

FORM

Preliminary Information

PREAMBLE

Chapters 22 and 23 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA) establish an environmental and social protection regime in Northern Québec. Certain aspects of these chapters are the responsibility of the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec or both. Those under Québec's jurisdiction have been included in Chapter II of the [Environmental Quality Act \(EQA\)](#) (c. Q-2). This chapter of the EQA sets out the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedures that apply in the Baie-James region (Section 133 of the EQA) or in Nunavik (Section 168 of the EQA) (www.mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/mil-nordique/index.htm).

Projects listed in Schedule A of the EQA are required to undergo one of the procedures applicable in Northern areas, while those listed in Schedule B are not. Those not covered by these schedules are considered "grey area" projects. They must therefore be submitted to the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MDDELCC), which will determine whether they are subject to any of the procedures applicable in a Northern area.

The "Preliminary Information" form is used to describe the general characteristics of the project. It must be completed in a clear and concise manner and be limited to the information needed for good understanding of the project, its impacts and the issues at stake. Preliminary information will be published on the Environmental Assessment Registry as required under Section 118.5.0.1 of the EQA.

Any proponent wishing to carry out a project covered by Schedule A of the EQA or a "grey area" project in these territories must first apply for a certificate of authorization or attestation of exemption, in accordance with sections 154 and 189 of the EQA. The proponent must therefore submit preliminary information on the project to the MDDELCC.

In accordance with sections 115.5 to 115.12 of the EQA, the applicant for any authorization granted under the Act must, as a condition, produce the declaration of the applicant or holder of an authorization issued under the EQA along with the other documents required by the Minister. This requirement does not apply to projects deemed not subject to the Act. An explanatory guide and the required forms can be found in French at www.mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca/lqe/index.htm.

The "Preliminary Information" form must be accompanied by payment under the environmental permit application fee system. The payment must be made payable to the Minister of Finance. Details of the applicable rates are available at www.mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/tarification/ministere.htm (click on the link "Procédure d'évaluation environnementale – Milieu nordique"). Note that the application will not be processed until payment is received. Preliminary information should be sent in ten (10) French hard copies, four (4) English hard copies and one electronic copy to the following address:

Provincial Administrator of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement
Deputy Minister of Développement durable, de l'Environnement
et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques
Édifice Marie-Guyart, 30^e étage
675, boul. René-Lévesque Est, boîte 02
Québec (Québec) G1R 5V7
Phone: 418 521-3933
Fax: 418 646-0266

Moreover, in accordance with the EQA, the preliminary information form is sent to the Evaluation Committee, if the project concerns the Baie-James region, or to the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission, if the project concerns the Nunavik territory. These two committees review the preliminary information and, in the case of projects covered by Schedule A of the EQA, they produce a recommendation or an opinion on the Directive indicating the nature, scope and extent of the impact statement to be prepared by the proponent. For "grey area" projects, the committees produce a recommendation or decision on whether the project should be covered by the procedure and, if so, on the project directive. These recommendations, opinions and decisions are then forwarded to the Department, which sends its decision to the proponent. This may result in the issuance of a certificate of exemption, for projects not subject to the procedure, or a directive, for projects subject to the procedure.

The Evaluation Committee is a tripartite committee made up of representatives appointed by the Cree Nation and by the governments of Canada and Québec. The Kativik Environmental Quality Commission is a bipartite committee made up of Inuit or Naskapi representatives appointed by the Kativik Regional Government and Québec government representatives. In carrying out their duties, these two committees pay particular attention to the following principles, which are set out in sections 152 and 186 of the EQA:

- a) protection of Indigenous hunting, fishing and trapping rights;
- b) protection of the biophysical and human environments;
- c) protection of Indigenous people and of their societies, communities and economies;
- d) protection of wildlife, the biophysical environment and the ecosystems of the territory;
- e) Indigenous rights and guarantees in Category II lands;
- f) participation of the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi in the application of the environmental and social protection regime;
- g) all rights and interests of non-Indigenous people; and
- h) the right to carry out projects, possessed by persons acting legally in the territory.

1. APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

1.1 Proponent identification	
Name: Hydro-Québec	
Address: 855, rue Sainte-Catherine Est, H2L 4P5	
Mailing address (if different from street address):	
Name and title of signing officer(s) authorized to submit the application: Marie-Josée Gosselin, Project Manager, Lines – Transmission and Construction Projects	
Telephone No.: 514 840 3000 3415	Telephone No. (other): 514 608 5481
Email: gosselin.marie-josee@hydroquebec.com	
1.2 Company number	
Québec Business Number (NEQ): 1141181	
1.3 Municipal Council Resolution	
If the applicant is a municipality, the project notice must be accompanied by a duly certified resolution of the municipal council authorizing the signatory or signatories of the application to submit the application to the Minister. Attach a copy of the municipal resolution to Schedule I.	
1.4 Identification of proponent's consultant (if applicable)	
Name:	
Street address:	
Mailing address (if different from street address):	
Phone number: -	Telephone number (other): -
Email: @	
Description of mandate:	

