

Séance de la soirée du 29 septembre 2026

**BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

ÉTAIENT PRÉSENTS : **M. JACQUES BÉNARD, président**
M. MARTIN LESSARD, commissaire

**CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE
PROJET D'IMPLANTATION D'UNE FERME AQUACOLE TERRESTRE
EN RECIRCULATION INTENSIVE DANS LA MRC DE PONTICAC PAR SAMONIX**

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

VOLUME 1

Séance tenue le 29 septembre à 19 h
Centre récréatif de Campbell's Bay
2, rue Second, Campbell's Bay

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SÉANCE DU 29 SEPTEMBRE 2026
SÉANCE DE LA SOIRÉE
MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

5 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Bonsoir à tous.

Good evening everyone.

10

Bienvenue à cette 2e partie de l'audience publique sur le Projet d'implantation d'une ferme aquacole terrestre en recirculation intensive dans la MRC de Pontiac par Samonix.

Welcome to the second part of the public hearing.

15

Je salue également les personnes qui nous suivent à distance. Vous pouvez ouvrir la section « Q & R » de la webdiffusion et c'est là que vous trouverez les informations pour la participation en ligne.

20

If you are joining us online, please open the "Q & A" section of the webcast. This is where you will find information on how to participate online.

Mon nom est Jacques Bénard, je suis membre du Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement et je préside cette commission d'enquête.

25

Comme c'était le cas pour la première partie de l'audience, un service de traduction simultanée, en français et en anglais, est disponible en salle et à distance.

30

I will alternate between French and English, and all participants are welcome to speak in the language of their choice. If you are joining us remotely, you can choose the language in which you wish to follow the hearing.

35 *In the toolbar at the top of the Teams interface, click "More actions", then "Language and speech". Next, select "Language interpretation" and choose your preferred language. You may also, obviously, follow the hearing without interpretation.*

If you need assistance, please visit the "Q & A" section of the interface, where you will find the instructions to guide you through the process.

40 *Printed copies of the English version of the BAPE presentation are also available for those attending in the room, and a digital version is available in the English section of the BAPE website.*

J'aimerais maintenant vous présenter mes collègues. D'abord, mon collègue commissaire, Martin Lessard.

45 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Bonsoir. Good evening.

50 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

55 Ainsi que certains membres de l'équipe de la commission. Vous avez à ma gauche, Karim Chami et Yefagafie Ismaël Silue, qui sont tous les deux nos analystes, et à la table d'accueil, Kim Maloney, que vous devez commencer à connaître, qui est coordonnatrice du secrétariat de la commission.

Christophe Marquis, le conseiller en communication, et Ulriche Welchina Miyalou Taty, l'agente de soutien administratif, complètent l'équipe de la commission.

60 Donc, j'invite les personnes inscrites pour prendre la parole en salle ce soir à confirmer leur présence, si ce n'est pas déjà fait, à Kim Maloney à la table d'accueil.

65 *So, if you have already registered to speak in the room this evening, please confirm your attendance with Kim Maloney at the welcome desk.*

Quelques rappels avant de débiter. D'abord, le BAPE est un organisme impartial dont le rôle consiste à éclairer la prise de décision gouvernementale. Il n'a pas le pouvoir d'autoriser ou non le projet.

70 *So, the BAPE is an impartial body and doesn't have the authority to approve or reject a project; its mission is to inform government decision-making.*

Ensuite, la *Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement* nous accorde, en tant que commissaires, les pouvoirs et l'immunité des commissaires nommés en vertu de la *Loi sur les commissions d'enquête*.

75 *We will also examine the project from a sustainable development perspective, guided by the principles of the "Sustainable Development Act", and encompassing ecological, social and economic considerations.*

80 *The public hearing is, as you know, divided into two parts. A few weeks ago, we held the first part, which gave you an opportunity to learn about the project.*

85 *We are now beginning the second part, which is the opportunity for you to share your views on the project.*

If you have registered to speak, you will have a maximum of 15 minutes for your presentation. After your presentation, my colleague and I will take a few minutes to speak with you and ask you questions.

90 *Please note that the people who have already presented a brief cannot register again to address the Commission, but we also welcome the people who wish to speak without having registered in advance, to register.*

95 *You can register now at the welcoming desk or, if you are participating remotely, by completing the form available in the "Q & A" section of the live webcast.*

If you do not have access to the form, go to the project's webcast page on the BAPE website, where you will find the link to register.

100 *You can also call us at the number currently displayed on the screen. It's very small, so I will tell it: 1-800-463-4732, extension 6.*

105 *You will then have five minutes, as mentioned, five minutes to speak. Please note that the online forms are available in French only.*

110 Je tiens à souligner que vos opinions, suggestions et propositions de modification sont essentielles pour enrichir notre réflexion et vont éclairer l'analyse que nous ferons du projet et de sa justification.

115 Nous offrons également la possibilité de rectifier des faits mentionnés dans le mémoire ou la présentation d'un participant.

120 À noter qu'une rectification doit se limiter à corriger une inexactitude démontrée, comme, par exemple, une de date ou une citation erronée.

125 Pour apporter une rectification, merci de vous inscrire au registre.

130 Nous recevrons également des rectifications par écrit jusqu'au 7 octobre.

135 *So, very important, we offer the opportunity to correct factual information presented in a participant brief or a presentation. Please note that the correction must be limited to factual inaccuracies, such as an incorrect date or an inaccurate quotation.*

140 Donc, afin d'assurer le bon déroulement des séances publiques, les échanges devront se faire dans le respect et la courtoisie. Ainsi, les propos diffamatoires ou injurieux, de même que les manifestations d'approbation ou de désapprobation ne seront pas tolérés.

145 *As all sessions are recorded and transcribed, I ask everyone who is called upon to speak to state their name each time they take the floor.*

150 *Recordings of the session will be available on the BAPE website within 48 hours.*

155 *Transcripts will be available approximately 10 days later.*

135 *One thing I didn't mention, and I have been constantly reminding to do, is to speak slowly and articulate to facilitate the job of the translators. So, if you see that little paper that I'm showing you when you speak, instead of, you know, try to slow down and help the translators do their job. Thank you.*

140
PRÉSENTATION DES MÉMOIRES
BRIAN NOLAN
(Présentation verbale)

145 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

So, let's begin, and I would now like to invite Mr. Brian Nolan to come at the table and... et nous faire donc part de sa présentation verbale. Monsieur Nolan, bonsoir. Bienvenue.

150 **BRIAN NOLAN:**

Bonsoir. Je vais faire ça en français, c'est correct?

155 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

C'est parfait. Vous avez un maximum donc de 15 minutes pour faire votre présentation, puis après ça, on va vous poser probablement quelques questions.

160 **BRIAN NOLAN:**

C'est beau, pas de problème.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

165 C'est bien? Merci.

BRIAN NOLAN:

170 Alors, Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, bonsoir. Mon nom est Brian Nolan, je suis le maire de Chelsea et je vous remercie de me donner l'occasion de m'exprimer sur le projet Samonix. C'est un projet que j'ai entendu parler ça fait une couple d'années, puis c'est un projet qui m'intéresse beaucoup.

175 Samonix, c'est une entreprise qui est établie à Chelsea depuis plusieurs années. Dans mes échanges avec les dirigeants, j'ai connu une entreprise qui prend le temps d'écouter et tenir compte de la communauté. C'est quelque chose qui est très, très important pour eux autres.

180 Même nous autres, à Chelsea, ils font plusieurs – dans d'autres entreprises – ils font plusieurs consultations publiques afin de s'assurer que la communauté va de pair avec leur projet. Puis je pense que c'est ce qu'ils veulent faire ici également, ils ne veulent pas arriver ici et faire un désastre, ils veulent s'assurer que le projet est en bonne et due forme puis que ça correspond aussi à l'exigence des citoyens et de l'environnement.

185 Je les considère comme un citoyen corporatif exemplaire dans notre municipalité, et j'espère de voir cette même approche guider leur projet à Litchfield.

190 Lors de la dernière élection fédérale, j'étais un candidat et puis j'ai parcouru tout le Pontiac. Toute la MRC du Pontiac, je l'ai parcourue de fond en comble, et puis lors de mon parcours, je me suis rendu compte que c'est une MRC qui a besoin de beaucoup d'amour et beaucoup de nouvelles entreprises.

195 Comme on le sait, c'est une MRC qui vit du domaine forestier. Le domaine forestier étant ce qu'il n'est plus, alors je pense que ça l'amènerait, en fin de compte, une nouvelle industrie, puis ça pourrait aussi créer des emplois dans une MRC qui a besoin de beaucoup d'amour.

200 Côté, pas personnel, mais des citoyens qui demeurent dans la MRC de Pontiac, c'est des personnes qui sont très résilientes, qui sont très fières puis qui sont accrochées et veulent rester ici.

Alors, avoir une entreprise de ce genre-ci qui pourrait créer une centaine d'emplois, sans compter les emplois qui sont connexes, ce serait un avantage, un bel avantage pour la communauté.

