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Comité consultatif de l'environnement Kativik
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

Thursday, January 27, 2011

Regional Conference of Elected Officers for the Kativik Region
Kativik Regional Government
P.O. Box 9
Kuujuaq QC J0M 1C0

Subject: Public consultation on sustainable forest management

About the KEAC

The Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) is a preferential and official forum for the governments of Canada and Québec, the Kativik Regional Government as well as the Northern villages, when they draft laws and regulations regarding the environmental and social protection of the territory covered under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA) north of the 55th parallel. In particular, through the sharing of viewpoints and information, the KEAC monitors the application of Section 23 of the JBNQA.

About the KEAC's involvement in the subject

Pursuant to its mandate, the KEAC involves itself in the environmental strategies and regulations applicable in Nunavik, including forest management. In 2004, the KEAC prepared and submitted a position paper to the *Commission d'étude sur la gestion de la forêt publique québécoise* (public forests management task force). Refer to the recommendations appended to this letter. More recently, the KEAC also contributed to the preparation of an assessment study on the economic potential of two forest zones north of the 55th parallel.

Responses and comments on the sustainable forest management strategy and the provisions proposed for the future regulation on sustainable forest management

Strategy question no. 8: What parts of the strategy should be improved?

Forests in Nunavik

As the document refers to all the forests in the public domain in Québec, the KEAC would like assurances that the provisions contained in the strategy, in particular Challenge No. 1 (Take the interests, values and needs of the Québec population and Aboriginal nations into account in managing the forests), are implemented for the forests in Nunavik, when applicable. The southern portion of Nunavik is blanketed with forests, including some stands that are exceptional and important for the region's Aboriginal nations. Certain zones of these forests (burial sites, traditionally significant sites, etc.), not to say some of these entire forests, should receive protection, such as forest-fire monitoring as well as against logging and mining activities. In order to improve the current situation, Nunavik must develop its own forest management plan and participate actively in integrated land and natural resource planning. This portion of Québec's forest must be recognized.

Aboriginal nations: an integral part of the Québec population

Although distinct, Aboriginal nations are part of the Québec population. The KEAC therefore suggests a few modifications to the strategy in order to preclude any interpretation to the contrary.

For example, in the first paragraph of Section 2 of the consultation document, the phrase "Forests are very important in the lives of Quebeckers and Aboriginal nations [...]" [translation] could instead be written "Forests are very important in the lives of Quebeckers and, in particular, the lives of Aboriginal nations [...]".

Also for Challenge No. 1, Orientation No. 1, the phrase "[...] strengthen dialogue with the population and the Aboriginal communities on the management [...]" [translation] could instead be written "[...] strengthen dialogue with the population and, in particular, the Aboriginal communities on the management [...]".

Conclusion

The KEAC would like to applaud the energy that has been devoted to improving forest management, with a view to sustainable development. The sustainable forest management strategy and the provisions proposed for future regulation clearly demonstrate a commitment to improved forest conservation.

The KEAC is confident that these changes will add to the conservation of the forest heritage of Quebeckers and, in particular, Aboriginal nations.

The President,

Claude Abel

Appendix

Recommendations extracted from the position paper prepared by the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) and submitted to the *Commission d'étude sur la gestion de la forêt publique québécoise* (public forests management task force) in October 2004.

1- The KEAC recommends to the Commission that a fact-finding group be established to compile and round out current knowledge of forest resources in Nunavik. This group would analyze and consolidate the studies (effectiveness of reforestation, soil quality, post-fire harvesting, etc.) necessary to ensure the protection and conservation of Nunavik's wood resources.

2- Prior to the completion of the preceding recommendation, with the exception of personal use, the KEAC recommends to the Commission the suspension of all activities (logging, wood harvesting, etc.) that could contribute to the decline of forest resources in Nunavik. This recommendation should apply until such time that the impacts of these activities are understood and that a management plan has been established to foster complete rehabilitation, within a reasonable period of time, of the situation that existed before the decline of the forest resource and connected ecosystems.

3- The forest management plan must comply, north of the 55th parallel, with the principle of conservation, the Inuit right to harvest wildlife set out in Section 24 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), as well as the environmental protection provisions set out in Section 23 of the JBNQA.