2. PROJECT LOCATION AND TIMETABLE

2.1 Identification and location of project and operations
Name of the municipality, village or community where the project will be carried out (indicate if more than one municipality, village or community is affected by the project): The project study area is 2,564 km² and overlaps two administrative regions: Nord-du-Québec and Abitibi-Témiscamingue. In Nord-du-Québec, it encompasses a portion of the territory of the Regional Government of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, including the town of Lebel-sur-Quévillon, and in Abitibi-Témiscamingue it includes part of the territory of the town of Senneterre (MRC de la Vallée-de-l'Or). The study area is predominantly located on public lands. It cuts across Waswanipi Cree traplines W24C, W24D, W25A, W25B and W42D.
Land Categories (I, II or III): Category III
Geographic coordinates (in decimal degrees) of the project's central point; for linear projects, provide the coordinates of the project's start and end points: Central point or beginning of project: Latitude: 76.8489 Longitude: 49.0390 End point of project (if applicable): Latitude: 75.6434 Longitude: 49.0708
2.2 Description of project site

Describe the main components of the physical, biological and human environments likely to be affected by the project, focusing on those elements considered to be of scientific, social, cultural, economic, historical, archaeological or aesthetic importance (valued environmental components). Indicate, if applicable, the ownership status of the land where the project is to be carried out, as well as the main characteristics of the site: zoning, available space, sensitive environments or wetlands, compatibility with current uses, availability of services, topography, presence of buildings, etc.

The following is a summary description of the components of the physical, biological and human environments that could be affected by the project. A detailed description of these components will be provided as part of the project impact assessment. The impact study process began in the fall of 2020 and will be completed in the winter of 2022.

Biophysical environment

Hydrography

The study area is located in the Rivière Nottaway Level 1 watershed of the Hannah and Rupert bays hydrographic region. Specifically, approximately half of the study area is within the Rivière Bell Level 2 watershed and the other half is within the Rivière Waswanipi Level 2 watershed. There are numerous lakes and streams throughout the study area.

Vegetation and wetlands

The study area is located in the southern part of the bioclimatic domain of the boreal spruce-moss belt. The landscapes are rather homogeneous since the forest cover is clearly dominated by black spruce while the shrub layer is largely represented by ericaceous trees (MFFP, 2017). At the regional level, the study area is located in ecological region 6C, the Plaine du Lac Opémisca region (MRNFP, 2004).¹ As described in the guide to recognizing ecological types (MRNFP, 2004), in addition to the black spruce dominating the landscape, jack pine is found on drier sites and white birch is seen in association with balsam fir, as well as trembling aspen on sites with thin surface deposits.

In Québec's boreal zones, abundant precipitation and a short growing season are conducive to peat accumulation and the formation of peat bogs (Leboeuf et al., 2012), which partly explains their frequent presence in the study area. Open and wooded ombrotrophic bogs are prevalent. Fens, shrubby or treed swamps and beaver ponds are also present.

Special-status species

Vegetation

In general, the forests of the Baie-James region and northeastern Abitibi-Témiscamingue are unlikely to support threatened or vulnerable species or species likely to be so designated. These vast areas of coniferous boreal forest are generally homogeneous in their plant communities, which makes them rather undiversified. The relative poverty of remarkable flora, as well as the low presence of special-status vascular species, characterize the territory as a whole.

Wildlife

The woodland caribou is one mammal that could be found in the study area. In addition, two species of small mammals on the list of species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Québec could be present: Cooper's vole (*Synaptomys cooperi*) and rock vole (*Microtus chrotorrhinus*) (MFFP, 2020).²

As for birds, five at-risk species could frequent the study area: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), rusty blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*), olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) and Canada warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*).

Of the eight species of chiropterans present in Québec, six are likely to use the study area. They include the silver bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), red bat (*Lasirius borealis*) and hoary bat (*Lasirius cinereus*), which are migratory species and are on the MFFP *List of Wildlife Species Likely to be Designated Threatened or Vulnerable* (MFFP, 2020). Two species of the genus *Myotis* could also be present in the study area: the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) and northern bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), both considered endangered in Canada and listed in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (Government of Canada, 2019).³

Human environment

Demographic background

The study area encompasses the Lebel-sur-Quévillon agglomeration. According to the 2016 census, this agglomeration has a population of 2,015. The distribution of the population by age group is comparable to that of Québec in general. It is a predominantly French-speaking population. The

average household size is 2.3 persons and the median household income is about \$65,000, slightly higher than the Québec average. Mining is an important industry and employs about 20% of the working population. The employment situation was worrisome, with an unemployment rate of 17.5% at the time. Approximately one quarter of the population has no higher education or even a high school diploma. About 7% of the population is classified as low-income (according to the after-tax low-income measure).

