MINUTES OF THE 241st MEETING OF THE JAMES BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE
September 17-18, 2026

LOCATION
Hybrid (Videoconference and Eastmain)

PRESENT
Marc Dunn, Cree Nation Government (for the item Cumulative effects – transport, remote)
Graeme Morin, Cree Nation Government
Tina Petawabano, Cree Nation Government
Melissa Saganash, Cree Nation Government
Brigitte Goulet, Québec
Jean-Philippe Marcoux, Québec
Mélanie Savoie, Québec
Joëlle Boucher-Kirouac, Canada
Luc Denis, Canada
Benoit Péloquin, Canada
Madeleine Green, Canada

Michèle Leduc-Lapierre, Executive Director
Louis-Joseph Drapeau, Environmental Analyst
Benjamin Labbé, Environmental Analyst

ABSENT
Mélanie Chabot, Québec

GUESTS
Chief Raymond Shanoush, Cree Nation of Eastmain
Mélissa St-Onge et Catherine Poiré, Environnement and Climate Change Canada

WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair welcomes the members.

The agenda (see Appendix 1) is adopted on a motion by Benoit Péloquin, seconded by Mélanie Savoie.

As this is the new Analyst's first in-person meeting, everyone introduce themselves.

ADMINISTRATION

Minutes of the 240th meeting and follow-up on actions

The Chair points out that there is a minor translation error in the English version of the minutes. The Executive Director will correct it.

The minutes of the 240th meeting are adopted on a motion by Brigitte Goulet, seconded by Benoit Péloquin.

The Executive Director then follows up on the actions taken at the 240th meeting:

- The analyst has not yet contacted the member regarding the working group on waste management, but the working group has not met since the last meeting.
- The Cree Administrator was invited to the Eastmain meeting. However, he will not be attending this meeting, but will attend a subsequent one.
- In the forestry file, the Analyst contacted the MRNF to find out the deadline for submitting the next PAFITs, so as to plan the timetable for the JBACE.
- The Forestry Subcommittee met to discuss the approach to reviewing the PAFITs. Discussions took place regarding the specific approach for the PAFITs, but the final overall approach will be presented to members at the November meeting.

Subcommittees and membership

There are no changes to be made to the subcommittees. One member mentions that consideration will need to be given to replacing the member from Québec, who is due to retire in 2027. The process is expected to begin in the fall, but delays are to be expected due to the provincial elections.

Next meetings

The Executive Director provides an update on the upcoming meetings.

The 242nd meeting will be in Québec City on the afternoon of November 19 and the morning of November 20, 2026. A member of the provincial delegation has confirmed that the meeting room has been booked. A member of the federal delegation will enquire as to whether the Federal Administrator is available to attend the meeting.

Following a discussion, it is decided that the 243rd meeting would be held on March 10, 2027, in Montreal. A member of the Cree delegation confirms that he had booked the conference room.

The members decide to wait until the November meeting to choose the date and venue for the 244th meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGREEMENT AND FUNDING

The Executive Director outlines the main points of the proposed administrative agreement.

The proposal to renew the administrative agreement, which dates from 2003, stems from an internal audit by the MELCCFP aimed at strengthening the monitoring of public funds, and from discussions with the federal government regarding multi-year funding for the northern committees. This will formalize certain mechanisms that are absent from the current agreement, notably the eligibility of expenditure, the management of surpluses, working capital and accountability requirements.

The JBACE will be the first to sign this new four-year agreement (2027–2031), followed next year by the KEAC, and then by the Quebec–Canada agreement on funding for the northern committees. The funding request, including the four-year financial forecasts, must be submitted by December 11, 2026, at the latest.

Each year, a full financial statement will have to be submitted by December 15 at the latest, and will have to include the annual activity report, the financial statements, a comparative analysis of the approved budget and actual expenditure, and a detailed breakdown of surpluses, deficits and working capital. The pre-authorized amount will be the ceiling.

The administrative agreement sets the date for the payment of the grant as May 31 and provides a framework for financial management (eligible expenditure, travel expenses, surpluses, deficits and working capital). It also sets out the requirements for reporting, auditing and internal policies, whilst incorporating the rules of the JBNQA for the COMEV, the COMEX and the COFEX-South.

