



July 12, 2021

Presidents of Exploration Companies
Activities Location: Wemindji (Eeyou Istchee-Baie James Quebec)

Subject: **A Message to Our Guest Exploration Companies in Wemindji territory**

To all Presidents of Exploration Companies,

Wemindji Cree Nation is within Eeyou Istchee (the James Bay territory) and one of ten (10) Cree communities. Our people are open to progress and sustainable development, including mining. However, there is a strong connection to the land and the Crees encourage that all land users including guests, respect the land and environment and to make effort to leave it in its' original state whenever possible as not to disturb the wildlife and waterways.

The management of exploration companies must realize that members of every Cree community in the James Bay territory still live from traditional activities related to trapping, hunting and fishing and that entire community's benefit from harvesting wildlife and other forest resources.

In addition, Cree families oversee territories within Eeyou Istchee (traplines) that are allotted to them for traditional trapping and hunting purposes.

In 1975, the Crees of James Bay signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) with the provincial and federal governments. The JBNQA establishes the system of Category 1 lands (villages) and Category 2 lands (exclusive hunting grounds). The Agreement also grants significant rights to the Crees and defines the institutions authorized to exercise them, such as the Cree Nation Government and community band councils.

Our communication is to insist on the good practices that should be followed by mineral exploration companies operating on the Wemindji Cree territory. It is, therefore, your responsibility to ensure that you have all the information required to comply with the laws and regulations.

The mining companies are our guests in Eeyou Istchee, we expect them to respect our land, our people and our culture. The companies also have the responsibility to inform properly the Chief and Council, and the tallyperson affected by the mining projects at any stage of development. Furthermore, the President of the company or prospector shall communicate with the Wemindji band as soon as possible after a claim is registered on GESTIM (MENR website) and inform the Chief and Council about any environment, social and health impact of their exploration activities. It is to be reported as soon as it happens.

It is our expectation that all exploration activities are ceased during the goose harvesting season that starts from April 20 to May 20 and moose harvesting season from September 15 to October 15 of every year. There are factors of your operations that cause disruption of these harvesting activities to our hunters.

Additionally, there have been reports of workers of exploration companies that have been reckless during seasons of unsafe ice conditions. It is our concern that your workers are unsafe and that they should be made aware of dangerous elements that they may encounter on the land and water. The tallypersons and other land users are the knowledge keepers of this important information. The communication with them is very crucial for the protection of the land and water and especially, for the safety of your workers.

We strongly encourage the companies to hire from local workforces and sub-contractors and to use local service providers.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Chief Christina Gilpin

cc: Council Members, CNW
Youcef Larbi, Director of Cree Mineral Exploration Board