



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

418th MEETING OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Adopted)

DATE: **418 A:** October 4, 2023
418 B: October 16, 2023

PLACE: Video conference (Teams)

PRESENT: Luc Lainé, Chairman
Daniel Berrouard, Québec
Robert Joly, Québec
John Paul Murdoch, CNG
Lucas Del Vecchio, CNG

Sophie Cooper, Executive Secretary

1) Call to order and adoption of the agenda

The executive secretary proposed changing the order of the agenda items to focus on the environmental review report for the James Bay Lithium Mine Project. The proposal was approved.

2) Adoption of the minutes of the 417th meeting

The minutes of the 417th meeting were adopted as presented.

Action: Translate and file the 417th meeting minutes

3) Correspondence and follow-up action

Correspondence and follow-up action from September 2 to October 4, 2023, are presented in Appendix A.

4) Troilus mining project

Ref. No.: 3214-14-067

a) Table of concerns and issues

➤ For information

WHEREAS on September 22, 2023, the Review Committee received the additional information for the Troilus mining project.

WHEREAS the COMEX members reviewed the table of projected concerns and issues for the impact assessment (*Tableau des préoccupations et enjeux envisagés – Rédaction de l'étude d'impact par enjeux*) submitted by the proponent and have no comments regarding the content. However, COMEX asks that the proponent comply with the issues and guidelines set out in the 2022 impact assessment directive.

#2023-1004-01: *write to the Provincial Administrator to inform her that the COMEX members reviewed the document submitted by the proponent and wish to remind the proponent of the importance of complying with the issues and guidelines set out in the impact assessment directive.*

Action: Write to the Provincial Administrator

5) Compensation for adverse effects on wetlands and bodies of water – Assessment of the situation in territories under agreement

a) Consultation request

➤ For opinion and comments

WHEREAS on August 14, 2023, the Review Committee received a request from the MELCCFP and the working committee on compensation for adverse effects on wetlands and bodies of water north of the 49th parallel on application of the *Regulation*

respecting compensation for adverse effects on wetlands and bodies of water in territories under agreement.

WHEREAS COMEX is seeking a fair, standardized, and reproducible approach to compensation for adverse effects on wetlands and bodies of water in the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory and the members welcome the opportunity to submit their comments on the compensation options proposed in the assessment of the situation in territories under agreement. They will also propose other compensation options.

WHEREAS COMEX will send its questions and opinions on possible financial compensation for wetlands and bodies of water in northern areas and involvement of the Cree and Jamésien communities in both project selection and financial compensation management.

#2023-1004-02: *send Mélissa Gagnon (MELCCFP) a summary of the COMEX members' opinions and concerns regarding the proposed compensation options for affected wetlands and bodies of water in Eeyou Istchee James Bay.*

Action: Write to Mélissa Gagnon

6) James Bay Lithium Mine Project, Galaxy Lithium (Canada) Inc.

Ref. No.: 3214-14-055

- a) Environmental and social impact assessment
- b) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- c) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- d) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- e) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- f) Supplementary information
- g) Public hearings
- h) Drafting of the review report
 - For recommendation

The second version of the review report for the James Bay Lithium Mine Project was submitted to COMEX for review. The committee will continue discussing the report at tomorrow's meeting (October 16).

7) Meeting 418 B – October 16, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., held by video conference
James Bay Lithium Mine Project, Galaxy Lithium (Canada) Inc.

Ref. No.: 3214-14-055

- a) Environmental and social impact assessment
- b) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- c) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- d) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- e) Additional information (answers to questions and comments)
- f) Supplementary information
- g) Public hearings
- h) Drafting of the review report
 - For recommendation

Further to the COMEX members' comments, the MELCCFP and CNG analysts are awaiting verification of a few aspects of the project before continuing to draft the report.

8) Eastmain-1-A and Rupert diversion project

Ref. No.: 3214-10-017

- a) Saltwater intrusion in Rupert Bay – 2017 monitoring report
 - For information

WHEREAS on January 14, 2020, the Review Committee (COMEX) received, for information purposes, the 2017 monitoring report on saltwater intrusion in Rupert Bay for the Eastmain-1-A hydroelectric development project. The monitoring was a requirement of condition 5.30 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 general monitoring objective was to validate anticipated changes in oceanographic (salinity gradient) and hydraulic (water level) conditions in the Rupert estuary and bay and the mouth of the Pontax river. The specific objectives were to assess the upstream limit of saltwater intrusion in Rupert Bay in 2017 and compare it with the baseline conditions (2003), compare the saltwater intrusion limit in Rupert Bay with and without ice cover, assess currents and saltwater intrusion in the mouth of the Pontax river in 2017 and compare the results with the baseline conditions, and compare water levels in Rupert Bay in 2017 with the baseline conditions.

