



la Convention
de la Baie James
et du Nord québécois

**Comité d'examen des répercussions
sur l'environnement et le milieu social**

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**MINUTES OF THE
411th MEETING OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE
(Adopted)**

DATE: February 15, 2023

PLACE: Video conference (Teams)

PRESENT: Luc Lainé, Chairman
Daniel Berrouard, Québec
Robert Joly, Québec
Lucas Del Vecchio, CNG
Sophie Cooper, Executive Secretary

ABSENT: John Paul Murdoch, CNG

1) Call to order and adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

2) Adoption of the minutes of the 410th meeting

The minutes of the 410th meeting were adopted as presented.

Action: Translate and file the 410th meeting minutes

3) Correspondence and follow-up action

Correspondence and follow-up action from January 25 to February 15, 2023 are presented in Appendix A.

4) Eastmain-1-A and Rupert River diversion project

Ref. No.: 3214-10-017

a) Monitoring the integrity and effectiveness of the granular blankets installed in the estuary of La Grande River – 2017

➤ For information

WHEREAS on March 12, 2020, the Review Committee (COMEX) received, for information purposes, the 2017 monitoring report on the integrity and effectiveness of the granular blankets installed in La Grande River estuary for the Eastmain-1-A and Rupert River diversion project. The monitoring program was a requirement of condition 5.1 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006, and condition 1 of the amended certificate of authorization issued on July 28, 2008.

The granular blankets were installed on the left bank of La Grande River, between KP 22.7 and KP 9.7, to protect the shoreline from erosion near Chisasibi. The objectives of the study were to assess the physical integrity and effectiveness of the granular blankets relative to the 2012 monitoring results, inspect the granular blankets for signs of deterioration or slope erosion, and make sure the blankets were generally in good condition to protect the banks and promote the establishment of vegetation.

The monitoring study showed that the blankets withstand wave and floating ice action and that the protected slopes are being stabilized by vegetation. The report concludes that the granular blankets effectively protect the shoreline against erosion.

WHEREAS the COMEX members reviewed the document submitted by the proponent and find that the granular blankets installed by the proponent satisfy the conditions stipulated in the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006. The members have no comments to submit.

#2023-0215-01: *write to the Provincial Administrator to inform her that the COMEX members reviewed the document submitted by the proponent and have no further comments to submit.*

Action: Write to the Provincial Administrator

b) Cree land use monitoring report, 2015-2016

c) Monitoring of navigation conditions in Rupert River, Consultation of Cree land users – 2018

➤ For information

WHEREAS on June 20, 2022, the Review Committee (COMEX) received, for information purposes, the 2015-2016 monitoring report on Cree land use. The monitoring program was a requirement of conditions 6.9, 6.10 and 6.13 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006 and condition 1 of the amended certificate of authorization issued on July 28, 2008. On June 20, 2022, COMEX also received, for information purposes, the 2018 report on consultations with Cree land users regarding navigation conditions in Rupert River. This monitoring program was a requirement of conditions 5.1 and 6.19 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006 and condition 1 of the amended certificate of authorization issued on July 28, 2008.

The objective of the 2015-2016 land use monitoring study was to assess the impact of the Eastmain-Sarcelle-Rupert hydroelectric complex on Cree land use and assess the effectiveness of the mitigation measures implemented. The monitoring report also aimed to identify and characterize hunting, fishing and trapping activities carried out in 2015 and 2016, identify changes since the previous monitoring campaign in 2012-2013 and document Cree users' concerns related to the hydroelectric development. The report provides an exhaustive account of the interviews conducted and the concerns expressed by both land users and the Cree communities of Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi.

The monitoring conducted in 2015-2016 showed that while land users have gradually adjusted to the new conditions in their territory, concerns remain regarding dangerous ice conditions in the diversion bays, possible contamination of fish, and the low beaver population in the diversion bay areas due to fluctuating water levels. In addition, land users remain saddened by the loss of areas where they used to carry out activities, such as fishing, although the sadness was not voiced to the same extent as during previous monitoring campaigns.

The main objectives of monitoring report on navigation conditions in Rupert River were to consult Cree users from Waskaganish and Nemaska, record their concerns following the 2018 boating season, get their assessment on the current navigation conditions and the mitigation measures implemented, and evaluate the Crees' adjustment to navigation conditions since the river's diversion.

The monitoring results show that land users from Waskaganish and Nemaska have adjusted well to the new navigation conditions in Rupert River. Overall, they appreciate the boat ramps and portages developed or upgraded as part of the mitigation measures. Most land users greatly appreciate the buoyage installed to aid navigation in the Rupert River estuary between KP 11 and KP 18, which they feel was needed. The signs warning of underwater structures are deemed useful for people who are less familiar with the river. In addition, the maps and nautical charts are useful for people who don't have much experience boating on the river and they inform users who are not very familiar with the territory.

WHEREAS the COMEX members reviewed the documents submitted by the proponent and although they consider that the monitoring conducted achieved the set objective, they think that Hydro-Québec could have included data collected by the Niskamoon Corporation in the monitoring reports. Currently, the COMEX members have no comments to submit and are waiting to review the 2020-2021 monitoring report on Cree land use before submitting any comments.

#2023-0215-02: *write to the Provincial Administrator to inform her that the COMEX members reviewed the documents submitted by the proponent and have no comments to submit at this time.*

Action: Write to the Provincial Administrator

- d) Monitoring of navigation conditions in the Rupert diversion bays, environmental monitoring during the operation phase (2015 and 2018)
 - For information

WHEREAS on March 21, 2017 and March 12, 2020, respectively, the Review Committee (COMEX) received, for information purposes, the 2015 and 2018 monitoring reports on the navigation conditions in the Rupert diversion bays. The monitoring program was a requirement of conditions 5.1 and 6.9 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006 and condition 1 of the amended certificate of authorization issued on July 28, 2008.

