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Comité consultatif de l'environnement Kativik
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

MINUTES OF THE 184TH MEETING OF THE KEAC (ADOPTED)

DATES: June 3 and 4, 2025

LOCATION: Marie-Guyart Building, Complex G, Conference Room RC221.01, Quebec City

PRESENT:

Appointed by the Kativik Regional Government (KRG)

Michael Barrett, Chairperson
Minnie Grey, Vice-Chairperson
Theresa Chemaganish

Appointed by the Government of Canada

Marc-Antoine Giroux
Marie-Noëlle Fournier
Pierre-Yves Gagnon

Appointed by the Government of Québec

André-Anne Gagnon,
Jasmin Bergeron
Paule Halley

Environmental Analyst

Nancy Dea

Environmental Legislation Analyst

Christine Lambert

ABSENT:

Benjamin Patenaude, Executive Secretary

GUESTS:

Mélissa Gagnon, Assistant Director General – Environmental and Strategic Assessment, MELCCFP
Vanessa Chalifour, Advisor on Environmental Protection Schemes in Northern Environments, MELCCFP
Marie-Josée Lizotte, Provincial Administrator of Section 23 of the JBNQA
Terence Hubbard, Federal Administrator of Section 23 of the JBNQA
Daniel Labrecque, Assistant Deputy Minister for Environmental Authorizations and Regional Operations, MELCCFP

Véronique Gilbert, Assistant Director, Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks Department, KRG

OBSERVERS:

Claude Péloquin, Advisor, Regional Relations and Analysis, Environment and Climate Change Canada
Billy Shecanapish, Environment Officer, Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach
Philippe LeBlanc-Rochette, Environmental Coordinator, Makivik Corporation

1. Call to order and adoption of the agenda

The 184th meeting of the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) began at 9 a.m. on June 3, 2025, at the Quebec City office of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (environment, fight against climate change, wildlife and parks, MELCCFP). The chairperson opened the meeting and invited the members to propose modifications to the agenda. Modifications were made and the 184th meeting took place in accordance with the agenda appearing in appendix.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 182nd and 183rd meetings

The minutes of the 182nd meeting were reviewed and adoption was postponed to a later date. The minutes of the 183rd meeting are in the process of being prepared.

3. Administration

a) Budget

- i. Follow-up on items addressed at the 183rd meeting

An update on the transfer of KEAC files to a new accounting firm as well as the preparation of the annual audited financial statement was provided.

- ii. Expense report for the period from March to April 2025

The expense report for the period from March to April 2025 was presented and discussed.

- iii. Operating budget, 2025–2026

Funding for the 2025–2026 operating budget was received on May 16, 2025. The members agreed to thank the administrators later in the meeting for the speedy processing of the funding.

- iv. Employee travel expense policy

The need for a travel expense policy for KEAC staff was discussed. A policy would improve the management of internal expenses and was proposed in the KEAC's financial recovery plan adopted by the members and submitted to the provincial administrator of Section 23 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA) on December 6, 2024. The new policy was to have been adopted before the end of the fiscal year, i.e. before March 31, 2025.

Action item

- **The administrative subcommittee will meet to discuss the development of the employee travel expense policy.**

b) Secretariat

The executive secretary has begun his differed salary leave. Secretariat staff are sharing his duties during the leave.

c) Members

i. Member travel

Discussions are continuing with the KRG about responsibility for the costs related to travel and accommodation for the members it appoints to the KEAC.

ii. Composition of subcommittees

The members examined the list of subcommittees and discussed their compositions.

d) Active files since the 183rd meeting, correspondence and housekeeping

The members reviewed the table showing the status of KEAC files since the last meeting and the list of correspondence. They also discussed an order for the revision of the KEAC meeting minutes.

e) Website

An overview of the recent revisions to the KEAC website was presented and discussed.

f) Annual report, 2024–2025

An update on the preparation of the 2024–2025 annual report was provided.

g) Action plan, 2025–2030

The members reviewed the most recent modifications to the 2025–2030 action plan and then adopted it.

4. Environmental assessment in Nunavik

a) Activity follow-up in Nunavik

The members met with MéliSSa Gagnon, Assistant Director General, and Vanessa Chalifour, Advisor on Environmental Protection Schemes in Northern Environments, of the Environmental and Strategic Assessment Branch of the MELCCFP to discuss monitoring measures for authorized projects in Nunavik.