205 Je m'en vais un petit peu trop vite sur mon texte, mais c'est correct. Alors, le projet pourrait donner une nouvelle vocation à un site industriel existant et permettre de produire dans l'Outaouais, une partie du saumon consommé au Québec et en Ontario. Alors, ça aurait une grosse vision, aussi enjeu – pas enjeu, mais une grosse vision pour le reste du Canada parce que là, on pourrait se procurer du saumon local, en fin de compte.

210 Je veux également parler franchement du rejet prévu dans la rivière Outaouais. Selon Samonix, son système permettra de recirculer environ 99 % des eaux utilisées. Une partie des eaux traitées sera néanmoins rejetée dans la rivière.

215 Fort de mes échanges avec les dirigeants de l'entreprise, je suis confiant qu'ils prendront les mesures nécessaires pour réduire autant la possible concentration de chlorure, et de la qualité d'eau rejetée. Samonix prévoit un système de traitement et un programme de suivi, comme ils le font dans tous les autres projets qu'ils font, et que nous on est conscients à Chelsea.

220 Alors, bien sûr, je suis favorable au projet de Samonix. Je souhaite de voir une entreprise de chez nous, qui investit dans notre région, qui pourrait créer des emplois dans le Pontiac et qui en a grandement besoin également.

225 Avec des engagements environnementaux solides, et une écoute continue de la population, ce projet pourrait devenir une véritable source de fierté pour l'Outaouais.

230 Alors, je vous remercie du temps que vous m'avez laissé. Je ne prendrai pas votre 15 minutes, mais c'est juste pour vous dire que c'est une compagnie que nous, à Chelsea, on apprécie beaucoup. Ce sont des gens qui travaillent de pair avec nous dans tous les projets qu'ils entreprennent, puis je suis pas mal sûr qu'ils feraient la même chose ici.

Ça fait que c'est tout pour moi, puis je vous remercie beaucoup.

235 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Très bien. Restez avec nous, mon collègue va vous poser quelques questions.

240 **BRIAN NOLAN:**

Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

245 Bonsoir, Monsieur Nolan. Je vous remercie de participer à nos travaux. Première petite question, juste, on se demandait, vous, au départ, est-ce que vous vous adressez à nous davantage comme le maire de Chelsea ou plus à titre de citoyen?

250 **BRIAN NOLAN:**

Bien, je m'adresse comme personne qui a voyagé dans le Pontiac, puis que je vois comment le monde vit, puis je ne dénigre pas personne, là, mais je vois qu'il y a un manque d'industries dans le Pontiac puis ça, ce serait une belle occasion de créer 100 emplois dans le Pontiac et dans la MRC, une des MRC les plus pauvres de la province de Québec.

255 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Hum, hum.

260 **BRIAN NOLAN:**

Je ne sais pas si vous le saviez, mais on a besoin d'emplois ici, puis amener des industries ici, surtout une industrie comme celle-là qui pourrait créer 100 emplois, je pense que ça a un atout.

265 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Oui. Puis j'en profiterais pour vous demander, votre municipalité est quand même – elle n'est pas dans la MRC de Pontiac, justement, elle est...

BRIAN NOLAN:

270

Non, nous, on est dans la MRC des Collines, oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

275

C'est ça, vous êtes, je pense, à une centaine de kilomètres, peut-être, d'ici...

BRIAN NOLAN :

280

Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

285

... mais on se demandait quand même, d'après vous, de votre côté, est-ce que vous envisagez certaines retombées économiques plus dans votre région, dans votre municipalité avec ce projet-là ou...

BRIAN NOLAN:

290

Dans notre région, non, il n'y aura aucune retombée économique du tout.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Non?

295

BRIAN NOLAN:

Économiquement parlant, Chelsea ne gagne absolument rien en arrière de Samonix, autre que je vais être bon pour me procurer du saumon local. C'est à peu près tout.

300

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Oui, d'accord. C'est bon.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

305 Vous avez parlé d'une attente, de votre part, que l'initiateur réduise le plus possible la concentration de chlorure dans le rejet dans la rivière, est-ce que ça correspond à une préoccupation que vous avez?

BRIAN NOLAN:

310 Bien, nous, même à Chelsea, on est près de la rivière Gatineau, on fait extrêmement attention à l'environnement. La rivière Gatineau, c'est une merveille puis il faut la protéger. Et puis il y a des systèmes de filtration d'eau qui sont au courant que c'est important que l'eau qui va être rejetée soit filtrée le plus possible, parce que quand on regarde la rivière Outaouais, elle descend jusqu'à
315 Ottawa, même jusqu'à Montréal, si on veut, ça fait que c'est important de ne pas la polluer.

Puis, comme je disais, avec mon expérience que j'ai avec cette compagnie-là, ou les dirigeants de la compagnie, ils prennent toutes les mesures pour s'assurer qu'ils ne font pas de dommages environnementaux.

320

LE PRÉSIDENT :

O.K., mais en fait, ma question est posée sur le chlorure en particulier, si c'est quelque chose qui vous préoccupe dans votre municipalité?

325

BRIAN NOLAN:

Bien, dans notre municipalité, on n'est pas affectés par ça, nous.

330

LE PRÉSIDENT :

O.K.

BRIAN NOLAN:

Mais c'est que le déversement des eaux qui pourraient se déverser de l'entreprise, il y a du chlorure et puis de là, c'est important de réduire le plus possible, là, pour ne pas contaminer la rivière, mais il y a des systèmes qui existent pour éliminer, en fin de compte, le chlorure ou presque éliminer le chlorure, là.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Très bien. Bien, merci beaucoup. Merci d'avoir pris le temps de venir vous adresser à nous.

BRIAN NOLAN:

Je vous remercie. Bonne soirée.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Bonne soirée à vous aussi.

MUNICIPALITÉ DE LITCHFIELD (DM4)
COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Donc, la prochaine personne est madame Colleen Larivière, de la municipalité de Litchfield. Bonsoir et bienvenue.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Bonsoir, merci.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

370 Bonsoir.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

375 La Municipalité a déposé un mémoire, vous l'avez déjà, mais moi, j'ai quelques mots à dire personnellement et au nom de la Municipalité, bien sûr.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

380 Je vais vous dire, peut-être, comme j'allais le dire à toutes les autres personnes, on a tous lu vos mémoires. Donc, on a pris le temps, on a eu l'occasion de...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

385 Oui, je sais. Merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

... de regarder ça, merci.

390 **COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:**

395 M'entendez-vous? Oui? Bon, parfait. Bonsoir, encore. Je m'appelle Colleen Larivière et je suis la mairesse de la municipalité de Litchfield. Je suis née dans le Pontiac, c'est ici que j'ai grandi et j'ai élevé mes enfants, et j'ai consacré une grande partie de ma vie à travailler et à contribuer à ma communauté.

400 J'ai vu le Pontiac connaître des périodes de prospérité, mais j'ai aussi été témoin de périodes beaucoup plus difficiles. J'ai vu notre économie changer, j'ai vu des industries disparaître et des emplois devenir de plus en plus difficile à trouver.

Je sais donc, personnellement, ce que cela signifie pour une famille, pour une communauté et pour une région lorsque les possibilités se font de plus en plus rares.

405 C'est avec cette expérience personnelle et avec ma responsabilité en tant que mairesse que je prends la parole ce soir. Je suis ici au nom du Conseil municipal afin de parler de l'importance du projet Samonix, non seulement pour la municipalité de Litchfield, mais pour la région de Pontiac.

410 Pour le Pontiac, il est difficile de surestimer l'importance d'un projet de cette envergure. Nous n'avons pas vu un projet de cette ampleur prendre forme dans notre région depuis le déclin quasi total de l'industrie forestière.

415 Depuis plusieurs années, nos communautés cherchent de nouvelles occasions de renforcer et de diversifier notre économie et le projet Samonix pourrait contribuer de façon importante à cet objectif.

According to the information presented to the BAPE file, the project represents an investment estimated at approximately \$418,000,000 and could create up to 100 permanent jobs. But the importance of this project goes beyond the number of jobs.

420 The benefits could extend throughout our communities by creating opportunities for local businesses, contractors, suppliers and service providers, while generating new economic activity and potentially attracting other businesses and services connected to the project's operations.

425 Puis, aussi, les retombées fiscales et municipales de ce projet représentent également des éléments très importants. Pour les fins de notre analyse municipale, Litchfield a estimé de façon préliminaire, bien entendu, que le terrain, les bâtiments et les installations pourraient représenter \$125,000,000 en valeurs imposables.

430 As outlined in our brief, an increase of Litchfield's property wealth would affect the MRC's municipal contributions and quota shares.

Depending on the final assessment, there would definitely be a positive and financial impact to other municipalities throughout the Pontiac. Therefore, we are looking at this not simply as a Litchfield project, but as a regional opportunity for the Pontiac.

435 At the same time, we recognize that an opportunity of this magnitude comes with responsibilities. A project of this importance must be carefully evaluated, and this is precisely the reason the BAPE process is so important.