Observations confirm that, as predicted in the impact assessment, the limit of the salinity front in Rupert Bay moves significantly upstream during the open-water period, although not as far as predicted in the impact assessment. In winter, saline waters are not as deep in the bay because the tidal range is damped by ice sheets. Occasional saltwater intrusion in the Pontax river is influenced by a combination of strong

northwesterly winds, high water events in Rupert Bay and moderate flows in the Pontax river.

The monitoring results in 2010, 2013 and 2017 confirm the trends predicted in the 2004 impact assessment. The highest saltwater intrusion observed is not as far upstream as predicted. In addition, fluctuating water levels in the Rupert bay and estuary are consistent with predictions. There has been no observable change in water levels in Rupert Bay since the river's partial diversion.

WHEREAS the COMEX members reviewed the documents submitted by the proponent and find that saltwater intrusion monitoring in Rupert Bay was exhaustive and detailed and achieved the set objective. The COMEX members have no comments regarding this study.

#2023-1004-03: *write to the Provincial Administrator to inform her that the COMEX members reviewed the documents submitted by the proponent and have no comments.*

Action: Write to the Provincial Administrator

- b) Ice cover monitoring – Winter 2013-2014, winter 2014-2015 and winter 2015-2016
➤ For information

COMEX decided not to submit comments until it has received the analysis of monitoring conducted in winter 2016-2017, winter 2017-2018 and winter 2018-2019. The matter will be discussed at a future meeting.

9) Other business

a) Report on the meeting with La Grande Alliance – September 26, 2023

Representatives of La Grande Alliance (Marc Dunn, Aditya Chinnakonda, Alessandro Cirella, Julie Roy, Jon-Ethan Rankin-Kistabish, Christopher Salhany) briefly went over the results of the Infrastructure Program feasibility studies, particularly maintenance and sustainable development of the Billy-Diamond Highway and construction of a railway.

The Billy-Diamond Highway was built in the 1970s for Hydro-Québec's La Grande hydroelectric project. The presentation briefly explained the issue of long-term use: limited planning of long-term maintenance and sustainability of the highway; little funding for genuine empowerment, complex financial administration; the highway isn't designed to withstand the cold and has a load-bearing capacity of just 57.5 tonnes during spring thaw (an exemption can be requested from the Société de Développement de la Baie James). Road repairs have been carried out several times since 2015 and more are needed in the short term. In addition, major reconstruction will be needed in 15 years.

Added to these maintenance issues are regulatory shortcomings (in particular, few heavy vehicle restrictions, few control measures, lack of signage) leading to rapid road deterioration and higher health and safety risks for users. Three mining projects (Rose Lithium-Tantalum, Whabouchi and James Bay Lithium) are likely to enter the operation phase in the medium term, resulting in a significant increase in truck traffic on Billy-Diamond Highway (1 truck/5 minutes/24 hours).

The presentation included an overview of the benefits of a railway, including the fact that a single train could carry the equivalent of the predicted 262 trucks (or more) a day on the Billy-Diamond Highway, which would greatly reduce public road maintenance, increase road safety and reduce noise pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The final feasibility study hasn't been released yet, but an interim report on the Infrastructure Program feasibility studies was submitted to the Québec government on October 14, 2022. The COMEX members are invited to visit La Grande Alliance's website for more information (www.lagrandealliance.quebec).

Following the presentation, the COMEX members discussed the relevance of including some of the information given by La Grande Alliance in the environmental review report for the James Bay Lithium Mine Project.

b) Letter from the Chisasibi Eeyou Resource and Research Institute (CERRI)

COMEX received a letter from George Lameboy, dated September 6, 2023, saying that Hydro-Québec has not sent the 2014 and 2019 eelgrass monitoring reports to CERRI, nor to the community of Chisasibi or the tallymen. COMEX will write to Mr. Lameboy to inform him that the documents are available to the public on Hydro-Québec's website.