The discussion opened with a description of the environmental assessment and authorization procedure applicable in Nunavik and the roles and responsibilities of the parties concerned. It was explained that project

authorizations provide for a variety of requirements. The first level of responsibility lies with project proponents who must make sure their projects comply with the prescribed authorization conditions and transmit the required documents to the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC). Responsibility for other authorization conditions lies with the KEQC supported by the MELCCFP, including for the analysis of monitoring reports. Issues in this regard, such as communications with the communities from the start of projects and improved KEQC visibility, were covered.

Next, the issue of modernization of Section 23 of the JBNQA and its schedules was discussed, along with the members' desire to see this work carried out. The MELCCFP recognized that, even though the legal foundation of the JBNQA continues to apply, improvements are still possible. The MELCCFP noted that it had proposed to meet with the KEQC to explore how the environmental assessment procedure could be improved and to identify how the MELCCFP could better support the KEQC in its work.

In addition to the KEQC procedure, the ministerial authorization process under Section 22 of the *Environment Quality Act* (EQA) entails certain requirements which strengthen and complete the overall assessment and authorization process. The MELCCFP also maintains a centralized database that permits tracking of the implementation of each project authorization condition by region. The MELCCFP is striving to make information on northern projects accessible to the public.

Ms. Gagnon then described the amendments to the environmental impact assessment and review procedure applicable in southern Québec under Title I of the *Environment Quality Act* that have been proposed by the MELCCFP under *Bill 81, An Act to amend Various Provisions relating to the Environment*. The amendments, which should be in place by 2027, aim to streamline analysis upstream of project reviews and to clarify what the MELCCFP expects from projects proponents. The MELCCFP also intends to implement sectoral and regional environmental assessment procedures. Discussion concluded with examples of how these legislative amendments could serve to improve the assessment and authorization processes applicable in Nunavik as well as to enhance communication with the communities and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of review bodies and project proponents.

b) The MRNF's monitoring system

As regards the presence of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (natural resources and forests, MRNF) in Nunavik and its monitoring activities, in written follow-up from Patricia Hébert, Regional Director for Nord-du-Québec with the Public Lands Branch of the MRNF, it was stated that the regional office is responsible for issuing land leases in Nunavik and ensuring that lease holders comply with any conditions. Monitoring activities are carried out through site visits, aerial surveys, official forms, and receipt of community observations. The MRNF has recently begun including in its land leases conditions that require lease holders to take responsibility for any contamination or environmental damage caused by their activities. Finally, while no system exists for transmitting monitoring results directly to regional organizations, the MRNF does ensure that its follow-up complies with existing legal and regulatory requirements. The MRNF meets with the KRG on a regular basis and is able to request KRG compliance notices.

The MRNF notifies lease holders in the event of non-compliance and will provide information on appropriate corrective measures when required. Where a lease holder fails to correct a situation, their lease can be terminated, and the site cleared and restored at the lease holder's expense.

The members expressed concern that, should a lease be terminated due to non-compliance, the site risks becoming an environmental liability of the State and its remediation a government responsibility.

Action item

- **Contact the KRG to review issues related to lease renewals, boundary modifications and situations of lease non-compliance.**

c) Modernization of Section 23 of the JBNQA

The members discussed governance and the responsibilities of the parties with a view to the modernization of Section 23 of the JBNQA and its schedules. They also discussed the letter transmitted to the Makivik Corporation on May 29, 2025, that shared KEAC observations on improving the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedures in Nunavik.

d) Update on the Nunavik Impact Assessment Working Group

The Nunavik Impact Assessment Working Group is organizing community workshops on impact assessment. The purpose of the workshops is to enhance community awareness of impact assessments and obtain feedback on best practices with regards to public consultation and participation in assessment processes. The first workshop is scheduled to be held on June 11, 2025, in Kuujjuaraapik, while further workshops are being planned subsequently in Kuujjuaq and Quaqtaq.

