



**Assemblée des Premières Nations
Québec-Labrador**

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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIRST NATIONS DO NOT WANT A SUPERMINISTER OF THE
ECONOMY**

Wendake, October 18, 2022 – The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) does not look favorably on the possibility of Premier François Legault appointing Pierre Fitzgibbon to the head of a superministry of the Economy when creating his new cabinet. "This would be very bad news for First Nations, who have nothing to gain from a superminister for Economy," said AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard.

The AFNQL wishes to point out that relations with the CAQ government have been particularly difficult, especially when it comes to economic issues, employment, investments, and the exploitation of natural resources. Faced with a lack of listening from the government, the AFNQL has chosen to directly contact companies and civil society organizations that want to build business relationships with First Nations. This will be at the heart of the creation of the Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous People and Quebec, held in November 2021, after which more than 150 organizations, including Hydro-Québec, adopted a declaration that emphasizes, among other things, that "the current socio-economic context of the Indigenous peoples does not allow for individual or collective development, in particular to eliminate the enormous gap that separates the living conditions of Indigenous people from those of Quebecers."

In recent months, the AFNQL has also increased its meetings and exchanges with various companies and organizations wishing to become allies of the economic growth of First Nations. One of the findings that came out of these exchanges is that civil society is significantly more open than that of the government. "Unlike the Quebec government, civil society, business, and municipal organizations are not afraid of the rights of Indigenous peoples. On the contrary, they are quite prepared to recognize the distinct economic development rights of First Nations, that take into account our particularities as nations as well as the historical ties we have with the land," said Chief Picard.

It is worth repeating that First Nations are Nations of their own with full rights, who have established, over the millennia of their existence and presence on the land, their own governments, their own laws and practices for the benefit of their populations and of the sustainable development of their territories and resources, and whose rights are confirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

After over 4 years of difficult, even conflictual relations with the various ministers with an economic vocation, the AFNQL can't help but be concerned about the possibility of the appointment of a superminister of the Economy. "There are many development projects among all First Nations, but there are also several obstacles that hinder the growth of our communities. The Government of Quebec has a broad responsibility in this regard, as it is able to act as both a facilitator and an obstructor. The choice of appointing certain people at the head of key ministries can have significant impacts on the future of our communities. We therefore sincerely hope that the Premier will abandon this idea of putting that much power in the hands of Mr. Fitzgibbon alone," concluded Ghislain Picard.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political body that brings together the 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador. Follow the AFNQL on Twitter @APNQL

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SOURCE: Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador

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