440 The August hearings provided additional information and greater clarity on water treatment, the Ottawa River, waste management, fish health, biodiversity and environmental monitoring.

What we heard was very encouraging and strengthened our confidence that the project can move forward responsibly while maintaining strong environmental safeguards.

445 Economic development and environmental responsibilities must go hand in hand.

Nous pouvons vouloir créer des emplois et développer notre économie, tout en exigeant que notre environnement soit protégé. L'un ne devrait pas opposer l'autre.

450 Ce projet pourrait être un moment déterminant pour le Pontiac, en transformant notre avenir économique et en créant des occasions qui profiteront à nos communautés pour les générations à venir.

455 As mayor of Litchfield, I believe we must look at this opportunity with both optimism and responsibility, all while protecting our environment and ensuring the future generations have the opportunity to live, work and drive here in the Pontiac.

460 On behalf of the members of Council, I state that there is a strong sense of hope and anticipation about what this project could mean to the future of Litchfield and the whole of the Pontiac.

Subject to the completion of the environmental review, and all the necessary approvals, we look forward to the possibility of welcoming Samonix to Litchfield and seeing this important investment become part of the future's region.

465 Au nom du Conseil municipal de Litchfield, je remercie la commission de nous avoir donné l'occasion de connaître notre point de vue et je tiens à souligner le travail accompli dans le cadre de ce processus et je vous remercie.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Mairesse. Mon collègue va vous poser quelques questions.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Oui, quelques questions.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Pardon?

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Je vais avoir quelques petites questions pour vous.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Oui, allez-y.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Merci, en premier lieu, de votre participation. Juste une petite question de précision, on se demandait, pour ce qui est au niveau des retombées économiques, vous dites, bon, la valeur imposable de l'immeuble, bon, on tourne autour de 125 M\$. Avez-vous une petite idée, en termes de revenus annuels, avez-vous une petite idée, comment ça...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Bien, pensez-vous que je n'ai pas fait le calcul?

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Bien, c'est ce qu'on s'est dit.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

505 Oui. Oui, ça voudrait dire à peu près entre 600 000 \$ et 630 000 \$ par année.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

510 O.K. Non, c'est ça, ça donne une meilleure idée de grandeur, là.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Bien entendu, ça dépend du montant de la...

515 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Bien, du taux d'imposition, ça, ça peut jouer, là.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

520 Oui, oui, c'est ça.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

525 Mais je comprends, ça donne quand même un aperçu un peu plus, là.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

530 C'est ça.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

535 Merci. Ensuite, justement, vous dites, vous avez précisé, bon, le déclin un peu de la région avec l'industrie forestière, notamment, je reviendrais plus sur votre parc industriel. On se posait la question, dans les dernières années, est-ce qu'il y a eu quand même des projets qui ont été étudiés, des projets de développement dans le parc industriel?

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

540 Bien, c'est ça. Dans les dernières années, moi, ça va faire 14 ans que je suis mairesse et puis c'est certain qu'on a eu certains projets qui ont été présentés puis qui ont été jusqu'à un certain point, puis après ça, disons que c'est la première fois qu'il y a un projet qui se rend jusqu'à ce point ici.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

545 O.K.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

550 Ça fait qu'on est optimistes, comme j'ai dit tantôt, là, mais c'est...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

555 C'était quel type de projets qui ont été...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

560 Bien, il y avait... oui, je peux le dire. Il y avait Livewell, qui est un projet de cannabis puis, en tout cas, ça n'a pas fonctionné.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Ça n'a pas fonctionné.

565 **COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:**

Mais c'était... on avait espoir, mais on a plus qu'espoir aujourd'hui.

570

LE COMMISSAIRE :

D'accord. Bien, merci. Ensuite, bon, on se posait la question en termes d'investissements envisagés par la Municipalité, est-ce qu'il y a des investissements particuliers pour accueillir le projet que vous envisagez?

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Non.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Non? Ça n'implique pas en termes d'infrastructures...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Non. C'est un terrain privé et puis c'est...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Oui, O.K. Puis ensuite, pour ce qui est, encore pour le projet, est-ce qu'il reste des éléments? C'est ça qu'on se demandait, est-ce qu'il reste des éléments particuliers à discuter avec vous ou des consultations particulières, là?

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Non.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Il faut que je parle plus lentement, merci. Donc, est-ce qu'il y a...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

605 Non. C'est le zonage, et puis c'est industriel lourd, et puis ça, c'est industriel léger, ça fait qu'il n'y a aucun problème.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

610 O.K., ça fait que tout ça est réglé. J'aurais, dans le fond, une dernière question. C'est plus souvent les... c'est par rapport au public qui souhaite être consulté davantage, on se disait, de votre côté, avez-vous des attentes en matière de participation des citoyens de votre municipalité advenant l'autorisation du projet, en termes de suivi, par exemple, ou de comité de suivi ou quoi que ce soit?

615

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

620 Non. Je veux dire, on verra. Si c'est nécessaire, c'est certain qu'on va le mettre en place. Si c'est quelque chose qui est nécessaire, mais jusqu'à date, je n'ai pas, pour ce qui est des résidents de Litchfield, pour ce qui est du bureau municipal, on n'a pas eu de préoccupation.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

625 O.K., d'accord. Je vous remercie. Est-ce que mon collègue veut compléter, oui?

LE PRÉSIDENT :

630 Oui, une petite précision sur ce que représente dans le fond, proportionnellement à la valeur de votre parc immobilier dans la ville, 125 M\$, ça se compare à quoi? C'est quoi le... quelle est la proportion approximative que ça représente sur la valeur de l'ensemble de votre...

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

635 Oui, c'est ça. C'est drôle que vous posiez cette question-là, parce que je me la posais hier soir et puis...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Bon, c'est une bonne question.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

... c'est ça, puis – c'est une bonne question – puis je ne veux pas – ma DG est ici, là – mais moi, je dirais que c'est peut-être un tiers?

LE PRÉSIDENT :

O.K.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Oui.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Puis l'autre chose que je me posais comme question c'est, dans le fond, une entreprise comme ça qui s'installe avec des travailleurs qui vont, j'imagine, chercher un endroit pour vivre aussi, ils ne sont pas déjà présents aussi, comment on se prépare, comme municipalité comme la vôtre, à accueillir une entreprise majeure qui est... parce que tout à l'heure, vous avez dit, bon, on ne prévoit pas vraiment d'investissement en infrastructures, mais ça prend des services, ça prend toutes sortes de choses pour accueillir ces gens-là.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

Bien, dans une municipalité rurale, comme pour Litchfield, comme telle, c'est plutôt des puits, des... on n'a pas de systèmes d'égout, on n'a pas de système d'aqueduc. Bon, il y a les chemins, les routes, mais il faut dire que disons que ça crée 100 emplois, bien, c'est certain que la municipalité de Campbell's Bay, il y a Bryson, il y a Litchfield, il y a Portage-du-Fort, il y a plein de... les gens vont être répartis. Les employés vont venir de différents endroits, c'est certain.

C'est 15 minutes de Bryson pour aller travailler – même pas – au parc industriel. Mais si, je veux dire, si la nécessité est là, si ça devient nécessaire, bien là, c'est certain qu'on va avoir des discussions avec...

675 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

O.K., ça fait que vous ne prévoyez pas nécessairement qu'il y aura des besoins en matière d'école, de services, de commerces, d'habitation. Ça devrait pouvoir...

680 **COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:**

Ça devrait pouvoir, oui, bien...

685 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

... être absorbé par la région, selon votre connaissance de la région.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

690 Il y a déjà des gens dans le Pontiac qui cherchent de l'emploi.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Oui.

695

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

700 Ça fait que peut-être que ces gens-là vont être assez chanceux de retrouver un emploi chez Samonix. Et puis, les gens qui vont venir de l'extérieur, bien, je pense, puis si c'est nécessaire, bien, on fera quelque chose à ce moment-là. Mais pour tout de suite, c'est la façon que je vois ça, du moins.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

705 C'est complet pour moi. Merci beaucoup.

COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE:

710 Merci.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Je vous remercie, bonne soirée.

715 **COLLEEN LARIVIÈRE :**

Bonne soirée.

720

MUNICIPALITÉ DE PORTAGE-DU-FORT (DM15)
NICOLE THOMPSON

LE PRÉSIDENT :

725

La prochaine personne – next person is Nicole Thompson, municipalité de Portage-du-Fort.
Bonsoir, Madame Thompson.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

730

Bonsoir. Vous me pardonnerez, je suis un peu éparpillée.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

735

Vous avez 15 minutes.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

740 Sans problème. Donc oui, en mon nom personnel et au nom de la municipalité de Portage-
du-Fort, je fais un résumé un peu du mémoire que vous avez devant vous, mais aussi un peu de
toute cette expérience qu'on a vécue ensemble.

