

EEYOU ISTCHEE BAIE-JAMES

The Quebec government grants \$5 million to facilitate access to the Sunday Lake Fault

Matagami, May 26, 2021 - The Government of Quebec is granting \$5 million to repair the road that will facilitate access to the Sunday Lake geological fault, which has a high mining potential for Matagami businesses. This is the first action under the Memorandum of Understanding that aims to make Matagami a development hub for mining and northern transportation and to ensure the vitality of the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James region.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and Minister Responsible for the Côte-Nord and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions, Mr. Jonatan Julien, made the announcement today during an online press conference, along with Abel Bosum, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees and President of the Cree Nation Government, Denis Lamothe, Member of Parliament for Ungava and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, René Dubé, Mayor of the City of Matagami, and François Demers, Vice President of Mining and Projects at Wallbridge, which is developing a project in the Sunday Lake Fault.

The \$6.5 million project consists of upgrading paved road N-810 and an existing logging road that provides access to the Sunday Lake geological fault from Highway 109 for a total distance of 55.54 km. The Société du Plan Nord (SPN) will contribute \$3 million and the Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ) will contribute \$2 million. The Wallbridge mining company will complete the financing of the project by investing up to \$1.5 million.

Let us recall that the Memorandum of Understanding, signed last December by the James Bay Native Development Corporation/Cree Development Corporation, the SDBJ, the SPN and the City of Matagami, aims to implement strategic infrastructures in a sustainable development perspective.

This partnership is in line with the philosophy of La Grande Alliance concluded between the Cree Nation and the Quebec government in February 2020. It aims to develop the territory's infrastructures in an integrated vision of sustainable socio-economic development, compatible with Cree traditional values to connect, develop and protect the northern territory.

Quotes:

"The rehabilitation of this road is a first tangible and concrete action to propel the economic plan of the town of Matagami in the context of the announced closure of the Matagami Mine. Our government is proud to mobilize for the implementation of this structuring project for the development of natural resources, in partnership with the local players. Together, we will develop infrastructures to support the responsible and sustainable development of minerals in Quebec."

Mr. Jonatan Julien, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and Minister Responsible for the Côte-Nord and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions

"The purpose of the upgrade of this road is to benefit and ensure the future of the town of Matagami and it means a lot to me because it symbolizes so much more. The original plan was to build a new road which would encroach upon sensitive woodland caribou areas, so the leadership of Matagami adapted their plans to take into account environmental and wildlife issues. This is what reconciliation should look like, reusing existing infrastructure to lift each other up without

harming the environment, wildlife in the spirit of co-existence.”

Mr. Abel Bosum, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees and Chairman of the Cree Nation Government

"This announcement is an important first step in the Memorandum of Understanding between the James Bay Native Development Corporation, the City of Matagami and the Government of Quebec. The close collaboration between the Cree Nation, the City of Matagami and our government has made possible this structuring project that is essential to the economic development of Matagami and the entire region."

Mr. Denis Lamothe, Member for Ungava and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs

"The mining industry has always occupied an important place in the history of Matagami and will continue to do so for many years to come thanks to the implementation of strategic infrastructures that will allow local people to pursue their careers in the mining field and our local businesses to offer services to the entire region. Today we are taking a very important step towards what will be the Matagami of tomorrow, a prosperous city where it feels good to live!"

Mr. René Dubé, Mayor of the City of Matagami

"We are very pleased to support the Government of Quebec and the regional and Indigenous communities in the economic development project that will facilitate access to the Detour - Fenelon gold region from Matagami. For Wallbridge, the road upgrade will improve regional access to the Fenelon Gold Project, including better access to Matagami and its infrastructure, local labour force and businesses."

Mr. François Demers, Vice-President of Mining and Projects at Wallbridge

About the Société du Plan Nord

The Société du Plan Nord contributes to the integrated and coherent planning and development of the Quebec territory located north of the 49th parallel. It does so from a sustainable development perspective, in consultation with representatives of the regions and Indigenous Nations concerned, as well as the private sector.

About the Société de développement de la Baie-James

Created in 1971 by the *James Bay Region Development Act*, the mission of the Société de développement de la Baie-James is to promote, in a sustainable development perspective, the economic development, the enhancement and the exploitation of the natural resources, other than the hydroelectric resources under the mandate of Hydro Quebec, of the James Bay Territory. In particular, it may initiate, support and participate in the realization of projects to these ends.

- 30 -

Related links:

The Société du Plan Nord website: plannord.gouv.qc.ca/en/.

The Société de développement de la Baie-James website: www.sdbj.gouv.qc.ca/en/home/

Source:

Elizabeth Lemay
Press Attaché
Office of the Minister of Energy and Natural
Resources and Minister Responsible
for the Côte-Nord and
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions
Tel: 418-643-7295
Elizabeth.Lemay@mern.gouv.qc.ca

**For more information, please
contact:**

Andréanne Séguin
Communications Manager
Société du Plan Nord
Tel: 418-643-1874, ext. 66409
andreeanne.seguin@spn.gouv.qc.ca