



**NEWS RELEASE
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**MINING DEVELOPMENT: THE AFNQL JOINS ITS VOICE TO THOSE OF THE
ABITIBIWINI AND LAC SIMON FIRST NATIONS**

Wendake, November 24, 2023 – The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) supports the approach undertaken by the Conseil de la Première Nation Abitibiwinini and the Conseil de la Nation Anishnabe de Lac Simon aimed at denouncing the lack of consideration of the Australian mining company Sayona and the Quebec government concerning them.

As the Québec Mines + Energy (QM+É) conference is being held in Quebec City this week, the AFNQL would like to remind the Quebec government and Sayona that they have a duty, under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Canadian law, to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations when it comes to the exploitation of their unceded ancestral territories.

In concrete terms, this refers to the need to establish a partnership with the First Nations of Abitibiwinini and Lac Simon, particularly regarding the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the exploitation of the resources and territories of the First Nations. This partnership must also be able to respect the desire of First Nations to protect their ancestral territories and the cultures and traditions that are intrinsically linked to them.

“Quebec’s refusal to grant the possibility to First Nations of identifying territories that are incompatible with mining activities and sharing with First Nations a portion of the mining royalties that it receives from mines located on unceded territories, as well as Sayona’s refusal to include the First Nations of Abitibiwinini and Lac Simon in the second lithium transformation phase, the most profitable part of the process, demonstrate a major failure to respect the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples,” said Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador.

If the desire expressed by the Quebec government and Sayona to build relationships and harmonious mining development is sincere, they must collaborate concretely and without further delay with the First Nations with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the regional political organization that brings together the 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador.

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Source: Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador

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