

**Assemblée des Premières Nations
Québec-Labrador**

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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

**Matawinie Mining Project
The BAPE Must Hear the Atikamekw Nation**

Wendake, May 26, 2020 – Following the Atikamekw Nation's public denunciation of the failure from the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) to respect the duty to consult regarding the Matawinie mining project, the AFNQL supports the request of the Conseil des Atikamekw de Manawan (CDAM) and the Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw (CNA) to extend the hearings. The First Nation's attempts to have the hearings postponed and held under acceptable and reasonable conditions have proven inconclusive. An aberration that raises questions for the AFNQL.

"What exactly is behind this eagerness, on the part of the BAPE, the mining company and the Quebec government, to skip a very basic step, which is the proper consultation of the Atikamekw of Manawan for this project likely to have irreversible consequences on their inherent rights on their ancestral territory? From our point of view, the tabling of a consultation report that would likely exclude the legitimate concerns that could have been formally expressed by the Atikamekw, is inconceivable and therefore inadmissible," stated AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard.

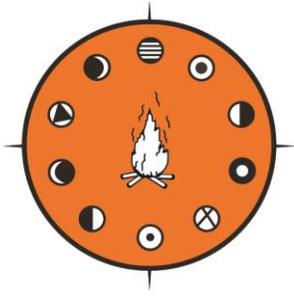
On April 17, the AFNQL had asked Premier François Legault to temporarily suspend all consultations and analyses of applications, permits and authorizations related to resource development projects that have an impact on the rights and interests of First Nations until the pandemic crisis situation is resolved. To date, this correspondence remains unanswered.

"The current pandemic situation cannot be used to divert attention and conceal the shortcomings of a consultation process. If the economic imperatives exacerbated by the crisis call for a disguised substitution of the Quebec government's legal obligations towards First Nations, First Nations may have no choice but to adopt measures to stop the related projects. The request for an extension of the hearings seems to be the most just and equitable solution under the circumstances," concluded the Chief of the AFNQL.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador is the political organization regrouping 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador. Follow us on Twitter @APNQL

Source:



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