nous dites, c'est que pour faire une décision sage il faudrait avoir des certitudes, et à défaut de certitudes, étudier le principe...

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M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

Bien, du moins que le risque calculé soit moins grand que ce que je ressens comme ça, là. Je ne dis pas faut être certain à cent pour cent (100%), c'est sûr qu'on n'irait jamais nulle part, là, si on... on ne développerait jamais un projet, là. Mais il y a trop d'incertitudes présentement, à la lecture que j'en fais.

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LA COMMISSAIRE:

1200 O.K. Ça c'est le premier point, le niveau de la connaissance, les risques, le niveau de risques. Maintenant, au niveau de l'encadrement, vous dites: Écoutez, il y a trop de déviations, on ne paie pas les amendes... on préfère payer des amendes.

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

1205 Oui.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1210 Advenant que le gouvernement, dans une perspective de vouloir autoriser ce type d'industrie dise: On va prendre toutes les mesures pour internaliser les coûts de surveillance, on va les faire payer par l'industrie. En tout cas, peu importe le moyen que le gouvernement pourrait bien trouver, puis qu'à ce moment-là la surveillance, elle serait là...

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

1215 Oui.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1220 ... puis il n'y aurait pas de possibilité de dévier, donc tout... est-ce que vous pensez que c'est envisageable à ce moment-là?

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

1225 Bien, je vous répondrais, Madame, en disant qu'ils devraient commencer par faire leurs preuves dans d'autres domaines, tels la foresterie ou... dans le minier aussi, mais dans les mines d'or, les mines d'argent, faire déjà appliquer au moins ce qui est... ce qui est là comme loi et règlements, et puis resserrer la vis dans les domaines dans lesquels on voit déjà du laxisme avant de se lancer dans un autre domaine.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1230 Merci pour moi.

1235

LE PRÉSIDENT:

Ça va pour moi, vous avez couvert justement des sujets que je voulais couvrir.

1240 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

On se complète tellement!

1245 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Oui, on travaille sur les mêmes dossiers. Alors, moi ça complète. Votre mémoire est apprécié. Je vous en remercie beaucoup. Même...

1250 **M. PASCAL BIBEAU:**

Merci beaucoup, puis je vous remercie de vous être déplacés dans notre belle région.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1255 Même... qui est même particulièrement bien écrit, permettez-moi de le souligner.

M. PASCAL BIBEAU:

Merci.

1260 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

1265 Alors, si vous le voulez bien, on prendrait une pause d'une quinzaine de minutes et puis on reviendra avec les trois dernières présentations. Alors on y va pour une pause d'une quinzaine de minutes, d'accord? Merci.

SUSPENSION DE QUELQUES MINUTES

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REPRISE DE LA SÉANCE
Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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Bonsoir Madame McKenzie. Alors, Monsieur Andrew Fleury, avec qui vous deviez présenter n'est pas là? Ah,

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:

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No, he's dealing with Tembec issues right now, so he won't be here tonight.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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Okay. So, okay, we will listen to you.

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:

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Good evening. Like I said, my husband's not there tonight, he's dealing with the Tembec issues, and the strike issues, so I'm here presenting for both of us.

1300

We've always been proud to call Kipawa or home, living here most of our lives and raising our family here. Now there is a threat to our environment. That threat is mining. A word we never thought we'd hear around Kipawa, and now today it is all we hear. There's talk about uranium mining, rare earth mining, mining this, mining for that. It just never ends. I'd like to know when will it end. This is our backyard that these mining companies are exploring for their own personal gain, and if it doesn't stop now, our future generations will suffer for it.

1305

Today if you read anything about mining companies, you will read how they never have any intentions of polluting the environment, or that these companies will follow all government regulations. However, accidents happen, and they happen often. There is no guarantee that their projects won't impact the environment, the wildlife, or most importantly our health. Once the environment becomes sick, the animals become sick, and once those animals become sick, the people will become sick. Then what?

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Is our life and the life of the future generations worth the risk for short-term economic benefits? Hopefully you will answer no, and say our lives is worth so much more than any mining project. My husband and I, as well as my children, we do not support mining, we do not support any rare earth mining, we do not support uranium mining, we don't support any mining. The risks

1315 are not worth it, and we ask that you do not remove the moratorium on uranium mining, and we also ask that there be a moratorium on rare earth mining as well.