Navigation conditions in the Rupert diversion bays have been the object of several monitoring activities since 2010, notably to monitor the use of buoyage of navigation channels and the presence of wood debris. The monitoring objectives in 2015 and 2018 were to record any significant changes in navigation conditions caused by the project, assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures implemented to safeguard boating activities (canoeing, kayaking and power boating) by Crees and other land users, and compare the 2015 and 2018 monitoring results against previous-year data to track possible changes in Cree boating activities in the Rupert diversion bays. The proponent also produced nautical charts for the Rupert River and diversion bays. The Cree communities of Mistissini and Nemaska were consulted during the monitoring campaigns

to allow regular boaters in the Rupert diversion bays to share their observations and concerns.

According to the Cree informants, navigation conditions in the Rupert diversion bays have changed little since 2015. However, the informants said that wood debris and floating bogs hinder boating in the navigation channels. They also said that there is a greater amount of wood debris in certain sectors outside the navigation channels, which hinders boating and reduces mooring options, thereby jeopardizing activities such as trapping of fur-bearing animals and moose hunting. The presence of wood debris and floating bogs requires boaters to remain vigilant in the diversion bays to avoid colliding with these objects. The Cree informants pointed out that the nautical charts produced by Hydro-Québec could be useful to boaters who are less familiar with the territory.

WHEREAS the COMEX members reviewed the documents submitted by the proponent and consider that the monitoring campaigns achieved the set objectives. However, COMEX finds that the sporadic presence of wood debris and floating bogs in the diversion bays may be an issue in the medium and long runs in terms of reappropriation of the river and land. COMEX will recommend that the proponent propose a follow-up program aimed at monitoring changes in regards to the presence of these floating obstacles, extend the consultations to younger land users and provide mitigation measures, if necessary. This proposed follow-up program must be submitted to the Administrator for information purposes.

#2023-0215-03: *write to the Provincial Administrator to inform her that the COMEX members reviewed the document submitted by the proponent and would like additional information from the proponent.*

**Action: Write to the Provincial Administrator
Request additional information**

- e) Monitoring of shoreline and island dynamics in La Grande estuary – 2017
 - For information

WHEREAS on March 12, 2020, the Review Committee (COMEX) received, for information purposes, the 2017 monitoring report on shoreline and island dynamics in La Grande estuary for the above project. The monitoring campaign was a requirement of condition 5.1 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 24, 2006 and condition 1 of the amended certificate of authorization issued on July 28, 2008.

Following a discussion, the members decided to continue their review of the monitoring report at COMEX's next meeting, scheduled for March 29, 2023.

5) Other business

a. James Bay Lithium Mine Project: Public hearings

Sophie Cooper said that the COMEX secretariat had not received any comments or briefs following the public hearings, although representatives of Climat Québec and Eau Secours had contacted the secretariat to say they wanted to submit a brief. The public has until February 27, 2023 to submit comments or briefs.

Participants raised several issues during the public hearings. COMEX took note of these issues and concerns and will consider them during its final recommendation. COMEX will hold a special meeting to continue discussions on the project.

b. Troilus mining project: Drafting of an environmental and social impact assessment study based on the potential issues arising from the project

The project proponent informed the MELCCFP that it planned to draft its impact assessment study by issues. The COMEX members want to make sure that the proponent understands that the final impact assessment study must address all of the elements required by the directive.

c. Forest roads H and I: Letter from Liz Barratt-Brown, Natural Resources Defense Council – NRDC - Canada

Liz Barratt-Brown from the National Resources Defense Council contacted the COMEX secretariat to ask if it could post a letter addressed to the proponent of the extension of forest roads H and I project on its website. She also wanted to know if the NRDC could meet with the COMEX members to discuss the project. COMEX agreed to publish the NRDC's letter on its website. However, Sophie Cooper will inform Ms. Barratt-Brown that a meeting with COMEX will not be possible.

Action: Publish the letter from the NRDC on COMEX's website

d. Request to meet with the Provincial Administrator

The committee will write to the Provincial Administrator, Marie-Josée Lizotte, to invite her to COMEX's 412th meeting scheduled for March 29, 2023.

Action: Invite the Provincial Administrator to COMEX's 412th meeting

e. Projects on the agenda for the meetings scheduled in March and April 2023

- James Bay Lithium Mine Project, Galaxy Lithium Inc.
 - Follow-up on the public hearings and drafting of the review report
- Eastmain-1-A and Rupert diversion project (to be confirmed)
- Bachelor Mine, Bonterra Resources (under review)

Minutes - COMEX

411th Meeting

- Whabouchi Mine – Restoration Plan, Environmental and social monitoring in 2021
- Renard Diamond Mine – Environmental and social monitoring in 2021
- Windfall mining project (submission of the environmental impact assessment – spring 2023)

6) Next meeting

The next COMEX meeting will be held on March 29, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., by video conference.

Appendix A

Correspondence and follow-up: January 25 to February 15, 2023

| Project | From | To | Document | Date | Action - Comments |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Establishment of a quarry over 3 ha in size near the La Grande-3 power station, Hydro-Québec Ref. No.: 3214-03-045 | Luc Lainé COMEX | Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP | Request for additional information | Sent: February 14, 2023 Acknowledgement of receipt: February 14, 2023 | <i>For recommendation</i> |