The agreement is expected to be signed by March 31. A discussion with the team that worked on the agreement may take place at the next meeting in Quebec City in November.

One member pointed out that this new administrative agreement will serve as a catalyst for introducing a multi-year funding model and modernizing the financial parameters, including the eligibility of new expenditure items such as remote meetings. The JBACE is the first committee to be selected to develop the agreement, which will provide greater predictability for long-term projects. The Executive Director points out, however, that reporting will remain on an annual basis for the secretariat. This initial draft, which is not subject to the *Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif* nor managed by Indigenous Affairs, will be analyzed before being reviewed by lawyers.

MEETING WITH CHIEF SHANOUSH

After a round of introductions, Chief Shanoush introduces himself and addresses a number of issues relating to the development and protection of the territory. Faced with significant industrial activity (2 mines, 50 exploration

companies), the development of a waste management plan and the protection of the water system are key concerns for the community. As the first community to have a land-use plan, it is of the utmost importance to preserve and pass on the traditional way of life and, consequently, to protect the territory.

The Executive Director presents the strategic plan and outlines some of the JBACE's ongoing files. Chief Shanoush mentions that Eastmain is directly managing the restoration of its abandoned mining sites. The community wishes to create a firebreak in anticipation of future forest fires. A study is also underway into the cumulative effects of the Eastmain River diversion, focusing on erosion, water levels and the health of spawning grounds.

The supply of drinking water is a critical issue for Eastmain. Chief Shanoush explains that the community used to draw water directly from the river, and now has a treatment plant set up under an agreement with Hydro-Québec, but its capacity remains insufficient to support population growth. As a member of the CNG points out, Eastmain is the only community forced to combine wells with surface water capture to make up for the shortfall. Faced with this situation, Chief Shanoush is concerned about the long-term sustainability of the resource over the next 10 to 20 years and the major infrastructure that will need to be put in place to secure future supplies.

DISCUSSION – TRAINING/INFORMATION SESSION/CONFERENCE ON THE JBNQA, SECTION 22/SECTIONS 22–24/JBACE FOR THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Executive Director proposes organizing a provincial event modelled on the success of the March 2026 ECCC conference, which focused on the regimes of Sections 22, 23 and 24. The conference was primarily aimed at Canadian public service employees, but was also open to committee members and other interested parties in Quebec. The aim would be to provide in-depth and distinctive training, an opportunity that is all the more relevant in the context of the upcoming provincial elections and cabinet reshuffles. The other secretariats have already shown an openness to the idea, and the idea is being submitted to members to gauge their interest before taking any further steps.

Members discuss the proposal. The training day organized in Québec in March 2026 proved to be very beneficial in bringing new civil servants up to speed. In view of staff turnover and legislative changes, it is proposed that the committee's training sessions be held on a regular basis. The participation of more senior civil servants, or even elected representatives, would be relevant, but we must first identify the target audience and then tailor the message, particularly in the context of a change of government. To optimize relations, it is recommended to collaborate with the SRPNI's centre of expertise through its monthly workshops. However, engaging with elected representatives will require a separate approach, as links between the administrative and political spheres remain rare in Quebec. In the context of rapid changes, it is also suggested that this approach be made a permanent feature by requesting government presentations on new regulations and ongoing initiatives on a more regular basis. Ideally, such knowledge-sharing should take place at an early stage, particularly as teams are currently being consulted on future omnibus bills.

The discussion extends to external communications. It is recommended that direct channels of communication be established with proponents to prevent them from dealing solely with government ministries. This approach is straightforward with regular stakeholders, but proves complex with new companies from the South who are unfamiliar with the local context and press the authorities to obtain their permits before the impact assessment has been completed. To reach different audiences, several avenues are being considered: presenting a French version of the IAIA poster at Québec Mines + Énergie, utilizing government stands, contacting the Quebec Mining Association, and training tallymen. These initiatives would support the JBNQA's public outreach work already initiated by the CNG.

The Executive Director summarises the actions arising from the discussion: contact David Saint-Pierre of the SRPNI, compile a list of existing initiatives amongst elected representatives and identify the needs to be met. The committee will also invite civil servants on a more regular basis to receive updates on legislation and regulations. Finally, external communications will target other audiences.