e) Update on the Strange Lake rare earth mining project

The Kangiqsualujjuaq Liaison Committee held a meeting with community members and the project proponent in March this year. The project proponent intends to submit its prefeasibility study before the end of this month and to have completed its impact study before the end of the year. Community representatives from Kangiqsualujjuaq have been invited to contribute to the preparation of the section on the potential impacts of the project on Inuit rights in the study area.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) is developing a consultation program with the community. The Kangiqsualujjuaq Liaison Committee has not yet received any communication from the KEQC regarding the project but intends to invite KEQC representatives to the community in August this year and hopes to meet with the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachickamach in the near future.

f) JBACE document concerning federal and provincial laws and regulations applicable to the environmental and social protection regime under Section 22 of the JBNQA

The James Bay Committee on the Environment (JBACE) published an overview of federal and provincial laws and regulations applicable to the environmental and social protection regime of Section 22 of the JBNQA.

The document presents the JBNQA context and how its provisions fit into the overall environmental governance structure. It also contains a summary table of the key environmental legislation likely to apply in the James Bay territory, organized by theme and jurisdiction. The document provides descriptions of the purpose of each law and regulation and specifies if specific modifications, adaptations or amendments to these apply in the James Bay territory. The members expressed interest in this document for Nunavik.

5. Meetings with the federal and provincial administrators of Section 23 of the JBNQA

The members met separately with Terence Hubbard, the federal administrator of Section 23 of the JBNQA, and Marie-Josée Lizotte, the provincial administrator of Section 23 of the JBNQA. Ms. Lizotte was accompanied by Daniel Labrecque, Assistant Deputy Minister for Environmental Authorizations and Regional Operations with the MELCCFP.

The members discussed with both administrators the governments' obligation to consult the KEAC and tentative solutions to enhance communications. The KEAC also highlighted its continuing efforts to improve the federal and provincial environmental assessment procedures and the need to improve public consultation in Nunavik. The upcoming workshops and recent activities of the Nunavik Impact Assessment Working Group were also presented. Finally, the members and administrators discussed the KEAC's current budget situation, and the steps taken to balance the organization's ongoing expenses.

With Mr. Hubbard, the members also reviewed concerns regarding the project to remediate different components of the Killiniq site.

With Ms. Lizotte, the further items reviewed included:

- 1) Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the status and management of final waste produced by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (environmental public hearings) regarding the open-air burning of residual materials;
- 2) Drinking water delivery in Puvirnituk and other Nunavik communities;
- 3) Community participation in the Mid-Canada Radar Line clean-up pilot project;
- 4) Implementation of a creation mechanism for northern conservation areas. Ms. Lizotte explained that the MELCCFP is developing a pilot project to identify the most suitable creation mechanism and that it intends to have a system in place in the coming months.

6. Conservation and biodiversity

- a) Update on the status of protected areas in Nunavik

Véronique Gilbert, Assistant Director of the Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks Department at the KRG, presented an update on the status of protected areas and park projects. Ms. Gilbert explained that the protected areas are distinct from park projects as each has different purposes and creation processes. A protected area working group was created in 2013 and an advisory committee in 2017 and are key to the creation of protected areas.

In 2022, the KRG conducted a public information and consultation campaign on protected areas, which was organized in two phases. The first phase involved engagement sessions for gathering public feedback. The second phase involved a meeting with the region's land users to assist in defining the boundaries of the proposed protected areas. The KRG is preparing a report on the consultations that will be used by the protected area advisory committee and working group to orient decision-making.

In addition, discussions touched on jurisdictional issues in the offshore area of Nunavik as well as the KRG's role in protected area management with regard to land use management. Ms. Gilbert also provided an

overview of the Parc national Iluliliq creation process. She explained that, at present, the park's boundaries have not been completely defined due to certain existing mining claims, the Québec government's intentions concerning mining development in the study area, and issues relating to the northern boundary of Nunavik. The presentation concluded with information on next steps in the park creation process.

- b) Draft climate change adaptation plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, MELCCFP

Information was presented on the draft climate change adaptation plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The adaptation plan was proposed in the 2024–2028 action plan under the Plan Nature 2030. It addresses issues related to biodiversity, wildlife and habitat conservation and management in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems throughout Québec. The plan provides a coordinated global vision of the challenges and objectives of climate change adaptation in the context of wildlife and biodiversity management, as well as required actions.

