

**The stakes related to seismic surveys in the St. Lawrence Gulf and Estuary**

**BAPE INQUIRY AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**OPENS ON APRIL 5 IN RIMOUSKI**

**Québec City, March 22, 2004** – The Commission for the *Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement* (BAPE) mandated to conduct an inquiry and public hearings on the stakes involved in seismic surveys in the St. Lawrence gulf and estuary will begin Part One of the public hearing **on Monday, April 5 2004 in Rimouski.**

Commissioners Pierre André and Jacques Locat with Michel Germain as Chairman have invited resource persons and a panel of experts to exchange knowledge regarding the ecology of the St. Lawrence gulf and estuary as well as the impact of seismic surveys on marine habitats. Sharing this knowledge will enhance the process of analysis and reflection both for members of the general public and the Commission.

The public hearing will take place in the **Hôtel Rimouski Ballroom, 225, boulevard René-Lepage East, beginning at 7:00 p.m.** The session dates and locations are as follows, in accordance with the needs of the public and the Commission. The Commission will sit at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Part One of the public hearing will entail a visit by the Commission to the following locations:

City	Date	Location
Rimouski	As of April 5, 2004	Ballroom A Hôtel Rimouski 225, boulevard René-Lepage East
Îles-de-la-Madeleine	April 13-14-15, 2004	Centre civique de Cap-aux-Meules 460, chemin Principal Cap-aux-Meules
Gaspé	April 19-20, 2004	Salle Hector-Denis et Emilia Hôtel des Commandants 178, rue de la Reine
Sept-Îles	April 21-22, 2004	Salle Corrosol Hôtel Sept-Îles 451, rue Arnaud

Part One will provide both the general public and the Commission with an opportunity to develop a more profound understanding of the issues involved in seismic surveys and clarify the stakes involved.

**BAPE’S MANDATE AND THE COMMISSION PROCESS**

On March 10, 2004, the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Thomas J. Mulcair, mandated the *Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement* (BAPE) to hold an inquiry and public hearings on seismic surveys that may be carried out in the St. Lawrence gulf and estuary and their related environmental impact. At the Minister’s request, the Commission created by BAPE President should examine “notably the stakes and possible solutions identified by the panel of experts and [...] recommend avenues worth exploring in a perspective of sustainable development.”

The Commission hearings will proceed according to the customary BAPE procedure namely, in two distinct parts. During Part Two of the public hearing, **slated to begin on Tuesday, May 18 2004**, the Commission will hear public viewpoints and suggestions concerning the issue of seismic surveys and their related impacts. Within this context, it will hear the opinions and suggestions of any individual, group, organization or municipality interested in commenting on the project, either orally or in the form of a brief. Details regarding Part Two of the public hearing will be released once they are available.

BAPE will table a report with the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Thomas J. Mulcair, no later than August 31, 2004, which will be released publically within 60 days.

#### AVAILABLE PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this project are available for consultation at the BAPE Office in Québec City, the *Bibliothèque centrale de l'Université du Québec à Montréal* as well as the following locations:

- *Bibliothèque de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski*;
- Library of the Cégep de la Gaspésie, 96, Jacques-Cartier, Gaspé;
- *Bibliothèque municipale de Cap-aux-Meules*, 315, chemin Principal;
- *Bibliothèque Louis-Ange-Santerre*, 500, rue Jolliet à Sept-Îles.

They can also be consulted at any time on the BAPE website at: [www.bape.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca), where you will also find all related documents, including those tabled by the Commission during the mandate. Furthermore, every phase of the consultation process will be announced in the section *À surveiller* of the Commission's website. Free Internet access to the BAPE website is available at the following locations:

- *Bibliothèque municipale de Matane (Fonds de solidarité FTQ)*, 520, avenue Saint-Jérôme, Matane;
- *Bibliothèque du Vieux-Couvent*, 99, place Suzanne-Guité, New Richmond;
- *Bibliothèque municipale Alice-Lane*, 6, avenue Radisson, Baie-Comeau;
- Tadoussac Village, 162, rue des Jésuites.

For further information, please contact Ms. Danielle Dallaire, coordinator of the Commission's secretariat, or Ms. Marie-Ève Chamberland, Communications Advisor at: (418) 643-7447 or 1 800 463-4732 (toll-free). The Commission can also be contacted by e-mail at: [sismiques@bape.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:sismiques@bape.gouv.qc.ca).

Source: Marie-Ève Chamberland  
Communications Advisor  
(418) 643-7447 or 1 800 463-4732  
[sismiques@bape.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:sismiques@bape.gouv.qc.ca)