DISCUSSION – INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Director points out that it has been some time since the committee last reviewed communications. Given the introduction of the new tools, now would be a good time to do so.

The first topic discussed is the use of the new tools available to the committee, namely Teams and SharePoint. Given the issues involved in having to switch windows to access the JBACE's Teams channel, it is decided to continue using email for communications with all members. However, it is now possible to have two-way conversations via the chat function. As for documents, we will now use the SharePoint site for members to streamline our work. This will allow members to comment on the same document without worrying about whether they are using the very latest version. The secretariat will compile all the information previously found in the shared folder on the old cloud into a single folder to ensure nothing is lost, and will start afresh with the new folders. When a deadline approaches for the revision of a document or the taking of a decision, secretariat staff will be able to send a reminder to members. Furthermore, new items will be highlighted in the weekly update.

On the subject of external communications, the Executive Director mentions that she would like to set up a SharePoint site for sharing information between the secretariats of the northern committees. As an example, she cites the 2014 report on the revision of Schedules 1 and 2 for mineral exploration. As it is quite a large document, it is more difficult to send by email. The SharePoint site could be a useful tool. However, it is essential to obtain the members' approval, which they grant her.

Finally, members discuss the publication of letters of comment, as other committees do. At present, briefs are published on the JBACE website because they are made public by governments. However, the letters are not. Following discussion, it is decided to take a case-by-case approach to the letters, particularly as some are in response to pre-consultations that have not yet been made public.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 1.1 Evaluate the legislative framework of the environmental and social protection regime

The Analyst explains that the subcommittee suggests providing an overview of water regulations, drawing on the 2024 legislative portrait, whilst focusing specifically on the management of drinking water and wastewater on Category I land. At the same time, monitoring of key issues involving the JBACE will continue, particularly regarding wetland compensation and shoreline management. As a next step, the Analyst will draft a comprehensive strategy this fall, which will be put forward for discussion by the subcommittee.

Objective 1.2 Evaluate the transparency of the environmental and social impact assessment and review process

The Analyst explains that the work carried out over recent months has led to the analysis period being revised to 2018–2026 to align with the 2017 COMEV register. The change and the modification of the inclusion thresholds required adjustments to the selected projects, including the inclusion of a Category II land project, despite limited data. Bi-monthly meetings with the Executive Director will ensure rigorous monitoring of the project.

Objective 1.3 Evaluate the follow-up and monitoring of authorized projects

The analyst explains that the collaboration with the KEAC has made it possible to update the working document, clarify the approach and begin defining the criteria. An upcoming meeting between the secretariats and members will establish the exact scope of this partnership, whilst fortnightly meetings with the Executive Director will ensure close monitoring of progress.

Objective 1.4 Provide recommendations for the consideration of cumulative effects in the environmental and social impact assessment and review process

Transportation project

The Executive Director reports that the subcommittee is currently reviewing the new draft of the report on the current state of transportation in the Territory. Once the information has been approved, the document will be sent for editing to tone down the informal language, and then translated in-house. Members agree that, to speed up the process, the report will be adopted by email before the next meeting and shared with Vanessa Chalifour prior to this approval. The final report will then be sent to the Provincial Administrator, and a copy will be forwarded to various ministries, including the MRNF, the MTMD and the SRPNI.

Regional Planning Strategy

The analyst summarises the four action areas, the timetable and the regional planning strategy, and states that Phase 1 has been completed, including the table of initiatives linking cumulative effects to planning and the analysis of the initial interviews. The next step will be to formally conclude this phase at the subcommittee meeting, and then to launch Phase 2 by preparing for the interviews scheduled for this fall.

Objective 2.1 Meetings with strategic partners

The Executive Director points out that a meeting with the Chief is scheduled during the current meeting. Members discuss planning invitations for the Administrators in line with the provincial electoral calendar: the Federal Administrator in November 2026 in Quebec City, the Cree Administrator in March 2027 in Montreal, and the Provincial Administrator in June 2027 in Quebec City. As for events, participation of the JBACE at SIFÉE in Montreal and at Québec Mines is still to be assessed.