- c) Draft regulation respecting biodiversity reserves, MELCCFP

The MELCCFP draft regulation respecting biodiversity reserves aims to streamline legislation related to biodiversity reserves and to provide a clear description of authorized, exempt and prohibited activities. The proposed streamlining will create a regulatory framework encompassing the universal characteristics of biodiversity reserves. The goal is to avoid the need for additional regulations each time a new biodiversity reserve is established.

- d) Development of a new regulation on invasive exotic plant species, MELCCFP

The MELCCFP is developing a new regulation on invasive exotic plant species. The new regulation will apply across Québec, although its impact is expected to be minimal in Nunavik as there are no garden or horticultural centers.

7. Land use planning and occupancy

- a) Bylaw concerning land use and environmental and social protection, KRG

Since the presentation delivered by the KRG at the 183rd KEAC meeting, the KRG has submitted the draft bylaw concerning land use and environmental and social protection to the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (municipal affairs and housing). The KRG also has plans to bring the bylaw in line with MELCCFP modernization of the regulatory framework for water environments and the proposed framework for flood protection works (permanent regime).

8. Mining activity

- a) Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals, MRNF

An overview was given of KEAC feedback submitted to the MRNF on April 24, 2025, regarding the Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals. The KEAC subsequently received an invitation from the MRNF in order to attend a series of meetings on the authorization process for impact-causing

exploration activities and to discuss KEAC feedback on the Plan. The meetings are scheduled for June 5 and 9, 2025.

Action item

- **Attend the meetings and present a summary at a future KEAC meeting.**

9. Drinking water management

- a) Drinking water governance document, KEAC

An overview was given of the contents of the KEAC drinking water governance document. An important purpose of the document is to describe the roles and responsibilities of different regional and government entities. It also provides a description of the legislative framework for drinking water management in Nunavik communities.

- b) Community drinking water infrastructure

The community of Puvirnituk has not been able to access drinking water from its water treatment plant since March 2025 due to a frozen water supply pipe. This situation is one of the many water management issues facing Nunavik communities. The members requested information regarding drinking water access, specifically with regard to infrastructure and delivery methods.

Action items

- **Request a presentation from the KRG Municipal Public Works Department at a future KEAC meeting.**
- **Request a presentation from the Department of Public Health of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services at a future KEAC meeting.**
- c) Project to modernize the regulatory framework for bodies of water and the project to oversee flood protection works, MELCCFP

An overview was given of a meeting held on April 22, 2025, concerning the MELCCFP project to modernize the regulatory framework for bodies of water and its project to oversee flood protection works (permanent regime) was presented. The purpose of the meeting was to review the regulatory framework, which incorporates some clarifications regarding application of existing legislation as well as new methodology to standardize the production of floodplains and mobility zone maps. The framework does currently apply in Nunavik. The MELCCFP intends to meet with regional stakeholders to discuss how the framework could first be adapted to the region and then implemented.

10. Residual materials management

- a) Québec Inuit community ineligibility for federal waste management funding programs

The correspondence sent to Adamie Delisle Alaku, Vice-President of Environment, Wildlife and Research at the Makivvik Corporation, regarding KEAC concerns about the ineligibility of Québec Inuit communities for federal waste management funding programs was discussed.

In his response dated May 15, Mr. Delisle Alaku noted that waste management was identified during an infrastructure needs assessment conducted in 2022 by the infrastructure working group of the Inuit–Crown Partnership Committee. The background paper was included in a pre-budget submission and aimed to inspire federal infrastructure investments.

Should Canada announce significant federal infrastructure investment in a future budget, the Makivvik Corporation would be enabled to explore waste management initiatives and projects, assuming waste management is identified as a key issue during the attendant community consultations.

11. Climate Change

- a) Workshop on coastal erosion and flooding adaptations, MELCCFP

On May 15, 2025, the KEAC analysts attended an MELCCFP workshop on coastal erosion and flooding adaptations. This initiative is different from the permanent regime as it is not a regulation and focuses exclusively on coastal regions. The workshop was tailored for the territory covered by the JBNQA. The deadline for written feedback is June 15, and the adaptations report will be published in 2026. As it provided input during the workshop but was the sole participating Nunavik organization, the KEAC will transmit the information to the Makivvik Corporation and the KRG.