745 En partant, je pense que l'idée maîtresse, c'était vraiment la protection des eaux de la rivière
des Outaouais qui nous inquiétait le plus, parce que c'est notre seule source d'eau potable. C'est
aussi nos loisirs, la pêche, la nage, le kayak et le reste, mais on s'est rendu compte qu'elle était
bien protégée ailleurs, mais un peu moins chez nous.

750 On a des espèces qui en dépendant, autant humaines qu'autres, puis on s'est posé la
question, est-ce qu'à ce moment ici, on favorise une industrie au détriment de l'environnement,
comme ça a déjà été fait avec la Consolidated Bathurst puis la Smurfit Stone. Alors, c'était une des
questions qui étaient ressorties.

755 L'autre problème, l'autre inquiétude – on va l'appeler comme ça – c'était bien sûr les rejets
qui pourraient en découler, découler de ce système-là, de ce projet-là. Un projet, on le dit très grand,
qu'on n'a jamais vu, dans le fond, et qu'on a cerné avec certains dirigeants ailleurs, qui n'avaient
pas... qui avaient eu des problèmes, et on s'était dit qu'on les avait tous réglés, mais on sait, sur
papier, c'est très beau, mais sur le terrain, on ne sait jamais ce qu'il peut arriver.

760 Donc, au sujet des rejets, bien, pour nous personnellement, c'est le système de traitement
d'eau, le nôtre qui déjà ne fonctionne pas beaucoup, on est encore endettés pour un autre cinq ans
pour le payer, alors on ne voit pas comment un projet comme celui-là va nous aider. Ça risque
d'ajouter à notre fardeau financier.

765 On le sait, le coût de nos filtres pour notre système, qui est déjà désuet, qui ne suffit déjà pas,
sont dans les 30 000 \$ à 45 000 \$. Nous, on n'aura pas les retombées économiques de Litchfield.
Dans le fond, on n'aura aucune retombée sinon un potentiel de danger.

770 Donc, on ne sait pas comment une petite municipalité de moins de 300 personnes pourra
supporter les coûts additionnels à un système de filtration. On aimerait peut-être que des expertises
de la compagnie Samonix soient partagées avec nous pour nous aider dans ce sens-là.

Vous avez parlé il y a quelques instants des retombées économiques – bien, on en a parlé – versus répondre à des besoins, et c'était une des choses que j'avais mentionnées dans le mémoire.

775 Quand on regarde à implanter quelque chose comme ça, il y a les besoins en électricité, en télécommunication, en accommodation, les routes, l'alimentation. On se pose la question si la MRC Pontiac est prête non seulement à envisager tous ces enjeux, mais aussi à les gérer.

780 Si on est la plus pauvre MRC, il y a peut-être une raison à ça. Donc, il y a une question de gestion aussi. C'est beau, les retombées économiques, mais est-ce que les calculs avaient été faits pour voir si les enjeux correspondent avec ce qui va être demandé pour, justement, loger et prendre soin de cette population additionnelle qui ferait que chez nous, peut-être qu'on en aurait ou notre système d'eau serait encore, qui est déjà insuffisant, devrait être mis à jour.

785 Il y avait la question, il y avait les questions aussi – il y a tout plein de questions, tout plein d'inquiétudes. Puis plus on creuse le sujet, plus on trouvait à redire. Et un exemple, c'était que les terrains alentour du projet Samonix, le 99, chemin Industriel Nord, le 211, Route 301, et le 152, chemin Industriel Nord, entre autres, sont des terrains qui ont été nommés par Traces Québec comme étant les terrains pour tout l'Outaouais où les sols contaminés sont acheminés.

790 Alors, on se demandait si, question d'accumulation – on a vu que les rejets de Samonix pouvaient être minimes, je ne sais pas pour les terrains, les souterrains et le reste, la question était : oui, ils ont calculé les leurs, mais est-ce qu'ils ont calculé en – comment on dirait ça, donc – en accumulation avec ceux des autres terrains qui auraient déjà des sols contaminés ou du reste?

795 Donc oui, Samonix a calculé ses rejets et ses choses, mais peut-être qu'il y aurait accumulation calculée à ce niveau-là.

800 Et, après ça, il y avait la question, finalement, je pense que les bénéfices attendus sont indéniables. Pour nous, les retombées économiques sont minimes, les dépenses vont être... des dépenses plus que ce qu'on peut se permettre, si on n'a pas un peu d'aide. Et, aussi, on aimerait qu'il y ait des mesures de protection pour nous.

Tout le monde alentour est bien d'accord, ils auront toutes les retombées, mais c'est sur notre dos que s'il y a des problèmes, c'est chez nous que ça va paraître. On aimerait être consultés, peut-

805 être faire partie d'un comité quand il y a des... ou un peu comme notre, le monsieur qui s'occupe de notre système de filtration aimerait être averti si jamais il y avait des fuites.

On semble nous avoir mis de côté en disant, bon, il n'y a pas de danger, c'est correct, ça va être correct, mais il n'y a rien de concret qui nous protège et qui fait en sorte qu'on soit content de
810 participer à un projet qui potentiellement est très bon.

On aimerait être considérés un peu comme des partenaires, si jamais ça se développe, mais des partenaires à parts égales, pas... bon, bien, on va les pacifier un peu en donnant un peu de ça, un peu de ça. En tout cas, c'était un peu ça.

815 Et pour conclure, bien, la Municipalité, et je parle au nom des concitoyens qu'on a consultés et, bien, du Conseil municipal, notre position en tant que conseil, c'était qu'on était contre le projet. On réalise que ça peut aller de l'avant et on aimerait que si ça va de l'avant, qu'on puisse le faire comme partenaires, pour le bénéfice de tous, dans le fond.

820 Merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

825 Merci. Je vais commencer par les questions de mon collègue. J'en ai quelques-unes aussi. Donc, si vous avez encore un peu de temps, on va jaser un peu ensemble.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

830 Donc, bonsoir, merci de votre mémoire. Je commencerai la première question par les retombées économiques. Vous avez dit que les retombées seraient minimales.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

835 On n'en voit pas.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

840 On se posait la question, juste en termes, mettons en termes de quoteparts qui sont versées à la MRC, est-ce que ça pourrait avoir une incidence? Quand même, le projet, étant donné que ça l'amène un afflux d'argent au niveau de Litchfield, vous, vos quoteparts que vous payez à la MRC, est-ce qu'il pourrait y avoir un certain gain à ce niveau-là ou vous n'avez pas considéré ça? On se posait la question.

845 **NICOLE THOMPSON:**

Bien, dans le fond, ce serait la même... je pense que ça va d'après un pourcentage, là...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

850 Oui.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

855 ... pour les différentes municipalités. Donc, j'imagine que, comme toutes les autres municipalités, il y aurait ce pourcentage-là.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

860 O.K.

NICOLE THOMPSON :

865 Mais pour nous, dans le fond, ça... ce n'est pas que ça ne change rien, ça apporterait que notre part diminuerait, dans le fond, ce que nous on devrait rapporter diminuerait.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

870 O.K. Donc, on se posait cette question-là. Ensuite, bien, c'est sûr, bon, je sais qu'en première partie d'audience puis maintenant, vous avez un enjeu au niveau du système de traitement de l'eau potable, puis on voulait peut-être juste, un petit peu, peut-être, mieux saisir par rapport à votre enjeu.

875 Premièrement, on se demandait, est-ce que vous anticipez déjà une augmentation de la demande en eau potable dans un avenir rapproché déjà actuellement, dans le fond, indépendamment du projet, là?

NICOLE THOMPSON:

880 Indépendamment du projet, on est déjà... on n'est déjà pas à jour. On n'a déjà pas assez... ça ne répond pas aux besoins présentement.

885 O.K. Donc, c'est un des enjeux. La pression d'eau, elle est très basse et, bon, donc il y a déjà un enjeu que ça ne répond pas. Alors, le moins qu'il y aurait d'autres hébergements ou... parce que Portage est tellement proche et il y a des terrains disponibles et le reste, évidemment, il faudra mettre, faire une mise à jour du système de filtration, d'une manière ou de l'autre, là, que ça arrive ou que ça n'arrive pas.

890 Nous, on est liés dans le sens où, du point de vue financier, on est incapables de le faire. On est dans cette situation-là, il faut le dire, parce que c'est le gouvernement qui a imposé, après un incident, où... en fait, les systèmes d'eau à la hauteur du Québec, tout le monde a été imposé de mettre à jour les systèmes de filtration et, de là, vient notre dette et le reste. Avec une très petite base de taxes municipales, on est encore à payer un système qui ne répond déjà pas à nos besoins.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

895 Est-ce que c'était un système privé avant, qui a été municipalisé ou...

NICOLE THOMPSON:

900 Non.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Non?

905 **NICOLE THOMPSON:**

Ils ont fait venir des compagnies... comment je dirais ça? Bien, oui, c'était... avant, c'était un système, mais ils ont complètement... la fine pointe. Ils ont mis un système de fine pointe chez nous dans un tout petit village, puis je pense que la gestion n'était pas bien faite parce qu'apparemment, on nous a dit, c'est un très bon système, ça devrait bien fonctionner, alors c'est ou bien la gestion qui a mal été faite ou bien ça a mal été calculé pour ce qu'on avait besoin. Quoiqu'il en soit, on écope encore.