Thank you. That's it.

1320 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Short and clear.

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:

1325

That's right.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1330

Okay. Maybe one question. You say that all the forests, lakes that are around are your backyard. So you feel home there and I understand that. But in the harvesting of the different animals, plants and so on, how is the sharing with the non-Autochtone people?

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:

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With what?

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1340

With the people that are not Natives. They hunt also in the same territory, they fish in the same territory. How is it? Is it difficult to share with them or not? How is the culture of having those both... those two cultures together on the same territory?

Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:

1345

Well the mining is gonna affect them as well.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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Yes, that's what I understand, but I want to know how are your relations with the non-Native people when you think of sharing animals, plants, fishing, hunting and so on?

1355 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Well, my husband's non-Native, so I don't have a problem with it.

1360 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

I hope so for you! If he's your husband. Perfect example, you live the sharing, you're right. No, but globally in the territory is there some confrontations or if it is relative harmony? How is it?

1365 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Well if they're respecting our way of life then I don't have a problem with it.

1370 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Okay. So there are not frictions or...

1375 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Not that I know of.

1380 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Not that you know of. But you expect that they would react like you because they feel that this way of life is important also to them? That's what...

1385 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Yes.

1390 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

That's what I understand.

1395 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Hum hum.

1395 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Okay, I see what you mean. Okay, that was my question, you expect so. I want to understand that, because we don't have many non-Natives here tonight and I was wondering what would be -- yes, but not many, I said! Yes, okay, I thank you very much.

1400 **Mrs. ROXANE McKENZIE:**

Thank you.

1405 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Alors je vais appeler le Conseil des Premières Nations Abitibiwinni, monsieur Gabriel Argan. Il n'est pas ici? Est-ce que quelqu'un d'autre est là pour présenter le mémoire de la Première Nation? Il n'y a personne d'autre pour représenter le Conseil de la Première Nation?

1410 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

Mais nous, on a le mémoire.

1415

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX

1420 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Bon, on a le mémoire, oui, c'est le plus important. Bon. Alors dans ce cas-là je vais appeler le dernier intervenant, c'est-à-dire l'Association Avenir des ressources Témiscamiennes... oui, du Témiscamingue. Excusez mon début de rhume.

1425 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Bonsoir.

1430 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Merci beaucoup de vous être déplacés.

1435 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Vous êtes madame Johanne Descoteaux, c'est bien ça?

1440 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEUX:**

Exactement, pour l'Association pour l'avenir des ressources témiscamiennes.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1445 Voilà. Voulez-vous approcher le micro, s'il vous plaît, pour qu'on vous entende bien.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEUX:

D'accord. Donc je vais vous faire une lecture de ce qu'on pense de tout ça.

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Oui. Avez-vous des copies de votre mémoire?

1455 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEUX:**

Je l'ai envoyé aujourd'hui à madame Leblanc.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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D'accord, merci.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEUX:

1465 D'accord?

LE PRÉSIDENT:

On va prendre connaissance d'accord.

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEUX:

D'accord.

1475 (L'INTERVENANTE FAIT LECTURE DE SON MÉMOIRE)

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1480 Et je vais vous lire la citation de APART, qui est en fait une citation de Albert Einstein qui dit:
« Le monde ne sera pas détruit par ceux qui font le mal mais par ceux qui les regardent sans rien faire. »

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1485 Merci beaucoup pour votre mémoire.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1490 Merci à vous.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1495 Question. Vous dites: Quel besoin avons-nous de cet uranium. Si je pose la question autrement, est-ce qu'un pays comme le Canada ou un état comme le Québec n'a pas un devoir d'aider les pays ou les états qui ont de faibles ressources énergétiques à eux aussi se développer avec une ressource énergétique comme l'uranium?

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1500 Pas au prix de l'environnement.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1505 Expliquez.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1510 En fait, si on doit aider les autres pays mais que pour nous ça cause un danger, et en fait que ça peut causer des dangers irréversibles puis à en venir à mettre notre qualité de vie en cause, non, on n'a pas ce devoir-là. Puis en même temps, peut-être que justement on devrait plutôt, en tant que... que pays ou province ou peu importe, forcer plus à développer de nouvelles technologies, de nouvelles façons. Comme, en fait, c'est le cas justement pour la médecine que maintenant les isotopes ne sont plus nécessaires, qu'on peut les produire de d'autres façons. Donc peut-être qu'on devrait axer beaucoup sur la recherche.

