

Québec, March 19, 2008

COURTESY TRANSLATION

Mr. Jean-Pierre Gauthier,
Chairman,
Cree-Québec Forestry Board
2875, boulevard Laurier, Édifice Le Delta
11th floor, Room 1180
Québec (Québec) G1V 2M2

Dear Chairman:

On December 14, 2007, you informed me of the differences of views that prevailed within the Cree-Québec Forestry Board in the course of the discussions on the proposed amendments to the Forest Act and other statutory provisions.

First of all, I am delighted that the Cree members of the Board accept the objective aimed at by the streamlining of the forest planning process introduced by Bill 39. On the other hand, I note that the Cree party is concerned by the absence of the application framework pertaining to this new forest planning process. Faced with the uncertainty of seeing the Agreement concerning a new relationship between the *Gouvernement du Québec and the Cree of Québec* (the *Agreement*) complied with, the Cree party of the Board expressed its disagreement with the amendment to the Act that provides for greater flexibility with regard to annual planning and forest intervention permits.

As you already know, the National Assembly adopted Bill 39 without modifying the provisions regarding the forest planning process. However, I remain convinced that these provisions are in themselves compatible with the Agreement. Thus, in order to alleviate any concerns pertaining to this issue, it is my duty to ensure the elaboration of application modalities for the Territory of the Agreement. This exercise should confirm our capacity to implement these provisions of the Act while complying with the modalities and processes set out in the section of forestry in Chapter 3 of the Agreement.

Thus, in January 2008, acting on the recommendation set forth in your letter dated December 14, 2007, I invited the Cree party to define with the representatives of the *ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune* (MRNF) the application modalities of the streamlining of the forest planning process specific to the Territory of the Agreement as quickly as possible. I also asked the representatives of the *Direction générale du Nord-du-Québec* to keep you posted on the progression of the file. I assure that I will see to it that this exercise is successful.

I also take note of your comments concerning the consultation timeframe and seize the opportunity to thank you for the work you and your team carry out in the framework of your mandate.

Yours truly,

Claude Béchar
Minister