915 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

O.K. Dans le fond, c'est ça, il y aurait des travaux de mise à niveau, dans le fond, à faire?

NICOLE THOMPSON:

920 Ah, tout à fait. Tout à fait.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

925 Puis là, bien, évidemment, il y a un coût. Je comprends qu'il y a un coût quand même important, là, qui est...

NICOLE THOMPSON:

930 Oui. Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

... qui est associé à ça, là. O.K.

935 **NICOLE THOMPSON:**

Ça, c'est en plus du prix, du coût qu'il y a encore là à payer, là. On a encore la facture de cette mise à jour là pour un autre cinq ans à peu près, selon nos prévisions.

940 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Il vous reste à peu près cinq ans, c'est ça que vous dites, en termes...

945 **NICOLE THOMPSON:**

À payer, à finir de payer.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

950 C'est un emprunt, dans le fond.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

Oui, exactement.

955 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Vous avez dû faire un règlement d'emprunt dans le fond pour financer l'entretien...

960 **NICOLE THOMPSON:**

Pour financer, oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

965 Puis là, il vous reste encore...

NICOLE THOMPSON:

970 Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

975 Puis là, ensuite, il y aurait encore des travaux à faire.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

Exactement.

980 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

C'est ça que je comprends?

NICOLE THOMPSON:

985 Exactement.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

990 C'est bon. C'est plus clair.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

995 Vous mentionnez aussi, dans votre mémoire, une attente que l'entreprise partage son expertise...

NICOLE THOMPSON:

1000 Dans le sens où...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1005 Oui, j'aimerais que vous élaboriez là-dessus, qu'est-ce que vous entendez par là, concrètement?

NICOLE THOMPSON:

1010 Bien, concrètement, on se dit, O.K., il y a Samonix qui veut mettre ce projet en place, et ils ont tous ces experts-là qui vont avoir des systèmes de filtration de haute pointe et tout le reste. On est assis là, à côté, on se débat à essayer de trouver comment gérer notre système, on se dit, bien, peut-être que s'ils ont tellement d'experts puis qui sont tellement bons à régler, nous, la même rivière des Outaouais passe chez nous, peut-être qu'ils pourraient partager leur expertise pour nous aider à s'en sortir, finalement, au moins de ce côté-là, puis que la municipalité puisse se concentrer sur d'autres choses que son système de filtration d'eau puis aller de l'avant un peu, là, sortir un peu du...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1020 D'accord.

NICOLE THOMPSON :

1025 Mais dans ce sens-là où on, tu sais, on est assis, là, comme... bon, vous êtes très bons là-dedans, peut-être que vous pouvez partager ou nous aider à ce niveau-là. C'est peut-être quelque chose que nous, on pourrait aller chercher qui vaudrait la peine ou qui nous donnerait une raison d'être réjouis du projet.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1030 Très bien.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

1035 J'aurais peut-être une dernière question, je voulais juste être sûr de bien comprendre. Vous avez parlé, là, de... juste pour les sols contaminés.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

1040 Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

1045 Vous avez mentionné, je comprenais que – corrigez-moi, mais sur les terrains connexes, dans le fond, contigus, donc où aurait lieu le projet, qu'il y aurait eu de l'enfouissement de sols contaminés. C'est bien ça que vous avez...

NICOLE THOMPSON:

1050 Bien, dans le fond, Traces Québec, c'est la compagnie qui dirige un peu, alors pour les sols contaminés, là, vous l'avez sur le projet, il y a de l'enfouissement, il y a aussi – est-ce que je l'ai devant moi? Oui, bien, il y en a un que c'est un bioparc, il y en a que c'est... dans le fond, ils appellent ça le traitement des sols contaminés.

1055 Alors, selon le degré, j'imagine, de contamination...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

1060 De concentration, oui, oui.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

1065 Oui, c'est ça, de contamination, il y en a qu'ils vont enfouir, il y en a qu'ils vont nettoyer, il y en a qu'ils vont... alors, ils ont différentes façons de les gérer, mais que ce soit pour les traiter, les enfouir ou le reste, puis c'est pour ça qu'il y a différentes adresses. Un, c'est Uto, un c'est le bioparc, mais ce qui est important de savoir, c'est que Traces Québec nomme sur son site les différents

endroits où tous les constructeurs, dans le fond, de l'Outaouais doivent aller mener leurs sols contaminés. Et, pour l'Outaouais, tout l'Outaouais, tous les projets de construction qui ont des sols contaminés à gérer, c'est à Portage-du-Fort, c'est à Litchfield, à ces trois ou quatre...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Dans le parc industriel, là, dans le fond.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

Oui. Bien, dans le fond, il y a trois, quatre adresses, puis c'est ça. Il y a le 99, chemin Industriel, le 211, Route 301, le 152, chemin Industriel – vous l'avez là – puis ça dit, à côté aussi, là, qu'est-ce qu'ils font exactement avec les sols.

Mais pour toute la région de l'Outaouais, que vous veniez de Thurso ou de wherever, c'est là que ça... ça finit là. Ça fait que c'est encore un endroit où ce n'est pas ce qu'il y a de plus plaisant à recevoir, mais il y a encore, c'est encore, ça s'appelle « contaminé ».

LE COMMISSAIRE :

C'est bon, merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Merci, Madame Thompson.

NICOLE THOMPSON:

Merci.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Merci.

AMY TAYLOR (DM13)

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1105 La prochaine personne, next person is Amy Taylor. Bonsoir. Good evening.

AMY TAYLOR:

1110 Good evening, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you again.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1115 Can you get a little bit closer to the microphone, please, or bring the microphone towards you? Thank you.

AMY TAYLOR:

1120 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you again, for your time and your expertise and to let us comment this assessment.

1125 My written submission contains the information and evidence that prompted me to my position. I will not repeat all of that; instead, I want to take a step back and speak about my submission within the broader significance of the river.

1125 Before considering what this project would add to the river, I believe we need to consider what the river already is. Not simply a line on a map or a receiving body in a modelling exercise, but the actual river.

1130 La Rivière des Outaouais, the Ottawa River, Kichi Zibi. This is a living river and an interconnected freshwater ecosystem, and its waters connect tributaries, wetlands, lakes, flood plain habitats. It provides habitats for fish, freshwater mussels, turtles, amphibians, aquatic plants, birds and countless other organisms.

1135 Freshwater systems support food webs, cycle nutrients, transport water and sediments,
provide spawning and nursery areas, connect species to the places they need to survive and
reproduce. Ultimately, they provide the conditions that make aquatic life possible.

1140 And the river sustains more than wildlife. People have depended on it for thousands of years,
for drinking water...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Ms. Taylor, can I ask you just to slow down. I'm receiving messages from the translators that...

1145 **AMY TAYLOR:**

My apologies.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1150 You have very interesting things to say, and we have a lot of time. So, take your time, and
let's make sure we all understand what you're saying to us. Thank you.

AMY TAYLOR:

1155 People have depended on the river for thousands of years for drinking water and food,
transportation, recreation, cultural practices and economic activity.

1160 Its ecological importance and its importance to people are therefore not only interconnected
but they are inseparable.

1165 Despite this complex relationship, human activities can have a significant impact. The river
has already been subject to substantial modifications; its flows and water levels have been altered
by dams and hydroelectric development.

It receives municipal and industrial wastewater, as well as sewers, agricultural and road runoffs. It is also affected by the shoreline and habitat alteration, invasive species and other pressures.

1170 But modify does not mean expandable. The river is not an empty basin; it remains a functioning biological system, and that system depends on the environmental conditions that allow important relationship between species to persist.

1175 The project's own aquatic characterization identified 11 aquatic species with conservation status in the project area. Among them are the Hickorynut, designated threatened in Québec since 2023. The river redhorse designated vulnerable since 2009, and the lake sturgeon, which Québec identifies as susceptible to being designated threatened or vulnerable since 1993.

1180 The lake sturgeons are one of the main hosts for Hickorynut mussel larvae. The mussels release their larvae into the water, which then attach to the sturgeon's gills, but they develop into juveniles on the sturgeon before dropping off and settling into the sediment.

This relationship is crucial for the mussel's life cycle and key to its survival, as the sturgeon provides a safe place for the larvae to develop.

1185 The river redhorse, on the other hand, feed on mussels and other aquatic invertebrates. As benthic feeders, they are part of the river's food web and are themselves an important food source for birds, outers, and larger fish.

1190 These species illustrate both the interconnected relationships within the watershed and ecological functions those relationships support.

1195 The long-standing conservation status of these species highlights the river's persistent ecological challenges and the importance of proactive conservation and responsible decision-making.

That is the perspective I want to bring to this assessment because a river does not stop at the boundaries of a project site. What enters it does not exist in isolation; it becomes part of the conditions experienced by the living system.

