



Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec–Labrador

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wood Production Strategy: First Nations must have their say

Wendake, September 26, 2018 – The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) has serious concerns about the Wood Production Strategy project presented by the *ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs*. When all indicators are already set to red regarding environment and respect for First Nations’ rights, the government is showing, once again, its limited vision of land development geared solely towards the pursuit of short-term profit.

Quebec needs to be consistent and innovative and seize the opportunity of developing this Strategy to integrate the First Nations meaningfully and ensure respect for and protection of their rights which have been denied for far too long.

“The Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council is totally right when it affirms that we need to rethink the Strategy while ensuring the intrinsic presence of the First Nations and by integrating environmental issues in the equation. First Nations have already suffered enough from timber exploitation. Intensive forestry advocated by the Strategy is exerting even more pressure on the communities and it poses serious threats to the exercise of their rights. We have had another example of this with the long-standing Huron-Wendat Nation’s fight to protect the last large expanse of wild forest south of Quebec, Lac à Moïse. First Nations have an integrated perspective of the territory. The government should take example of them,” stated the Chief of the AFNQL, Ghislain Picard.

The Intensified Wood Production Areas, to which the government is proposing to devote 25% of the forest area in Quebec, are a major source of concern for the First Nations.

The Intensified Wood Production Areas are indeed a major change in land use vocation and, in this case, require further specifications and indicators that the Strategy does not provide on the designation and decision-making process, notably on First Nation consultation and accommodation.

Chief Picard concludes: “the next Government of Quebec must commit to putting into effect the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the principle of a free, prior and informed consent, as fundamental bases for reconciliation. Yet, genuine reconciliation can be reached only through attentive listening and by sharing revenues, land and expertise”.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the political organization which groups together 43 Chiefs of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. Follow the AFNQL on Twitter @APNQL.

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