Objective 2.2 Improve the visibility and communications of the JBACE

The Executive Director explains that a proposal for changes to the website has been sent to the Communications subcommittee. One of the members has suggested that the 'Issues' tab be renamed 'Topics'. The Executive Director will resend the document setting out the changes to the members for approval this fall.

With regard to the newsletter, the Executive Director proposes publishing two newsletters a year, one in April (after the end of the fiscal year) and one at the end of September, following the meeting, in order to share information without having to wait for the annual report to be published.

PRESENTATION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES FUND

Following a round of introductions, Ms. Mélissa St-Onge and Ms. Catherine Poiré from Environment and Climate Change Canada present the fund.

This is a fund based on the 'polluter pays' principle. It was established in 1995 and is administered by Environment and Climate Change on behalf of the Government of Canada. It redistributes funds derived, in particular, from fines and court orders to priority environmental projects. Fourteen federal acts are involved. There are four funding priorities: restoration, improving environmental quality, research and development, and education and awareness-raising. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, educational institutions, Indigenous organizations, and provincial or municipal authorities. The average duration of projects is four to five years, with a maximum of $6 million per project. Eligible expenditure includes, notably, salaries, professional services, travel and certain costs relating to Indigenous participation. Legally mandatory activities, projects already underway, infrastructure and the remediation of contaminated sites are among the exclusions. However, whilst remediation cannot be funded, monitoring may be carried out. For grants exceeding $3 million, field research, analysis and engagement work is carried out prior to the call for applications.

Examples are then presented. In the case of Lake Bloom, the FNQLSDI project reports that 38 sites have been cleaned up and 228.75 tons of waste removed, with jobs and contracts for First Nations. The 2026 ArcelorMittal project

introduces a new allocation process. The amount involved is nearly $100 million. A strategy involving stakeholder consultation, the identification of priorities and a presentation to senior management must be put in place.

Following the presentation, members ask what stage the Government of Canada had reached with the process. It is noted that the team is currently engaged in consultations to identify priority areas with the objective of making its recommendation in January 2027. In response to a question regarding the organizations concerned, it is stated that all organizations listed within the eligible groups are included. The CNG could, for example, receive the funding and redistribute it to communities within a specific framework. One member highlights that the benefit of involving the JBACE is to create a link between organizations that can contribute their expertise. Regarding the timetable, ECCC notes that there is currently no set timeline, as they wish to take the time to properly assess the options, given the substantial amount involved. However, they wish to disburse funds quickly to support projects in need.

FILES

Forestry

The Analyst explains that the subcommittee focused its discussions on the specific review of the PAFITs rather than on the final overall approach. The other three areas were not addressed, and a further meeting will be organized to finalize the entire process.

With regard to the review of the PAFITs, follow-up discussions have been held with the MRNF to ascertain the timetable for the forthcoming plans and to obtain its input on wildlife and its habitats. The JBACE will draft an official letter to express its concerns regarding the approach to these inputs. One member points out that, as the structure of the PAFITs is standardized across the whole province, the change in direction proposed by the committee will take time and will not be evident in the next cycle. At the same time, the Analysis of the follow-up to comments on previous plans is under way, and a letter will be sent to the Ministry to highlight the committee's concerns ahead of the drafting of the next PAFITs.

The Analyst will inform the members about the meeting on the consultations regarding strategic forestry issues, scheduled for September 24, 2026, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA)

The Analyst reports that a meeting was held on September 1, 2026, with Pascale Labbé of the MELCCFP and Frédéric Desrosiers of the SRPNI to present the progress made on the IPCA guide. This is a new status under the NHCA, the details of which will be set out in the guide currently being drawn up. The CNG sits on a First Nations advisory committee comprising 14 members. The drafting committee consists of a protected areas adviser from the FNQLSDI and Pascale Labbé. An inter-ministerial committee is also involved.

The general idea is to incorporate into the guide specific sections on the particular characteristics of the territory and the provisions of Sections 22 and 24 of the JBNQA. These sections would be developed in consultation with an advisory committee comprising, in particular, the JBACE and the HFTCC, whilst the CNG would sit on the drafting committee alongside the Naskapi and the MELCCFP. A provincial inter-ministerial committee would complement this collaborative structure. Furthermore, the IPCAs could be categorized according to various IUCN management categories, as agreed between the proposer and the MELCCFP.