1200 I did not approach this process opposed to aquaculture. I understand that land-base
recirculating aquaculture systems can offer important advantages compared with conventional
open-net fish farming. But we are not talking about an open-net fish farm, nor as the proposed
project a small aquaculture operation.

1205 At this proposed scale, it would be a very large facility. For an extended period, it will
continuously discharge treated effluent into the Rivière des Outaouais. This raises concerns about
the cumulative impact on the river's already vulnerable ecosystems, and whether introducing
another persistent human pressure into our river that has already been substantially modified is
justified.

1210 The project documents identify phosphorus, suspended solids, ammoniacal nitrogen, nitrates
and chloride among the principal constituents of the daily discharge. At the proposed average
discharge of approximately 2,300 cubic metres per day, the estimated daily load includes
2 kilograms of total phosphorus, 37 kilograms of suspended solids, 8 kilograms of ammoniacal
1215 nitrogen, 23 kilograms of nitrates and 1,264 kilograms of chloride.

These substances do not simply disappear when they enter the river. Nutrients can influence
biological productivity and oxygen dynamics. Suspended solids can affect water clarity, plant growth
and benthic habitats.

1220 Ammoniacal nitrogen can harm aquatic organisms. An elevated chloride can affect freshwater
organisms, including fish eggs, larvae and sensitive aquatic invertebrates.

1225 Because those invertebrates are an important part of the food web, changes in their populations
can extend beyond the organism himself, and unlike many contaminants, chloride cannot be
removed through ordinary biological treatment. It remains part of the river's load.

1230 These effects illustrate how changes in water chemistry can extend beyond the water itself,
affecting sediment conditions, habitat, and the biological relationships that sustain the river
ecosystem.

This is particularly relevant to freshwater mussels. Mussels continuously filter water and
contribute to nutrient cycling and aquatic food webs. Being closely connected to the sediment and

1235 substrate in which they live, they are vulnerable to conditions in both the water column and the surrounding habitat.

Because mussels can live for decades, impacts on their population can persist for generations.

1240 Given these ecological connections, a directly comparable operating example becomes particularly important. However, in reviewing available literature, I have not found a directly comparable operating example of a facility of this scale and design producing Atlantic salmon using a saline or brackish-water component and continuously discharging treated effluent into a large freshwater river.

1245 The literature does contain relevant examples of in-land brackish-water aquaculture affecting chloride concentrations in freshwater streams, but those operations are not directly comparable to the Samonix project and to its proposed scale.

1250 This lack of a directly comparable operating precedent is important when considering how much reliance should be placed on modelling to predict the long-term consequences of this particular discharge.

1255 The modelling may provide useful information about how the proposed effluent is expected to disperse and mix under the conditions examined but predicting that physical behaviour is different from knowing how a living river will respond over the facilities' operating life, particularly as the river itself and the pressures on it change over time.

1260 Monitoring is essential but it too has its limits. It can only identify impacts after they occur. They cannot prevent or reverse them. That is why the limits of what we can predict today matter when considering a decision that could affect the river for decades.

1265 The proposed effluent would contain chloride at concentrations far above those naturally present in the Ottawa River at the project site. Treatment may reduce many contaminants, and dilution may lower the concentration measure downstream, but neither removes the chloride itself. It remains a continuous addition to a freshwater ecosystem.

Chloride is monitored in the river, but it is not one of the six parameters used to calculate Québec's IQBP6 water quality index. Québec also recognizes that the IQBP6 has limitations and does not assess toxic substances for habitat degradation. Therefore, a good classification does not tell us whether chloride concentrations are changing or what ecological effects are occurring.

That brings me to the central issue. This is not simply a question of whether the discharge can be modelled, treated and monitored; it is whether the additional burden this project could place on the river is justified, given its existing pressures, ecological importance, and what reminds uncertain about its future.

When I prepared my written submission, I understood that the degree of water recirculation was an engineering choice, and I had identified a more closed-loop system as potential ways to reduce the project's environmental burden.

I still believe that reducing the water use, wastewater volumes and contaminant loading at the source is preferable to relying on a river's ability to assimilate those contaminants. However, as I continue to examine the issue, I realize that while a more closed-loop system could reduce the overall water burden, it would not eliminate the chloride that ultimately has to be discharged into the river. Therefore, it does not itself resolve the chloride issue.

That matters, because the river is a complex living system. Modelling an individual contaminant at a particular location cannot by itself provides certainty as to how new continuous pressure may interact with the conditions and ecological processes already present now and in the future.

The project may operate for decades, while river conditions, ecological pressures and scientific understanding continue to change. Some impacts may persist beyond the life of the operation.

That is why my concern is not simply compliant with today's regulations, but whether the consequences extend beyond what those regulations can anticipate.

1300 I understand this region needs industry, jobs, and opportunities for our communities that
you've already heard, but economic development can take different forms. Projects can be
redesigned, technologies changed and investments redirected.

1305 The Rivière des Outaouais cannot simply be replaced or recreated; when development
involves a resource this important, we have a responsibility to weight the economic benefits against
long-term environmental burden.

The people who depend on this river 50 years or 100 years from now will not have had a
voice in this decision; they will simply inherit its consequences.

1310 Some effects may only become apparent after years or even decades of continuous
discharge. By then, the opportunity to prevent them may have passed – may not be able to return
the river to the conditions that existed before the discharge began.

1315 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

May I invite you to conclude? Because we read your brief and we just want to make sure that
we have time to ask you a few questions.

1320 **AMY TAYLOR:**

Yes. I respectfully ask the Commission in preparing its report and the ministers who will
ultimately decide the faith of this project to remember what is ultimately at stake; not simply the
future of a project, and maybe some jobs who may or may not come to the local residents, but the
1325 future of the river it would affect. Because the standards that matter is not simply whether this river
meets the requirements of our time; it is whether we leave behind a river that remains healthy,
resilient and capable of sustaining life for the generation that follows us.

1330 Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Thank you very much. You have provided us with a substantive brief, and we had the time to look at it, but it will take more time for us to begin, but to help us with this task, at the end of your brief, you provide about like roughly 70 references, and that you used to prepare your document. Could you identify some that are really key for us to take a look at? Like, what are the main sources or references that you feel, out of the broad list that you provided, if there's like three or four that you think, these are really significant for our analysis...

AMY TAYLOR:

I did not memorize sources.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Well, I don't want to put you on the spot but, I mean, that's really something that we thought, well...

AMY TAYLOR:

There was...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Is there, like, authors, or sources that are more important than others? I can't guarantee you that we will read every single source, so that's why if you have some that you say, well, you have to look, you have to read that, we'll certainly – we'll certainly be grateful.

If you want – there is a great suggestion from my colleague here. If you want to give it to us after the pause, if you need a bit of time, you could provide it to our analysts here and say, well, these are the three or four that are really more important.

AMY TAYLOR:

1365 Yes, that would be...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1370 Would you appreciate that?

AMY TAYLOR:

Yes, that would be easier.

1375 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Because we have other questions.

AMY TAYLOR:

1380 I'm not taken anyone else's time, that would be great.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1385 Very good. So, I think it is on page 69 of your brief, and I'm talking about the French version, you state that the river assimilation or assimilative capacity should not be considered as a permanent solution for treating an effluent whose chemical composition differs from the river. And it seems to be the general message that you're – or one of the messages that you're saying to us here.

1390 And you also propose a closed-loop system, my understanding or...

AMY TAYLOR:

1395 I was initially thinking that a closed-loop system would prevent maybe much of the contaminants from the project facilities going into the river.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1400 So, I just want to finish my question to make sure that I don't forget it, but according to the proponent, the system's recirculation rate is or should be 99%. So, I mean, that should be close to a closed-loop system.

AMY TAYLOR:

1405 Yes.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1410 So, in the course of your research, which you seem to have done quite a lot, were you able to identify another solution than that, you know, considering that the recirculation is about 99%, which is the vast majority of the water, is there another solution you have that you read or that you're suggesting?

AMY TAYLOR:

1415 The name of it is escaping me right now, there was a process to which the chloride is completely removed from the discharge and I'm not thinking of the name right now...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1420 So, the solution for you is to remove, would be to remove the...

AMY TAYLOR:

1425 My biggest issue is the contaminants that are going, the remaining contaminants that will be in the river. How will they react with future conditions that are not modelled? You know, we haven't done those models, the river changes, the river is dammed, so water can – it is a reservoir, right, so water can pool, and perhaps the chemical released into the effluent will settle into some of the sediment. So how will that react over years and years of operation?

1430

LE PRÉSIDENT :

I get your point. So, we're going to take a break; if during the break you can find out the type of technology that you have in mind as an alternative solution to a closed-loop system, I think you can follow up with my colleague Karim, also with the key...

AMY TAYLOR:

With the list, yes.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

... the key studies that you think should be critical for our analysis.

AMY TAYLOR:

Okay.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Thank you very much.

AMY TAYLOR:

Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

On va prendre une courte pause d'une quinzaine de minutes, 15 minutes de pause.