12. Forests

- a) *Bill 97, An Act Mainly to Modernize the Forest Regime*, MRNF

Bill 97, An Act Mainly to Modernize the Forest Regime was presented. The Bill proposes to establish different forestry development zones including priority forest development zones where development activities will take priority over conservation and any other land uses.

On May 29, the KEAC submitted a brief containing feedback on Bill 97. The KEAC noted that the Bill sets a dangerous precedent by diminishing the strength of legislation aimed at protecting biodiversity in Québec. The KEAC pointed out that, even though no forestry industry is active in Nunavik, the region's forests play a vital environmental, social and economic role for the communities and that, for this reason, it would be advisable to adapt policies, strategies and regulations to adequately integrate the realities of the region.

13. Miscellaneous

- a) Green Corner article in *Tarralik*

The Green Corner articles for the 136th and 137th editions of *Tarralik* have been submitted. It was decided the next Green Corner article would address the tri-committee gathering (KEAC, JBACE and the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee) planned to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA. The gathering is scheduled to take place in Kuujjuaraapik-Whpamagoostui on September 23, 2025.

b) Research project on heating oil in Nunavik

The members were updated on the Université Laval research project on heating oil use and its implications in Nunavik, including meetings held with the MELCCFP, the KRG and the Nunavik Housing Bureau (NHB). The project was recently approved by the KRG and the NHB. The final report is expected to be available in 2026.

c) Auditor General's report

The French version of the report by the Sustainable Development Commissioner concerning climate change and resource development issues for 2024–2025 is now available. Chapter 5 is entitled “Development and Conservation in the North – Challenges and Characteristics”. The KEAC provided feedback on this chapter. The chapter’s recommendations include future strengthening collaboration between the KEAC and various provincial-government departments.

14. Next meetings

The members discussed travel and organization of the 185th meeting, which is scheduled for September 24 and 25 in Kuujuaaraapik. It was also confirmed that the 186th meeting would take place on December 2 through 4 in Kawawachikamach and the dates for the 187th meeting would be set at a later date.



Benjamin Patenaude
Executive Secretary
December 3, 2025

Appendix – Agenda of the 184th meeting

1. Call to order and adoption of the agenda

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 182nd and 183rd meetings

3. Administration

- a) Budget
 - i. Follow-up on items addressed at the 183rd meeting
 - ii. Expense report for the period March to April 2025
 - iii. Operating budget, 2025–2026
 - iv. Employee travel expense policy
- b) Secretariat
- c) Members
 - i. Member travel
 - ii. Composition of subcommittees
- d) Active files since the 183rd meeting, correspondence and housekeeping
- e) Website
- f) Annual report, 2024–2025
- g) Action plan, 2025–2030

4. Environmental assessment in Nunavik

- a) Activity follow-up in Nunavik
- b) The MRNF's monitoring system
- c) Modernization of Section 23 of the JBNQA
- d) Update on the Nunavik Impact Assessment Working Group
- e) Update on the Strange Lake rare earth mining project
- f) JBACE document concerning federal and provincial laws and regulations applicable to the environmental and social protection regime under Section 22 of the JBNQA

5. Meetings with federal and provincial administrators of Section 23 of the JBNQA

6. Conservation and biodiversity

- a) Update on the status of protected areas in Nunavik
- b) Draft climate change adaptation plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, MELCCFP
- c) Draft regulation respecting biodiversity reserves, MELCCFP
- d) Development of the new regulation on invasive exotic plant species, MELCCFP

7. Land use planning and occupancy

- a) Bylaw concerning land use and environmental and social protection, KRG

8. Mining activity

- a) Québec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals, MRNF

9. Drinking water management

- a) Drinking water governance document, KEAC
- b) Community drinking water infrastructure
- c) Project to modernize the regulatory framework for bodies of water and the project to oversee flood protection works, MELCCFP

10. Residual materials management

- a) Québec Inuit community ineligibility for federal waste management funding programs

11. Climate Change

- a) Workshop on coastal erosion and flooding adaptations, MELCCFP

12. Forests

- a) *Bill 97, An Act Mainly to Modernize the Forest Regime*, MRNF

13. Miscellaneous

- a) Green Corner article in *Tarralik*
- b) Research project on heating oil in Nunavik
- c) Auditor General's report

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