



COURTESY TRANSLATION

July 10, 2007

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Mr. Gilles Desaulniers
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Re: Cree participation process in the elaboration and analysis of the GFMPs

Dear Madam
Dear Sir:

Following a Board recommendation on extending the deadline of the submission of the GFMPs in order to foster consensus-building between tallymen and agreement holders, you informed me, last June 8, that the MRNF was open to extending the discussion period between said stakeholders until August 1st, 2007. The members of the Board took this decision very well and the Joint Working Groups were invited to carry on supporting agreement holders in fulfilling their duty to ensure the tallymen's participation in the elaboration of the GFMPs.

As you are well aware, « real and meaningful participation of the Cree in the planning of forest management activities in the Territory » constitutes one of the main objectives of Chapter 3 of the Agreement. Furthermore, the fact that agreement holders are planning the GFMPs offers a unique opportunity to translate the will of the Agreement into integrated plans that take into account Cree concerns, viable forest exploitation objectives and ecosystem protection.

There are only a few weeks left before the end of the GFMP improvement process and the reason I am sending you this letter is to inform you of my concerns regarding information that reached me recently. On July 5, the Cree Regional Authority Natural Resources coordinator wrote to your ministère's Cree Agreement coordinator in order to report on the tallymen's participation in the framework of the elaboration of the GFMPs and on the preparation of the Joint Working Groups with regard to the analysis of the plans. The Cree party is very concerned with the progress of the participation process, especially regarding the discussions and feedback between the tallymen and agreement holders prior to the submission of the completed plans. It was also been pointed out that the Joint Working Groups must be properly prepared to analyze the plans.

Furthermore, on Friday July 6, members of the Secretariat of the Board met with your ministère's representatives to take stock of the stakeholders' (MRNF, JWG, CQFB) role in and preparation for the analysis of the GFMPs and the actions envisaged in order to improve said

plans by August 1st. We then learnt that the ministère had just notified the agreement holders that new participation meetings with the Cree were to be held between now and August 15, 2007 and that they would receive the timetable for said meetings this week. We can only applaud this initiative even if it modifies once more the deadlines already established.

At this meeting, we were also informed of the criteria the ministère would use to analyze the application of the technical modalities of the Agreement. They seem well defined. However, with respect to the ministère's admissibility and conformity criteria regarding the assessment of the consensus-building between agreement holders and tallymen, it was observed that these criteria have not yet been determined and shared with the various stakeholders, among which the Board and the JWG's. I think addressing promptly this fundamental aspect of the analysis is of the utmost importance.

Indeed, with respect to the GFMPs' analysis, the Agreement provides that following the submission of the GFMPs, the ministère shall first proceed to examine admissibility and conformity of the plans then shall send the plans judged in conformity as well as the results of the examination of the admissibility and conformity to the Joint Working Groups of each community as well as to the Cree-Québec Forestry Board. (Schedule C-4, sect. 22 and 24).

The availability of the Ministère's examination of the plans, as much to comply with the technical aspects of the Agreement as with the participation of the Cree and the integration of their information, is of the utmost importance to ensure that the JWG's and the Board carry out a proper review of the plans and to avoid duplication of work. Lack of such information can also have an undesired impact on analysis delays and the advice to be produced for the Minister.

To conclude, I want to assure you both of our will to contribute positively and diligently to the analysis and review of the GFMPs in order to inform the Ministre des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune as objectively as possible on the conformity of the plans with the spirit and modalities of the Agreement.

Yours truly,

The Chairman of the Board,

Jean-Pierre Gauthier

c.c. Mario Gibeault
Guy Hétu