1515 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Et qu'est-ce que vous répondez à ceux qui disent que... et il y a même des autorités qui le disent, je pense par exemple à un rapport de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique, qui dit que le Canada est un des endroits dans le monde où les normes sont les plus sévères, les plus strictes en matière de gestion des sites uranifères. Est-ce que vous préférez que la planète s'approvisionne auprès de pays qui n'ont pas de normes environnementales? Est-ce que ça ne crée pas un devoir moral d'aider à satisfaire ces besoins énergétiques de la meilleure façon possible?

1525 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

En fait, si on a ces meilleures normes-là, on devrait peut-être échanger, justement, avec les autres pays qui en ont moins, pour les conscientiser.

1530 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

D'accord. Vous dites aussi, en substance, que les élus ne représentent pas toujours les citoyens là-dedans, vous faites une distinction entre faire parler les citoyens, leur donner la parole, et ce que les élus parfois, au niveau des MRC, *et cetera*, peuvent en dire, et approuver des fois des projets. Non seulement vous dites ils ne sont pas nécessairement représentatifs, mais vous dites ils sont souvent, parfois, peu préparés au plan technique pour savoir ce que les promoteurs leur mettent sur la table. Bon. Est-ce que je résume bien votre pensée?

1540 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Oui, parce que, en fait...

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1545 Bon.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

... surtout dans le domaine minier. Il y a des domaines qui sont moins difficiles à comprendre, mais le domaine minier est un... moi je le sais, je suis en fait forestière, et puis j'essaie un peu de, justement, m'informer sur le domaine minier, mais c'est très difficile, hum? C'est plus complexe qu'un autre domaine. Donc, pour un élu, on peut comprendre qu'en quelque part c'est difficile pour lui de comprendre ça. Peu importe sa formation, il n'y a pas de formation, en fait... minier.

1555 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Compte tenu de cette difficulté, j'en reviens à ma question, est-ce que les élus, avant de se prononcer pour ou contre ces projets, ne devraient pas attendre que l'évaluation environnementale et le rapport du BAPE, qui est un organisme indépendant, soient terminés pour avoir un portrait complet des impacts potentiels d'un projet avant de se prononcer?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

C'est clair, en fait, qu'il devrait toujours avant tout projet y avoir des études environnementales. Mais souvent la minière passe en dessous de l'assujettissement, donc il y a souvent pas, justement, de BAPE qui est demandé. Et puis...

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Mais là c'est obligatoire pour les projets miniers, là.

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Maintenant oui, mais en quelque part, oui, il faut absolument que toutes les questions soient répondues, et ça serait sûrement un bon outil, au lieu d'une formation, peut-être justement que le BAPE se prononce, justement, sur ce projet-là avant que les élus donnent leur aval dans le projet.

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Pour qu'ils aient le portrait complet? C'est ça que je comprends?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Exactement, pour qu'ils aient un bon portrait, parce que veux, veux pas, ils ne peuvent pas, en tant qu'élus, avoir justement les connaissances mais aussi le temps. Parce que c'est nommément de temps, là, puis élu, souvent, bien oui, t'as du temps, mais à un moment donné ça a une limite. Donc, justement, s'il y aurait un BAPE puis que toutes les questions seraient répondues, ça donnerait un vrai beau portrait, justement, au projet.

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1590 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

En fait, je ne veux pas tomber trop dans le détail du détail. Ce que la Commission, il va falloir qu'elle éclaircisse, c'est est-ce que les élus ont donné -- puis là, on ne parle pas d'un projet en particulier, là --, mais est-ce que dans ce cas-là ils ont donné, comme élus, une autorisation à

1595 un projet, ou dit qu'ils sont favorables ou est-ce que, à cause de la mécanique, ils sont obligés de donner une autorisation de procéder parce que c'est conforme au schéma d'aménagement? C'est complètement deux choses, ça. Puis ça, il faut vérifier ça, là, savoir qu'est-ce qu'ils ont donné comme appui avant de dire ils l'ont fait.

