



## Public Consultation on Uranium Industry Issues in Québec

### CONSULTATIONS IN THE TERRITORY UNDER AGREEMENT

The three commissions that reviewed uranium industry issues in the territories covered by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement are unanimous in their conclusion that a political choice to impose uranium exploration and mining activities in these regions would significantly weaken the relationship of trust and damage the broader relationship between the regions' communities and the Government, and would also adversely affect cohesion and social peace. Accordingly, the three commissions advise the Government to be prudent, since any decision made without informed consent is likely to have a social and political cost.

For the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi, hunting, fishing and trapping activities are still vital in meeting the physical, psychological and economic needs and in upholding the spirituality and cultural values of each different community. They must therefore be taken into account when considering mining development in general, and uranium mining in particular. To protect these activities, industrial development must be respectful of historic, social and economic contexts, territorial organization and the provisions and guidelines set out in the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement.

These observations were made by the BAPE inquiry commission on uranium industry issues in Québec, and by the two commissions created for the same purposes by the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment and the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee. Chapter 13 of the BAPE report addresses issues specific to Northern areas covered by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement, and received unanimous approval from the three commissions that sat jointly, with due regard for their respective mandates, at all sessions in Cree, Inuit and Naskapi territory. In the report's general conclusion, the BAPE commission notes that it would be counter-indicated, in the present context, to allow uranium mining operations in Québec.

In the joint report, the commissions note that the Aboriginal communities are uncomfortable with the many technological and scientific uncertainties and limitations surrounding uranium mining operations and the associated radioactivity, and that they not only refuse this type of project, but firmly object to uranium mining development in the territories covered by the agreements.

The commissions are also of the opinion that the psychological and social impacts of uranium industry development could be harmful to the Aboriginal communities of Northern Québec because of their attachment to the natural environment, their culture and their way of life.

In addition, the three commissions feel that the mechanisms created by the Agreements in James Bay and Nunavik provide a suitable management framework for potential uranium mining projects in the North. At the same time, the territories' administrative authorities have been innovative in developing new partnership and joint management models for significant components of some large mining projects currently being implemented. These new approaches offer a cooperative strategy for the economic development of those regions, provided the climate of trust can be maintained.

The commission created by the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment (JBACE) was chaired by John Paul Murdoch, and that created by the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) was chaired by Michael Barrett. The BAPE commission was chaired by Louis-Gilles Francoeur.