

Québec, July 31, 2014

Mr. Laurent Lessard
Minister
Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs
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Québec, QC G1H 6R1

Subject: Board advice on the 2014-2015 interim period integrated forest management plans – operational (IFMP-O)

For a second consecutive year, the parties to the Paix des Braves Agreement asked the Board to analyze the forest management plans (2014-2015) developed and finalized under interim measures while waiting for an Adapted Forestry Regime (AFR) – new Québec Forest Regime harmonization agreement to be signed.

Analysis shows that all of the elements highlighted in the 2013-2014 interim period plan review remain. More specifically, the issues raised concerned the lack of measures agreed on jointly by the parties to take into account the woodland caribou situation in the Territory, increased planning of hardwood stand harvesting, certain sectors' inaccessibility due to the fact that the environmental impact assessments for various road projects have yet to be completed, many Cree trappers' dissatisfaction with buffer strip management and access to planning-support maps. In addition, as part of the 2014-2015 analysis, the Board wishes to raise the issue of the availability of some Joint Working Group analysis reports.

The Board notes potential developments and elements of solutions related to these issues, namely application of a precautionary approach for woodland caribou, which has been implemented by the ministry but still being discussed by the Cree party; the parties' identification of a solution to the buffer strip issue in the context of negotiations for a new harmonization agreement, which is still under discussion; and, finally, parties' discussions on mechanisms to be implemented and the confidentiality agreement required to enable ministry's forest planners to have access to the forest planning-support maps produced by the Crees.

However, the Board is concerned about the fact that the parties are taking so long to implement measures aimed at agreeing on an overall plan targeting woodland caribou

recovery on Agreement territory (a plan that could be incorporated into future forest management plans); to define a mixed stand strategy that pursues both wildlife and forest-related objectives and to review the governance of Joint Working Groups in order to help them produce their analysis reports within agreed upon deadlines.

Although the new Québec Forest Regime has been in effect since April 1, 2013 with the parties indicating that they have agreed on most of the modifications to be made to the AFR, the parties have yet to sign an overall agreement on Adapted Forestry Regime harmonization. This situation generates a context of ambiguity and confusion for the individuals and organizations involved in implementing the AFR and undermines gains made in recent years in developing collaborative relations between stakeholders.

Therefore, the Board recommends that the parties finalize their discussions and, as soon as possible, officialize the harmonization measures agreed to with respect to the Adapted Forestry Regime. Once the new intervention framework has been defined, the stakeholders concerned will be able to step up their efforts to implement the harmonization measures, deal with the issues identified and promote the Adapted Forestry Regime's evolution.

Finally, regarding issues identified not directly linked to the signing of the new Agreement, notably the mixed stand strategy or the accessibility of the planning support maps, the Board encourages the parties to take action quickly to ensure that appropriate solutions are implemented as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

[Original signed]

Albin Tremblay
Chairman of the Board

c. c. Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief, GCC-EI