We're going to take a 15-minute break, and we'll come back with the others who have registered to present a brief. Thank you.

1465

SUSPENSION DE QUELQUES MINUTES

1470

REPRISE DE LA SÉANCE
PRÉSENTATION DES MÉMOIRES
LEE BOURDON
(Présentation verbale)

1475

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Merci beaucoup. Donc, notre prochain participant est monsieur Lee Bourdon.

Our next participant is Mr. Lee Bourdon. Bonsoir, bienvenue.

1480

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Bonsoir.

1485

LEE BOURDON:

I didn't submit a written...

1490

LE PRÉSIDENT :

It's perfect. Just go ahead.

LEE BOURDON:

1495

I just wanted to come here today to express my opinion on this project. As an investor in the Pontiac and a businessperson who's been involved in organic and natural food distribution for 30 years, I feel like I have some opinions on the project.

1500 I've been working with Farm Piscicole des Bobines, as a marketing person for them in the Ottawa-Gatineau area for 20 years, selling land-based RAS trout into customers' stores and other wholesalers, including Lufa Farms in Montreal, and we've been noticing, well I notice and – so, Farm Piscicole des Bobines is a freshwater trout farm in East Hereford, Québec, and they produce 12,000... 1,200 tons per year... 10,000 tons per years – I'm not sure. It's a big operation.

1505 They were forced by the Ministry of the Environment to filter their water at municipal scale, and I feel like any project of this scale would require that type of water treatment.

1510 So, I have faith in the government processes surrounding effluent management. Amy's points make perfect sense. I'm a fisherman, I enjoy the Ottawa River here in Campbell's Bay. I've been living here summers for 15 years, and I'm very aware of the environment of the river. I'm sensitive to concerns. However, I feel like if the private investor is willing to invest in the region a substantial amount of money to start a production, I feel like the market demands it, and I feel it can work.

1515 I feel positive about a project of this scale. It really does require this type of scale to attack a market and be recognized in the market as a supplier.

There are other smaller scale trout farms in the region who can't supply the market on a regular basis, and it usually ends up in failure. Those are more like pond-based trout farms, and they come under attack quite a bit for their phosphorus and nitrogen loading into the environment.

1520 I feel the river here in this area is very fast flowing. We're all very aware of how the flooding is in the spring. I also feel that the city management of roads dumps tons and tons of chloride into the river on a daily or a weekly basis all through the winter. Those concerns are seemed to be put aside when it comes to talking about chlorides. We don't often talk about how many tons of salt we dump into the river directly on our roads.

1525 So, I feel that the amount of effluent coming off this project is somewhat important but overall, I feel like perhaps there could be more in the phosphorus nitrogen loading than the chloride impact on the environment, considering how we manage our roads, and I just wanted to come in and say that I appreciate their effort to stimulate the economy, create jobs, create stable employment and stimulate local municipalities to think positively going forward.

1530

I think the Pontiac needs some kind of rejuvenation and I think everyone is aware of that, and I'm hoping that the project can move forward.

1535 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Thank you, Mr. Bourdon. I'm interested in your experience in other fish farms, and you seem to say that scale is important as a factor of economic viability. Could you elaborate a little bit more on that? Obviously, this one is a larger scale than maybe the one that you're talking about in the – I can't remember where it was...

1540

LEE BOURDON:

Eastern Township.

1545

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Eastern Township, thank you. Could you elaborate a little bit on how, you know, size is important for...

1550

LEE BOURDON:

Sure. When any producer goes to approach a wholesaler or a retail giant such as Metro or Sobey's, unless they are able to prove that they can supply the market on a regular basis, those large buyers are not even going to look at them.

1555

It takes years and years of expansion, normally, to attain those markets. This project seems to be going forward in the right way which is, they need a certain scale, they have overhead, they have even just original construction cost to make sense of financially.

1560

So, developing relationships with large buyers whether it's Costco or Sobey's, you know, require a certain amount of volume and when it comes to shipping product out into the market, it's all an economy of scale. If you can ship a truck full of fish, if you have, say, a distributor coming to make a delivery into Shawville from Montreal or Gatineau, and he's leaving this region with his truck

1565 empty going back to Montreal, there's definitely somewhere, you know, in there to fill those trucks going back.

So, it takes a certain scale to really make sense of it in many aspects.

1570 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Another question, you mentioned that – a couple of things. You mentioned about the importance of the salt used on roads. Do you have any information on the importance of that in the region?

1575 **LEE BOURDON:**

Well, I know the Pontiac tends to use more sand than salt. However, the MTQ still does use a lot of sand – of salt, sand/salt mix on major highways. If you look up the river, you have major cities, including Pembroke, Petawawa, and if you go up the river from that, there's Temiskaming, Val-d'Or.

1580 You know, anybody can do research on Chat GPT regarding how much exact tonnage we're using, but as far as I am aware, it's in the hundreds of thousands of tons. We see huge salt domes where the MTQ fills their trucks, and we really just have to look at how it's managed as far as that goes, and we don't tend to look at that as a society.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1590 And so, you're pointing us also on the phosphorus components of the effluent. How is that a specific concern? You seem to be more concerned about that than salt, can you elaborate on that?

LEE BOURDON:

1595 Well, anytime you inject nutrients into a system, you're going to have growth as a result. Just take sunlight and heat mixed with water, and next thing you know you have an alga blue. You can have blue, blue-green algae, you also have explosion of vegetation in areas where it's not necessarily appreciated.

1600 I grew up in Aylmer, we had, back then, we had direct effluent, city effluent being dumped into
the river and we had a weed problem, meaning weeds would grow in the bays and choke out fish.
So, it suffocates the oxygen in the system, and it hurts, harms the fish. The river has been dealing
with all kinds of, as Amy mentioned, the river has been dealing with all kinds of inputs over the years,
whether it'd be breaking down logs from when the log drive was happening, which is still going on,
we still have all kinds of flooding logs on the river.

1605 There is other vegetation that decomposes and creates nutrients and it's just a natural system.

1610 So, I feel that, you know, yes, there will be some effluents from this production, but it's to
balance it out in a sense of how much benefit it can bring and, you know, perhaps there should be
some offsets, some other methodologies that the government could impose whether it's – you know,
how they have carbon offsets now and stuff, maybe there could be something where the company
is forced to undergo some – like forced to have a program where they're studying the ecosystem of
the river, something like that, and developing solutions with their technology to perhaps help the
river in other aspects.

1615 As the councillor for Portage mentioned, it could be a good way to proceed as far as having
some corporate responsibility towards the river. I think the river is an amazing – we have an amazing
natural resource, by no means do I say we should be damaging it, but I still feel positive to this
project.

1620 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Thank you.

1625 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Thank you very much. No, it's okay for me, thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1630 Thank you very much.

LEE BOURDON:

1635 Thank you.

WINSTON SUNSTRUM (DM12)

1640 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

So, the next person is Mr. Winston Sunstrum.

1645 **WINSTON SUNSTRUM:**

Bonsoir.

1650 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Bonsoir. Good evening.

WINSTON SUNSTRUM:

1655 Thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation. En anglais, s'il vous plait.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

No problem.

1660 **WINSTON SUNSTRUM:**

So, my name is Winston Sunstrum. I am a Québec resident, I live at 676 Chemin River in the municipality of l'Isle-aux-Allumettes on a waterfront property that my wife and I bought in 1979. Actually, I bought the property and my wife found out later...

1665

LE PRÉSIDENT :

You don't necessarily have to go through all these details.

WINSTON SUNSTRUM:

... but it has worked out. It has worked out. We retired to the property in 2001 and again became Québec residents. I'd like to make a few points to highlight the situation.

First, I want to establish my connection and experience with the Ottawa River and the Pontiac. I first became a Québec resident in 1952 when my parents moved their family back to St. Joseph on l'Isle-aux-Allumettes. During that time, fishing in the Ottawa River became my big interest in the 1950s and '60s.

Sand beaches and swimming have been a highlight ever since then. Swimming has been a means of recreation, relaxation and destressing, and my most recent swim was three weeks ago when my grandson and I took the dock out of the Ottawa River.

Since 2001, our retirement year, we have enjoyed boating from Rapides-des-Joachim to Bryson.

Second point I'd like to make is about my departure from the Pontiac in the 1950s and '60s. There were few opportunities for work while growing up there. I left the Pontiac in 1964 to find work in Sudbury and then, further north, and over several locations in Ontario, before retiring back to l'Isle-aux-Allumettes in 2001. In all those years, I always returned to the Pontiac for visits and vacations.

The third point I'd like to make is about the BAPE hearings. I attended both previous hearings in Campbell's Bay out of interest and out of interest in the process and out of interest in economic development.

The Pontiac should be proud of how the process unfolded here. I was very impressed by the respectful questions and the respectful answers. This respectful process was enhanced by the scale of the moderators who allowed the participants opportunities to elaborate.