Action: Write to CERRI

c) Extension of forest roads "H, Section west" and "I"

The executive secretary informed the COMEX members that the letter sent to the Provincial Administrator on September 19, 2023, regarding the status of the project analysis, has been posted on COMEX's website.

d) Québec Mines + Énergie 2023

The executive secretary informed the COMEX members that the 2023 Québec Mines + Énergie congress takes place November 20-23, 2023, at the Centre des congrès de Québec. The COMEX members are encouraged to attend.

e) Projects on the agenda for the meetings scheduled for fall 2023

- James Bay Lithium Mine Project, Galaxy Lithium Inc.
 - Drafting of the review report
- Application to amend the CA for the quarry project on the Éléonore site
- Eastmain-1-A and Rupert diversion project
- Planned quarry over 3 ha in size near the La Grande-3 hydroelectric development, Hydro-Québec
- Planned extension of forest roads "H, Section west" and "I"
- Dewatering of pits J4 and 87 on the former Troilus mine site, Troilus Gold – Amendment of CA

10) Next meeting

The next COMEX meeting will be held on October 31, 2023, by video conference (Teams).

Appendix A
Correspondence and follow-up: September 2 to October 4, 2023

Project	From	To	Document	Date	Action - Comments
Eastmain-1-A and Rupert diversion project, Hydro-Québec Ref. No.: 3214-10-017	Marie-Josée Grimard Hydro-Québec	Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP	Follow-up on conditions of the certificate of authorization dated November 24, 2006	Sent: August 17, 2023	<i>For information</i>
	Mélissa Gagnon MELCCFP	Luc Lainé COMEX		Sent: September 15, 2023 Received by COMEX: September 15, 2023	
Extension of forest roads "H, Section west" and "I" (Phase II), Matériaux Blanchet inc. Ref. No.: 3214-05-075	Luc Lainé COMEX	Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP	Status report on COMEX's project review	Sent: September 19, 2023 Acknowledgement of receipt: September 19, 2023	<i>For recommendation</i>
Development of a new landfill in Whapmagoostui, Whapmagoostui First Nation Ref. No.: 3219-16-001	Luc Lainé COMEX	Isaac Voyageur Regional Administrator CNG	Follow-up on conditions 1 and 7 of the certificate of authorization issued on November 13, 2019	Sent: September 19, 2023	<i>For information</i>
Cree-Québec Forestry Board (CQFB)	Annette Hayden CQFB	Sophie Cooper COMEX	Annual Report 2022-2023	Sent: September 20, 2023 Received by COMEX: September 20, 2023	<i>For information</i>
Chisasibi Eeyou Resource and Research Institute (CERRI)	George Lameboy CERRI	Luc Lainé COMEX	Information request – 2014 and 2019 reports on eelgrass monitoring under the Eastmain-1-A/Rupert diversion project (3214010-017)	Sent: September 6, 2023 Received by COMEX: September 20, 2023	

Appendix A
Correspondence and follow-up: September 2 to October 4, 2023

Project	From	To	Document	Date	Action - Comments
Troilus Gold Project, Troilus Gold Ref. No.: 3214-14-067	Mathieu Michaud Troilus Gold	Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP	Table of concerns and issues – Issue-based impact assessment	Sent: September 8, 2023	<i>For information</i>
	Maud Ablain MELCCFP	Luc Lainé COMEX		Sent: September 22, 2023 Received by COMEX: September 22, 2023	
Éléonore mining project, Goldcorp Canada Ltd. Ref. No.: 3214-14-0	Marjorie Bujold Goldcorp Canada	Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP	Annual environmental and social monitoring and follow-up report, 2022	Sent: September 18, 2023	<i>For information</i>
	Maud Ablain MELCCFP	Luc Lainé COMEX		Sent: September 26, 2023 Received by COMEX: October 2, 2023	
Dewatering of pits J4 and 87, Troilus Gold Corp Ref. No.: 3214-14-025	Mathieu Michaud Troilus Gold	Marie-Josée Lizotte Deputy Minister MELCCFP	Application to amend the certificate of authorization	Sent: September 8, 2023	<i>For recommendation</i>
	Maud Ablain MELCCFP	Luc Lainé COMEX		Sent: September 28, 2023 Received by COMEX: October 2, 2023	