The Analyst points out that the ongoing discussions center on subjecting IPCAs to the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure. The discussions also take into consideration compliance with the rights set out in Section 24, as well as future arrangements for territorial management. Furthermore, the table of contents for the IPCA guide, which has been updated to reflect the specific characteristics of the territory, has been shared with members for review.

Members discuss the issues surrounding the drafting of the table of contents, which appears to be taking place in parallel with the call for proposals. Members also discuss the foreword. In order to reflect the nuances between treaty-based rights and claimed rights, it is suggested that the document be divided into two distinct

sections, or, as in the BAPE uranium reports and the review of waste management, that a chapter be dedicated to JBNQA territories. Before formulating comments – for which no deadline has been set – members therefore agree that the committee should confirm the ongoing discussions with the CNG lead. The documents will then be uploaded on SharePoint and the Analyst will organize a subcommittee meeting.

Recent federal consultations on environmental assessment

The Analyst points out that the JBACE has sent letters as part of consultations regarding regulatory and legislative changes aimed at facilitating projects of 'national interest' and 'major projects', as well as in the context of the Canada–Quebec 'one project, one assessment' agreement. We have received feedback on the first campaign. A bill is expected to be tabled at the start of the parliamentary session.

The JBACE and several other stakeholders have noted a certain lack of rigour on the part of the federal government in its recent initiatives, unrealistic analysis deadlines and a lack of direct communication from the Privy Council Office and the Major Projects Office. To address these shortcomings, the idea of sending a joint letter with other committees is being considered. Members believe we should use the November meeting to draw the Federal Administrator's attention to the lack of communication from the Major Projects Office and the Privy Council Office, and then reiterate these points in the post-meeting thank-you letter. The Administrator will thus be able to act as an intermediary to highlight the committee's role. In the meantime, checks will continue to ascertain whether the CNG has been consulted, and the strategy will be reassessed should any further omissions arise.

AJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned.

Prepared by Eva Wolf, Secretariat Officer, Louis-Joseph Drapeau, Environmental Analyst, Benjamin Labbé, Environmental Analyst and Michèle Leduc-Lapierre, Executive Director
Adopted on November 19, 2026

241st meeting of the JBACE

September 16-18, 2026, Eastmain

The meeting will take place at the Eastmain Band Council office or by Teams

September 16

Flight to Eastmain

8:15 Departure from Montreal

10:05 Departure from Val d'Or

11:55 Arrival in Eastmain

PM Free time

September 17

9:00 Welcome and adoption of the agenda

9:05 Administration
- Adoption of the minutes of the 240th meeting and follow-up on actions
- Subcommittees and membership
- Next meetings

9:20 Administrative agreement and funding

10:00 Meeting with Chief Shanoush

11:00 *Break*

11:15 Discussion – training/information session/conference on the JBNQA, Section 22/Sections 22-24/JBACE for the provincial government

11:30 Discussion – internal and external communication
- Internal: Teams, SharePoint, emails
- External: SharePoint for northern committees, publication of comment letters

12:00 *Lunch (on site)*

13:00 Implementation of the Strategic Plan
- 1.1: Legislative framework
  - Water
- 1.2: Evaluation of the transparency
- 1.3: Follow-up and monitoring of authorized projects
- 1.4: Cumulative impacts
  - Transportation project: update, presentation of the summary, next steps
  - Regional planning strategy: update
- 2.1: Meetings with strategic partners
- 2.2: Communications
  - Website
  - Newsletter

14:00 Presentation of the Environmental Damages Fund
Mélissa St-Onge & Catherine Poiré, ECCC

15:15 *Break*

15:30 Implementation of the Strategic Plan (continued)

16:30 Adjourn

17:30 Traditional supper

<u>September 18</u>

9:00 Files
- Forestry
- APIA
- Recent federal consultations on environmental assessment

12:00 End of the meeting (lunch on site)

14:15 Departure for the airport

15:25 Flight towards Val d'Or and Montréal

17:10 Arrival in Val d'Or

18:50 Arrival in Montréal