1600 OÙ je voudrais aller, puis là je ne sais pas si vous êtes une citoyenne de la région de Kipawa ou d'ailleurs...

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1605 Ailleurs.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1610 ... parce que, puis là je ne veux pas... c'est pour ça que je ne veux pas vous mettre dans l'embarras, mais au niveau de ce qu'on aurait voulu savoir, c'est est-ce que les MRC, dans ces cas-là, quand on donne un appui, est-ce qu'ils consultent les gens avant ou ils vont juste donner leur appui parce qu'ils sont élus? Puis c'est ça qu'il faut départager aussi. Puis là, je ne voulais pas faire un cours de pédagogie mais, je veux dire, il y a une différence entre donner un appui comme élu à un projet, ou être obligé de donner un avis de conformité parce que c'est conforme à un schéma, par exemples. C'est pour ça que... moi, ce que j'aimerais savoir c'est comment vous voudriez que les élus vous consultent avant de donner leur avis. C'est ça ma vraie question.

1615 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

1620 Comment?

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1625 Comment vous voudriez que les municipalités ou les MRC...

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

O.K. En fait...

1630 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

... agissent avec leur population dans ces cas-là, en termes de donner leur avis?

1635 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Oui.

1640 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

Là monsieur Francoeur est allé avec une orientation, dire, ne pas le donner d'avance. Vous, est-ce que vous... comment vous voudriez qu'ils agissent avant de donner un avis? Quel qu'il soit, dans un sens ou dans l'autre?

1645 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

1650 Bien, en fait, en premier lieu, les élus devraient s'informer au, justement... avec justement le BAPE, qui répond à toutes les questions, prendre connaissance entièrement du projet. Ça devrait être obligatoire. Obligatoire. Une formation obligatoire. Ça pourrait être une présentation, mais on ne pourrait pas dire que chacun l'a lu chez lui. En fait, c'est quelque chose qui devrait être vraiment structuré.

1655 Par la suite, chacun revient avec son bagage dans sa petite municipalité, et puis justement, il peut y aller sous forme de sondage... Écoutez, il y a une multitude... Justement, une petite soirée d'information pour la municipalité, des sondage, un référendum, n'importe comment. Mais il faut absolument que la population ait une voix, puis une voix vraiment concrète, là. Parce que souvent, les projets passent par le conseil municipal qui n'a pas conseillé ses citoyens.

1660 En fait, qui n'a pas fait aucune manoeuvre concrète pour évaluer si, en fait, ils ont l'accord ou pas. Donc, il faut qu'il y ait un mécanisme de mis en place pour que justement, que le citoyen ait aussi son mot à dire. Parce que, en fait, sinon, si c'est six personnes – un conseil municipal, en fait, c'est sept personnes qui décident pour l'ensemble de la municipalité, puis c'est pas correct, là, en fait.

1665 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

Donc, quand les gens, un certain type d'élus disent: « Bien écoutez, on a déjà été élus aux élections, on n'a pas besoin de reconsulter », ça, qu'est-ce que vous faites par rapport à une opinion comme celle-là?

1670 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

C'est inacceptable de dire ça, parce que souvent, en fait, les projets sont développés en cours de route. Donc, on n'a souvent pas élu notre maire en fonction de ce projet-là. Et puis il

1675 arrive en cours de route, donc c'est inacceptable de dire ça. Oui c'est vrai que, en quelque part, le maire représente l'opinion de ses citoyens, et peut mesurer l'acceptabilité sociale. Mais, en fait, avant de le dire, son accord ou son désaccord, il doit réellement l'avoir mesuré.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1680 Je vous remercie, Madame.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1685 Bienvenue.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1690 Ça complétait, parce qu'il y avait une nuance à faire entre les attestations techniques qu'un promoteur doit obtenir...

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1695 Oui, oui, c'est clair.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

... et l'appui politique.

1700 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Hum hum.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1705 C'est deux choses. D'ailleurs, c'est pas le corps politique, c'est pas le maire qui donne les attestations techniques que requiert la loi, quand la Loi dit est-ce que le projet est conforme à la réglementation, c'est le premier technocrate municipal, le secrétaire-général prévoit la loi. Alors l'appui politique, c'est autre chose.

1710 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Mais elle est pesante.

1715 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Oui, oui. Non, vous avez raison, elle est pesante, dans un sens ou dans l'autre.