Land use

Apart from Lebel-Sur-Quévillon, the study area consists of public lands. The portion north of the 49th parallel is part of the JBNQA territory and is composed of Category III lands. The part south of the 49th parallel is mainly used for logging. There is a small area for recreational use around Lac Labrie.

The study area is used both by residents of Lebel-sur-Quévillon for recreational, hunting and fishing activities and by Waswanipi Cree families for hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering. It is also likely used by vacationers from outside the region who have resort leases on Crown land and who hunt and fish in the area.

No outfitters are located within the study area, but a few are on the periphery. There are canoe routes on the major rivers in the study area, including the Wetetnagami.

Archaeology

According to the inventory of archaeological sites of Québec (ISAQ) conducted by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec (MCC), there are nine known archaeological sites in the study area. However, they are located near the Quévillon and Bell rivers, more than 5 km west of Lebel substation. There are no known archaeological sites in the area of the Windfall Mine connection, which is east of Lebel substation.

An archaeological potential study will be carried out in a corridor approximately 2 km wide centered on the selected route. Depending on the results of this study, an archaeological inventory will be carried out in any areas with archaeological potential.

2.3 Project schedule

Provide the project schedule (expected period and estimated duration of each project phase) taking into account the time required for the impact study and for the procedure to take its course.

Draft-design studies

- Technical and environmental studies: 2020–2021
- General information: November–December 2020
- Consultation information: winter 2021
- Information on the solution selected: summer 2021

Permitting

- Filing of Environmental Impact Assessment: early 2022
- Government approvals: 2022–2023

Project

- Construction: 2022–2023
- In-service date (target): end of 2023
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1 MINISTÈRE DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES, DE LA FAUNE ET DES PARCS DU QUÉBEC (MRNFP). 2004. *Guide de reconnaissance des types écologiques*. Online: [<https://www.mffp.gouv.qc.ca/publications/forets/connaissances/guide-ecologique-6cdefg.pdf>] (November 2020)

2 MINISTÈRE DES FORÊTS, DE LA FAUNE ET DES PARCS (MFFP). 2020. List of vertebrate fauna species likely to be threatened or vulnerable (in French). Québec government Online: [<https://mffp.gouv.qc.ca/la-faune/especes/liste-especes-vulnerables/>] (November 2020).

3 GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. 2019. Register of Endangered Wildlife Species Updated December 6, 2019. Online: [<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry.html>] (November 2020)

2.4 Location map

In Schedule III, add a topographic or cadastral map showing the project location and, if applicable, a location map of the work or activities at an appropriate scale, indicating in particular the infrastructure in place in relation to the work site.

The “Project Location” map shows the boundaries of the project study area and the location of the future Windfall Mine. It also shows the existing infrastructure, i.e., roads and power transmission system.

3. GENERAL PROJECT PRESENTATION

3.1 Project name

Project for the ... (construction/expansion/development/etc.) of ... (installation/equipment/plant/etc.) within the territory of ... (municipality/village/community)

120-kV Windfall Mine Connection

3.2 Under legislation

So that we can determine whether your project comes under the legislation, indicate which subsection of Schedule A of the *Environmental Quality Act* your project is covered by, and why (e.g., meeting the threshold). Indicate whether your project is in the “grey area”.

The project “120-kV Windfall Mine Connection” involves the construction of a 120-kV transmission line over approximately 95 km to connect the future Windfall Mine, a gold project owned by Minière Osisko Inc. Depending on the route selected, the line construction will be subject, in whole or in part, to the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure (the “Procedure”) provided for in Title II, Division 3 of the *Environment Quality Act* (the “Act”), through application of paragraph (e) in Schedule A, namely, “any energy transmission line with a voltage of more than 75 kV” is subject to the Procedure. Consequently, for any activity stemming from a project covered by the Procedure, a permit must be issued in the form of a certificate of authorization under section 164, insofar as such activity is subject to a ministerial authorization under section 22 of the Act (section 48 of the *Regulation respecting the supervision of activities according to their impact on the environment*).

N.B.: For the portions outside the geographical limits of the procedure, a ministerial authorization must be obtained only if they would affect wetlands or hydric environments (section 22(4) of the Act).

3.3 Summary description of the project and its variants

Briefly describe your project (length, width, quantity, voltage, surface area, etc.) and, for each of its phases (development, construction and operation and, if applicable, closure and restoration), briefly describe the main characteristics associated with each of the project variants, including activities, structures and work planned (clearing, expropriation, blasting, backfilling, etc.).

