

## Plan Nord

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### *Petit-Mecatina and Plan Nord* **NO, TO ANOTHER JAMES BAY ON OUR LANDS**

To make Quebec the primary world superpower of renewable energies is a very ambitious objective. One can wonder about this ambition to stand out among the mighty, at a time where the whole planet is confronted with crucial issues of sustainable development. No doubt, the population of Quebec will know how to have a sound appreciation, and in time, of this surge of partisan enthusiasm. Also, the definition that one can have of a “grand bâtisseur” certainly does not meet general agreement. If we wish to talk about politicians who wanted to take advantage of economic situations to speed up the development of major projects, Quebec counts several of them, and some of them were in the position of Premier. Among the First Nations, there are countless women and men who dedicated their life to the maintenance, the exploitation and the transmission of the territory and its resources, and to them, we owe them our greatest respect.

Among the Premiers of Quebec who contributed to the development of large projects, the First Nations acknowledge those who, no matter what their political party, could take into account the immemorial presence of the First Nations on this territory which are ours and which will continue to be at the hearth of what the First Nations are. This is what their role as government leader required, over and above the ambition to stand out.

One can choose to ignore, get around the rights of one and others. AFNQL notice that this is the position of Charest’s government. From the exploitation of a river on a territory which is not really his, he is ready to jump to another, in the same conditions of disrespect for the rights of First Nations. This is unacceptable. History should decide between those who have contributed to the harmonious development of the territory and the others. First Nations are not trying to conceal their deception, nor their anger.

Is there a need to remind that the territory on which government intends to develop your projects of hydroelectric dams, is called “Nitassinan”; it is the ancestral territory of the Innu Nation who owns rights and an Aboriginal title giving it a right to the territory itself.

Let remind that last November, the Chiefs’ Assembly adopted a declaration on a mechanism of affirmation of sovereignty of the First Nations. An action plan stemming from this declaration was adopted last April. The Chiefs gave the go-

ahead to the creation of a *Lands and Resources Committee*, formed of representatives of the First Nations empowered to propose solutions to the current problematic situation of managing the ancestral territories and the resources. As a first priority, this Committee will be responsible to propose a position in reaction to Plan Nord, of which First Nations know nothing about the details and the impact.

In closing, let remind that the International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms that “the Aboriginal Peoples have the right to lands, territories and resources they own and occupy traditionally or which they have used or acquired” (Article 26). Furthermore, this Declaration stipulates that “States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to Indigenous Peoples’ laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems (Article 27).

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