



MAKIVIK CORPORATION

BRIEF

Consultation on the Status and Management of Final Waste in Nunavik

**Presented to the Kativik Environmental Advisory
Committee and the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur
l'environnement**

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www.makivik.org

○ Head Office • Siège Social
C.P. 179
Kuujuaq QC J0M 1C0
Tél. (819) 964-2925
Fax (819) 964-2613

○ Montréal
1111, boul. D' Frederik-Philips 3^e étage
St-Laurent QC H4M 2X6
Tél. (514) 745-8880
Fax (514) 745-3700

○ Québec
580, Grande-Allée E.
Suite 350
Québec QC G1R 2K2
Tél. (418) 522.2224

○ Ottawa
75 Albert St
Suite 1006
Ottawa ON K1P 5E5
Tél. (613) 234-5530

Introduction

Makivik Corporation (hereafter referred to as Makivik) wishes to express its opinion on the Status and Management of Final Waste in Nunavik to the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) and the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) in the hope that these comments will contribute to the elaboration of a long-term strategy for the management of final waste throughout Quebec that would take into consideration the uniqueness of Nunavik and that would contribute to reducing the inequities that currently exist in this file.

The Corporation

Makivik Corporation is the birthright organization that represents the Inuit of Nunavik. Makivik is mandated to protect the rights, interests and financial compensation provided by the 1975 *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (JBNQA), the first comprehensive Inuit Land Claim in Canada, and the more recent offshore *Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement* (NILCA), for which Makivik is a signatory, and which came into force in 2008.

Makivik represents approximately 12 000 Inuit who are beneficiaries of the JBNQA, of whom the majority live in 14 coastal communities in Northern Québec north of the 55th parallel. Makivik's core objectives are:

- To receive, administer, distribute and invest the compensation money payable to Nunavik Inuit, as provided for in the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*;
- to relieve poverty, to promote the welfare, advancement, and education of the Inuit;
- to foster, promote, protect and assist in preserving the Inuit way of life, values and traditions;
- to exercise the functions vested in it by other Acts or the Agreement; and
- to develop and improve the Inuit communities and to improve their means of actions.

Makivik's distinct mandate ranges from owning large profitable business enterprises and generating jobs; to social economic development, improved housing conditions, to protection of the Inuit language and culture and the natural environment. Throughout its history Makivik has spoken on behalf of the Inuit of Nunavik in order to uphold the constitutionally protected rights of all Nunavimmiut.

In carrying out its mandate, which stems from the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, Makivik works within the Nunavik region with the main organizations created as a result of the JBNQA, with the government of Quebec, and the government of Canada.

Makivik also works with fellow Inuit from across Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland, as part of the national Inuit political process, formally represented by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). At the circumpolar level Makivik is a member of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

The need to support regional and local organizations in their mandates

Makivik wishes to highlight the important role that the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and the fourteen Northern villages are playing to manage the residual materials in our communities with the best of their abilities and despite the various challenges associated with our northern and isolated context.

On June 9, 2021, a Makivik representative attended the consultations with the regional organizations. During these consultations and based on the documents and briefs presented to the BAPE/KEAC, it is clear that the lack of resources and adequate support, along with exemptions that are allowed by the Quebec government for the region, such as the burning of solid waste in the waste disposal sites, are the main obstacles for a transition toward safer and more sustainable practices in Nunavik.

The regional and local organizations must be fully supported so they have the resources to implement new innovative solutions, adapted to our northern reality, that would contribute to protecting the environment and therefore, Nunavimmiut health and well-being.

Waste management as another source of inequity towards Nunavik Inuit

Makivik considers that the waste management, as currently in place, is another source of inequity toward the Inuit of Nunavik. Nunavik Inuit are already facing many challenges such as the housing shortage, the communities' reliance on diesel, and the disproportionate impact of climate change, for which they are not primarily responsible, on our communities and traditional practices, along with the many social, economic, and health inequities compared to our fellow Quebec citizens.

What is not allowed elsewhere in Quebec should not be tolerated in Nunavik under the pretext that our territory is isolated and sparsely populated and the financial argument should not be systematically considered as a due justification for the lack of proper services in Nunavik.

Moreover, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services presented the risks and discomforts associated with northern landfill during the consultations on June 9. We urge the Quebec Government to take actions to support our region to adopt safer practices in order to reduce those risks and protect the health of our communities.

Protecting Our Environment in and Outside Communities

The homeland of the Nunavik Inuit is vast and full of richness and we take great pride in it. Our culture is rooted in our environment and we have a strong desire to protect and maintain it for our future generations. We believe that landfill is not only affecting the quality of our environment but it's also a great source of visual pollution that is affecting the well-being of our population.

Travelling on the land is not equally accessible to all (due to health, time, resources) and the surroundings of the communities are often used by Nunavik Inuit for traditional practices. These areas are therefore important to promote cultural practices, physical activities and psychological well-being. The visual pollution along with the discomfort associated with open-air burning are affecting these important activities and we believe this should be considered as another impact of the current final waste management in our region. Makivik believes that the investments should be made in the construction of incinerators in each community, and that these incinerators include clean-air technology that will minimize emissions and noxious fumes.

Makivik is also concerned that all the changes currently occurring in Nunavik could increase the risks and impacts of the open-air burning in the landfills and that it might not be considered in this long-term strategy. Indeed, the landscape is changing, the permafrost is melting, the shrubbification of the tundra is accelerating and we believe that the cumulative impacts on our environment should be taken into consideration in the elaboration of this long-term strategy for the management of final waste (one example is the increased risks of tundra fires near the communities).

Makivik would like to see the Quebec government make a commitment to remedy the inequity that exists and towards preserving our lands. The use of a semi-mobile crushing plant that would have the ability to move between Nunavik communities and shred non-burnable waste would constitute a major improvement on the current situation. Additionally, proper collection and disposal of household hazardous waste (batteries, paint, etc.) should be on par with the infrastructure that exists in southern municipalities. If we are going to preserve the environment and biodiversity of Nunavik, substantial investments need to be made in modernizing our waste management systems.

Finally, as mentioned by the KRG in their brief, there is a need to include illegal dumping sites from abandoned mining exploration companies, outfitters, and former military activities in this strategy. Again, the vastness of our territory should not be used as an excuse to tolerate wrongful practices and the negative impacts of these sites along with the health risks for Nunavimmiut (due to the hazardous materials) should be seriously considered. Makivik is actively working with the Quebec government under the *Stratégie visant la vitalité et la mise en valeur du patrimoine nordique* to clean old outfitters sites. If we are proud to contribute to the reduction of pollution in our territory, it also gives us an understanding of the magnitude of the task to complete such work. A real commitment from the government will be required to achieve this important task.

Conclusion

Makivik would like to thank the BAPE and the KEAC for conducting these consultations that are a first step to implement the much-needed changes in the final waste management in Nunavik. We are hopeful that we can find a way to reduce these inequities between Nunavik and southern Quebec and that we can work together to support our regional and local organizations so they find the appropriate solutions that are adapted to our northern environment and our population.