This project consists in building a single 120-kV line approximately 95 km long from Line 1493, which originates at 315/120-kV Lebel substation, to connect existing and future facilities at the Windfall Mine site to the Hydro-Québec transmission grid. The line could be used first to supply power for exploratory activities, and then for mining operations.

The planned line will start near Lebel substation. The power demand is approximately 5 megawatts (MW) for the exploration phase and about 25 MW for the mining operations. Construction of this new line includes related work at Lebel substation, within the fenced perimeter of the substation, as well as the addition of a feeder on Line 1493.

Hydro-Québec will draw up line routes taking into special consideration environmental constraints and sensitive elements such as existing and planned biodiversity reserves, wildlife refuges, vacation areas, wetlands, special-status species, etc. It will also take into account technical constraints and community concerns. It will then conduct comparative analyses of the routes in order to select the optimal solution.

The overhead line work will consist in clearing the approximately 46 m to 60 m right-of-way, building temporary access roads and carrying out the general line construction. Briefly, these activities include excavating and concrete-pouring for the foundations, drilling guy anchors, assembling and raising the towers, paying out the cables and then restoring the site.

In Schedule II, add any relevant documents that will help us better identify the project characteristics (plan, sketch, sectional view, etc.).

3.4 Project objectives and justification

The objective of the project is to connect the existing and future Windfall Mine facilities to the Hydro-Québec power grid. The mine currently has a consumption of 5 MW, supplied by a thermal power plant, and consumption will increase to 25 MW in 2023. This project will reduce GHGs from the mine and provide a clean, renewable energy supply.

3.5 Related activities

Summarize any related activities (e.g., access road construction, crushing, cofferdam placement or diversion of rivers or streams) and any other projects that may influence the design of the proposed project.

The related activities planned are the construction of temporary access roads, clearing of work areas, and operation of new borrow pits less than 3 hectares in size.

4. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Public information and consultation

Provide details about any public information and consultation activities carried out as part of the project design (methods used, number of participants, communities represented), including those carried out with local populations, particularly the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi, and indicate any concerns raised and how they were taken into account in the project design.

Hydro-Québec plans to implement a public participation program to establish a dialogue with stakeholders throughout the draft-design studies. Meetings with the main community stakeholders (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) are scheduled to begin in November 2020 and will continue until 2021. Hydro-Québec will then be able to identify stakeholders' expectations and concerns and take them into account in the project design.

5. DESCRIPTION OF MAIN ISSUES AND PROJECT IMPACTS ON HOST COMMUNITIES

5.1 Main issues

For the development, construction, operation and, if applicable, closure and restoration phases of the project, briefly describe the main issues of the project, i.e., the major concerns of the government, the scientific community or the population, including the Indigenous communities concerned, whose analysis could influence the government's decision as to whether or not to authorize the project.

The main environmental issue related to the project is land use by Indigenous communities, particularly the Wasnawipi Cree. Hydro-Québec will organize meetings with the tallymen of the traplines likely to be affected by the project in order to learn more about the use of the area and to take this into account when designing the line.

5.2 Description of main anticipated project impacts on host communities

For the development, construction, operation and, if applicable, closure and restoration phases of the project, briefly describe the main anticipated issues of the project on the host environment (physical, biological and human).

In addition to land use, the main environmental elements sensitive to the implementation of a power line are streams, wetlands and forest cover. The impacts of the construction phase will also require special attention.

In the case of a "grey area" project, provide sufficient information to assess its environmental and social impacts in order to determine whether it should be subject to the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Review Procedure. Outline any planned mitigation or remediation measures.

6. GHG EMISSIONS

6.1 GHG emissions

Indicate whether the project is likely to emit GHGs, and if so, which ones. Briefly describe the main sources of expected emissions at the different project stages.

In the operation phase, the line will not generate any GHG emissions, The construction stage will generate GHG emissions comparable to those of any jobsite. These emissions will come from heavy equipment during construction.

7. OTHER INFORMATION

7.1 Other Information

Provide any other information you feel is necessary to better understand the project.

N/A

8. DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

8.1 Declaration and signature
<p><i>I declare that the documents and information provided in this project notice are accurate to the best of my knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>False reporting may result in penalties under the EQA. All information provided will form an integral part of the application and will be published on the website of the Evaluation Committee (COMEV) or the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC) and on the Environmental Assessment Registry.</i></p>
First name, family name
Signature
Date

Schedule I
Municipal Council Resolution

If applicable, please attach the duly certified resolution of the municipal council authorizing the signatory or signatories to submit the application to the Minister.

Not required.

Schedule II
Project characteristics

Below, add any relevant documents that will help us better identify the project characteristics (plan, sketch, cross-section diagram, etc.).

See Schedule 3 for the location map.

Schedule III
Location Map

Add a topographic or cadastral map showing the project location and, if applicable, a location map of the work or activities at an appropriate scale, indicating in particular the infrastructure in place in relation to the work site.