1720 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

Oui, très. Oui.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1725 Moi j'ai été un peu surpris de voir le problème de crédibilité que vous avez avec les normes, les lois. Vous dites les lois sont insuffisantes, souvent insuffisantes. Vous dites parfois on les fait sur mesure. Vous avez dit que vous n'aviez pas confiance à l'environnement.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1730 Au ministère, non.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

1735 Vous dites qu'ils ont peu de ressources, et là vous avez donnée une idée de la faiblesse, à votre avis, des ressources consacrées à la restauration, et vous avez donné le cas de Québec Lithium, en disant que les mailles sont trop larges. Qu'est-ce qu'il faudrait pour redresser cette crédibilité dans votre esprit?

1740 **Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:**

1745 En fait, il faudrait... Des lois, c'est vrai qu'il y en a beaucoup, en fait, mais il faudrait simplement les faire respecter ces lois-là. En fait, il faudrait des gens de terrain. Il faudrait arrêter de faire... des gens de bureaux, donc, parce que les catastrophes, elles sont sur le terrain et non dans le bureau.

1750 Donc moi je pense que déjà là, si on amènerait plus d'effectifs sur le terrain, donc, ça aiderait beaucoup. Parce que oui, c'est vrai qu'on n'a plus confiance au ministère de l'Environnement, parce qu'il y a trop de... justement, on entend trop de catastrophes, trop de choses qui sont arrivées, trop de... en fait, des amendes, justement, qui sont payées au lieu de respecter. Donc, il y a vraiment beaucoup beaucoup beaucoup de... puis les millions de dollars qu'on se sert pour tout ça, en quelque part c'est un peu la preuve de... il y a une faiblesse. Mais en même temps, si on regarde l'effectif qui est dans les bureaux puis l'effectif qu'il y a sur les terrains, c'est... c'est incroyable. Donc... il n'y a pas d'équilibre, là. Il y a vraiment aucun équilibre, là.

1755 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Mais est-ce que c'est pas parce que ça coûte trop cher? Puis est-ce que les contribuables, à votre avis, seraient d'accord pour payer une facture plus élevée pour qu'il y ait beaucoup de monde sur le terrain?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

En fait elle ne serait pas plus élevée. Il y a des gens dans les bureaux, peut-être qu'il faudrait réévaluer ces postes-là, en fait. Parce que, justement, ça se passe sur le terrain, donc c'est là que l'action, en fait les choses arrivent, sur le terrain. Donc, non, ça ne coûterait pas plus cher. En fait c'est peut-être le contraire. Parce que justement, on sauverait peut-être des millions et des millions en... en arrêtant de restaurer des sites, justement, ou des catastrophes, ou... Donc, il faudrait plus d'effectifs terrain, oui. Puis je ne crois pas, non, que ça coûterait plus cher.

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1770 **LE PRÉSIDENT:**

Donc, dans votre idée, ça ne coûterait pas plus cher parce qu'on prévendrait des dommages plus graves?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Exactement.

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

O.K. Mais admettez-vous que si ces gens-là qui dans le moment ne voyagent pas, se déplacent pas, ça... en terme de budget, ça coûte moins cher que de faire du terrain systématiquement. Faire du terrain, c'est dispendieux?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Oui, mais en même temps, à un moment donné, le bureau, là, il faut se questionner. Est-ce que c'est vraiment essentiel tout ce qui se passe dans le bureau comme papiers, là, puis comme... en fait, comme travail tout simplement, là? Est-ce que, en quelque part, on pourrait peut-être justement réévaluer ça un petit peu, l'organisation du ministère de l'Environnement, puis peut-être que... À mon avis, peut-être qu'il y aurait quelques petites failles, là, qui pourraient justement être rectifiées, puis qu'on sauverait quelques dollars pour justement envoyer... Je suis certaine qu'il y a de quoi à faire là-dessus, là, que, en quelque part, qu'on mette plus d'effectifs terrain. Puis que, en

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1795 quelque part, on applique les lois. Que quand il y a faute, en fait qu'on l'applique dès le départ, là. Qu'on... il y a sûrement quelque chose à faire, c'est pas possible, sinon.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1800 En fait, si on peut réinterpréter ça autrement, c'est parce qu'on n'est pas en position de savoir s'il y en a trop dans les bureaux parce que dans le fond, s'il y en a, ils doivent faire quelque chose aussi, les gens dans les bureaux. Mais ça reste que ce que vous nous dites, c'est qu'il faudrait quand même évaluer le coût économique de toutes les catastrophes pour lesquelles on doit payer des réparations quand les garanties sont pas là. Si on le mettait en effectifs, ça serait combien d'effectifs additionnels, puis le bénéfice qu'on en ferait? Ce que vous nous demandez, 1805 dans le fond, est-ce que le gouvernement ne devrait pas faire une analyse des bénéfices qu'il pourrait tirer d'augmenter son personnel, plutôt que de toujours couper sans savoir...

