



MINUTES OF THE 190TH MEETING OF THE JAMES BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

(ADOPTED)

- DATE:** January 9, 2015
- PLACE:** Saint-Sulpice Room, Westin Hotel, 270 Saint-Antoine Ouest, Montréal
- PRESENT:** Melissa Brousseau Saganash, Cree Nation Government (CNG)
Line Choinière, Canada
Manon Cyr, Québec
Ginette Lajoie, CNG
Jean-Pierre Laniel, Québec, Vice-Chairperson
Marie-Josée Lizotte, Québec
John Paul Murdoch, CNG
Chantal Otter Tétreault, CNG
Jean Picard, Canada, Chairperson
Marc Jetten, Executive Secretary
- ABSENT:** Caroline Girard, ex officio member, Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating
Committee (HFTCC)
Anne-Marie Gaudet, Canada
Guy Héту, Québec
Monique Lucie Sauriol, Canada
- GUESTS:**
Gilles Côté, consultant (for points 1 and 2)
Catherine Lussier, resource person associated with the JBACE's Commission on Issues
Related to the Uranium Industry
- OBSERVER:**
François Boulanger, Regional Director, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

1. GILLES CÔTÉ'S PRESENTATION ON THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY ISSUES RELATED TO THE URANIUM INDUSTRY

Gilles Côté's presentation on social acceptability approaches was based on sources that included research he took part in concerning land-use development and wind power. Mr. Côté pointed out that public participation is always a component of social acceptability. Ideally, the population is consulted at each main stage of a project. He believes public participation enhances a project but does not guarantee its social acceptability. The purpose

of his presentation was to show factors likely to improve social acceptability, with the caveat that there are no conditions that guarantee social acceptability.

He presented two social acceptability approaches that have an impact on the legitimacy of a decision. With the first, referred to as the sociopolitical approach, the project proponent aims to conclude agreements with the parties concerned by the impacts. The decision maker has to analyze the pros and cons by considering any balance of inconvenience. This approach may pose a problem when opponents, even though in the minority, are the citizens who are most affected by the project's impacts.

The second approach, referred to as the reasoned approach, involves establishing a priori principles or standards that ensure the project's economic, social and environmental viability. In this way, an analysis of the issues may lead to rejection of the project even though it is supported by the majority of the population.

Mr. Côté stressed the importance of the stage at which issues are defined, because it is usually on this matter that opposing points of view crystallize (economic development versus environmental protection, urban versus regional interests, etc.). When the issues involve values, the positions are often irreconcilable. One member pointed out that such issues may stem from concerns not related to the project. Mr. Côté cited the example of controversy over wind power development, which revived the social rifts created during the debate over the pork industry.

2. WORKSHOP ON THE SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF THE URANIUM INDUSTRY

According to Mr. Côté, impact and benefit agreements (IBA) concluded with Aboriginal communities are examples of social acceptability resulting from the "political" approach: elected officials approve a project on behalf of the community, even before the impact assessment. According to one member, such agreements may improve the dissemination of information on projects. As necessary, the information collected during the impact review can be used to adjust the project. Another member pointed out that the agreements concluded with the Crees are usually conditional on an assessment of the project's social and environmental impacts under Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA).

The members and Mr. Côté agreed that there is no linear process leading to social acceptability. It is an interactive process between the proponent and the community; the process has to be renewed as issues arise. In no case can the proponent presume that social acceptability is definitive.

Mr. Côté raised the matter of strategic issues related to a project. In the case of wind power development, he believes that the opposition stemmed more from the government's implementation strategy than from the projects themselves. The members believe that implementation is an issue in the case of development in the James Bay territory because of land-use planning deficiencies. They believe the land-use planning powers recently given to the Eeyou Istchee - James Bay Regional Government as well as the Cree Nation Government should clarify the project implementation context. According to Mr. Côté, a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) would make it possible to discuss the relevance of a development and to avoid having such issues arise during the impact assessment of each project. The JBACE had presented a recommendation to this effect in conjunction with the Plan Nord in 2010.

As part of the work on the uranium industry, the JBACE Commission would like to develop a separate approach to social acceptability based, for example, on the Crees' holistic vision of health, the environment, society and the economy. This approach would also take into account the territory's governance context and its mining heritage.

Mr. Côté suggested using a grid to analyze social acceptability criteria and indicators. Such an exercise would make it possible to identify clearly the relationships between issues, especially their levels (project, industry, decision-making process and host environment). Such a grid would also facilitate validation with partners.

3. FOLLOWUP ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONS ON URANIUM INDUSTRY ISSUES

Despite their interest in a grid to analyze social acceptability issues, the members believe such an exercise would not fit into the schedule of the commissions on uranium industry issues. The JBACE could apply such a grid to development activities in the territory in general at a more appropriate time.

The members of the JBACE's Commission on Uranium undertook to inform the other members of the outcome of the work and to solicit their comments as necessary.

4. COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (COMEX) ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As part of the consultation done by COMEX, the members will comment on the document on public participation by January 16, 2015.



Marc Jetten
Executive Secretary
February 17, 2015