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1810 Parce que...

LA COMMISSAIRE:

1815 Puis après ça, c'est d'aller chercher une bonne analyse des bénéfices...

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Bien, en fait...

1820 **LA COMMISSAIRE:**

... d'avoir plus de monde sur le terrain?

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

1825 Oui, mais dès le départ, en quelque part il devrait justement... moi, je pense, vérifier la structure du ministère, dès le départ. Vérifier, là, tout ce beau monde-là, en quelque part, si justement est à la bonne place, là. Et puis par la suite, justement, s'il est pas convaincu de justement le calculer, justement, tous ces millions-là qu'on prend pour justement les catastrophes qui se sont passées... en fait c'est pas les catastrophes, c'est le non respect des lois. Donc évaluer 1830 justement ce non-respect des lois là, et puis peut-être que ça va... ça va aider justement à mettre des effectifs.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

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Vous, vous travaillez dans le domaine forestier.

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

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Hum hum.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

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Dans le fond, le domaine forestier, ça s'apparente. Est-ce que vous voyez la même... si vous nous dites ça, est-ce que c'est parce que vous voyez la même réalité dans votre propre ministère?

Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

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Exactement. Exactement.

LA COMMISSAIRE:

Donc vous êtes capable... vous parlez en faisant une analogie?

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Bien, en fait oui, puis en même temps, on... je vous dirais, par contre, dans le domaine forestier c'est pas des millions de dollars pour la restauration des sites puis tout ça. Donc, c'est sûr que pour le domaine minier, c'est d'autant plus important, parce que justement, nous, pauvres contribuables, on s'en vient les reins affaiblis.

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Bon, moi aussi ça va. Eh bien, on vous remercie.

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Mme JOHANNE DESCOTEAUX:

Merci à vous.

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

J'aurais... bien, je relance un appel pour savoir si les gens du Conseil de la Première Nation Abitibiwinini sont ici? Alors écoutez, pour le groupe qui s'appelle le Conseil de la Première Nation

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Abitibiwinni, on les avait cédulés pour vingt heures quinze (20h15), vingt heures vingt (20h20) -- vingt et une heure quinze (21h15), vingt et une heure vingt (21h20). Comme on n'est pas tout à fait rendus là, peut-être que tout simplement ils s'attendent à passer et qu'ils vont être ici à l'heure. Alors je vais faire une pause de dix (10) minutes, et si dans dix (10) minutes ils ne sont pas là, bien à ce moment-là on ajournera la séance, parce que c'est notre dernier intervenant. Alors s'il n'est pas là, on se contentera du mémoire écrit qu'ils nous ont fait parvenir. Sinon, on les entendra.

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Oh, I'm sorry. Yes. We are waiting for the people representing le Conseil de la Première Nation Abitibiwinni, but they are not there. But they were scheduled for 20:15, 20:20 -- 21:20, 21:15. So, since they are not there, but maybe they will be at the time they were scheduled, maybe they were right on time, so I suggest that we take a break for ten minutes, just to wait. If they are there, we will hear their deposition. If not, we will adjourn the meeting, because they are our last presentators tonight. Is it clear enough? Sorry for my poor English.

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SUSPENSION DE QUELQUES MINUTES

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LE PRÉSIDENT:

Nous allons ajourner l'audience parce que les représentants du dernier groupe ne sont pas là. Alors écoutez, il me reste à vous remercier de votre participation et d'être venus aussi nombreux. Alors merci, et on va étudier et analyser attentivement vos points de vue. Alors bonsoir et merci de votre accueil.

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SÉANCE AJOURNÉE AU 24 NOVEMBRE 2014 – 19 H

1910

1915 Je soussignée, YOLANDE TEASDALE, sténographe officielle bilingue, certifie 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.

1920 ET J'AI SIGNÉ :

1925 _____
Yolande Teasdale,
Sténographe officielle bilingue