The next point has to do with the Ottawa River and the environment. We all have an impact on the environment and most of us in the Pontiac have had an impact on the Ottawa River. This includes individuals, residents, cottagers, farmers, business owners, municipalities and even provincial and federal operations.

1705

Road salt, septic tanks, municipal waste treatment facilities, those are all needed as we live our lives. Having these needs while ensuring the health of the Ottawa River is our shared responsibility.

1710

Next point, the Ottawa River as a generator of economic development. From the fur trade and logging operations to the present-day cottage industry and electricity generation, the Ottawa River has played a key role in the economic development of the Pontiac. This can continue with the approval of the Samonix project. I feel confident that, with today's technologies, the Ottawa River will remain healthy.

1715

Next point, the Samonix project. One of the biggest needs in the Pontiac is economic development. Samonix is one project that can help with this. We need more jobs for our young people. Keeping more people employed here will provide more customers for the businesses that are here now. A project the size of this size will attract more spin off businesses.

1720

The next point: "A project anywhere in the Pontiac is good for the whole Pontiac." That's not my quote; that's been said a few times by other people. Every municipality in the MRC of Pontiac pays for the operations of the MRC and policing. These are called the municipal shares.

1725

For two years in a row, when I was a municipal councillor in L'Isle-aux-Allumettes, our shares went up 25% in one year, followed by another 25% increase in the second year. This was a huge increase that I certainly wondered about.

1730

When I inquired about this, I found out that the Smurfit Stone mill in Litchfield closed and stopped paying municipal taxes. This affected all other municipalities in the Pontiac that had to increase their shares to make up the loss. That's the reason for the 25% increase year after year.

A new project such as Samonix would increase the tax base and that would financially benefit all municipalities.

1735 Next point, let's move this project forward. The Samonix team, the Ministère du
Développement durable de l'Environnement et des Parcs, the Ministère, the Samonix team, the
MRC Pontiac and the Municipality of Litchfield are all capable of working collaboratively to ensure
the successful implementation of this project, while also ensuring the health of the Ottawa River.

1740 This project fits with Québec's policy of being self-sufficient in food production. The Samonix
project will contribute to the self-sufficiency by producing healthy, nutritious food. I can see – I can
foresee local restaurants adding specialty salmon fishes to their menu.

1745 To the Samonix team, I say, and many other people in the Pontiac say: Welcome to the
Pontiac. I look forward to the first public open house of the facility and a tour of that facility as well.

Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1750 Thank you, Mr. Sunstrum, thank you for your very clear presentation.

1755 So, you said that we have all in impact or had an impact on the river – the residents, industries
and all that –, and you also mentioned that you've been a user of the Ottawa River since 1952. So,
we're interested in drawing on your long experience of the river, and the Pontiac region to hear your
perspective on a few points.

1760 The first is regarding the Ottawa River, since you've enjoyed it over many decades, how have
you seen it changed? Have you seen modifications, changes to the Ottawa River over these last
decades?

WINSTON SUNSTRUM:

1765 I haven't seen a great deal of changes, and I wasn't alive back a certain amount of time, but
my mother did mention walking from Allumettes Island across the river to Morrison Island for picnics.
And so, I'm thinking that during her time, that the river became quite low in the summer. But from
my time, I remember the Ottawa River flooding every year because it would come up right on the
middle of my mother's homestead.

1770 And being around the river for so many years, I had that knowledge. When I built my house,
I made sure it was high enough so that it did not get flooded in 2019.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1775 In terms of the quality of the water for different uses, have you seen any changes over time
that are, you know, to be noticed?

WINSTON SUNSTRUM:

1780 No. I remember swimming in a creek that was – that had probably cow effluent in. It didn't –
and then I swim now, and I don't see that kind of thing. The Ministry has put in some regulations to
prevent that, so...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1785 Thank you. Are you looking ahead that you see any changes, do you expect to see any
changes if the Samonix project is – on the river, if the project is authorized and built? Do you see
any effects specifically on the river from what you know from the project?

WINSTON SUNSTRUM:

1790 Well, from what I – I'm not a scientist and I don't pretend to be, but from what I heard in the
presentations, there is going to be some discharge and from what I also heard was that would be
dissipated pretty widely and in a short period of time. But I am looking forward to a few more years
of enjoying the river, I hope that happens.

1795 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Thank you very much.

1800 **WINSTON SUNSTRUM:**

Thank you.

SYLVIA POETSCHKE (DM7)

1805 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Is Mr. Hodgins here? No? So, we're going to go to the next – the next person is Sylvia Poetschke. So, we are now entering into the next stage of the evening which we – that is different from the presentation of briefs. They are shorter ones, about five minutes, but as we do have a little bit of time, we will extend this time for the next people who are intervening in this matter.

Good evening.

1815 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

Good evening. Je suis désolée, je ne parle pas encore assez bien français pour ce soir. Alors, en anglais.

1820 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Could you lower a little bit your microphone so we – or bring it closer to you? So, absolutely no problem, we have translation, so go ahead.

1825 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

I came into this process with a personal commitment to keep an open mind and to learn more about the project.

1830 At the first meeting, I asked if there was a plan to sell the fish locally, and at that time, we were told it was for the US and overseas markets because it was a premium product that would be unaffordable for most people in the Pontiac or in Québec.

1835 The company did offer to consider selling locally. This means that the price point for the fish will not contribute to affordable animal protein sources as part of Canada's Food Security Plan.

As we already heard, there will be some construction jobs, but most would likely need to come outside of the area as we do not have enough licensed trade's people. It's obvious and we recognize that there are not enough local resources to offer hospitality, and workers would be expected to stay or spend time and money across the river in Ontario.

1840

Once constructed, there were long-term jobs expected, but many will require specialized skills, so local people without that expertise would not be considered.

1845

It was also noted earlier this evening that people moving here would experience a quality of life, that is a barrier. There's an expectation of local healthcare, including obstetrics, schools that meet expectations, libraries in each community, recreational centres, groups, organizations, public transport, all of those things contribute to quality of life and some of it is available here, but not much.

1850

Cellphone reception is spotty; it's scheduled to improve. Fire response times are uncertain, and I learned from a provincial candidate last week that the Pontiac has four times the power outages of any area in Québec. Four times. Samonix would be a major consumer of power, and I might be sceptical but I'm not confident that reviving Hydro lines that have been dormant for a decade or more is going to be immediately reliable.

1855

The cost of generators will push the cost of production higher. Scarce Hydro-Québec resources may have been deployed to ensure – that may have been deployed to ensure existing residents have Hydro, maybe prior or ties to Samonix. We don't know.

1860

I've been unable to determine of Samonix plans to meet the 2018 Code of Practice for the care and handling of farm salmonids. There's standards. There's Canadian standards with respect to how the fishes are treated. The Code of Practice was not mentioned when I inquired about the living conditions of the fish.

1865

But in trying to keep an open mind, I will accept the project can't be built and powered and staffed knowing that the on-the-ground experience is in Norway and overseas. We are relying on an untested theory data and people who are not local.

This is where the project gets even more problematic because we've heard Pontiac has a history of failed expensive projects that offer a lot, but the doors remain closed. These challenges

1870 are the responsibility of all of us, and that I think is why you're experiencing a heightened level of scrutiny for this proposal.

1875 We heard tonight from Nicole how the project is situated near contaminated land. Part of it is the result of previous industry. I wasn't able to find any plan to ensure the health and safety of the construction crews who will be disrupting the soils, future employees working 8 to 12 hours on site, the risk of leaching into the fish pens.

1880 We've all heard about mercury in tuna and led in our trout populations. I wonder where the wisdom is in food production and toxic environments.

And probably the most concerning thing to me is the number of operations that are insolvent or abandoned and I found a list, a quick list in the SeaWest News, written by Fabian Dawson on September 21st, 2026. So, timely. It says:

1885 "It is easy to argue that billions of dollars should flow into land-based salmon farms. It is much harder to build one, keep the fish alive, produce consistently, control costs and make money. The growing trail of bankruptcies, abandoned projects, investor losses, missed production targets shows the difference between advocating for land-based salmon and actually making it work."

1890 Here are some that are listed:

"Nordic Aquafarm abandoned its California project after seven years and had previously walked away from a proposed salmon farm in Maine. Its investors suffered major right downs."

1895 "Sustainable Blue in Nova Scotia entered receivership after a filtration failure killed 96,000 market-ready salmons worth about \$5 million in 12 hours."

"AquaBounty Technologies ceased fish farming operations in 2024 after being unable to raise enough capital to continue."

1900 "LocalCoho in New York closed in 2025 after almost six years amid high operating costs and market pressures."

1905 “Salmo Terra in Norway went bankrupt before its planned 8,000-ton salmon farm was built, while Gaia Salmon filed for bankruptcy in 2025 after production and financing problems.”

1910 “Atlantic Sapphire, long promoted as the flagship of large-scale land-based salmon farming, has endured repeated biological problems, production shortfalls and financial rescues. It has burned through hundreds of millions of dollars and been forced into a creditor-led restructuring to simply survive.”

1915 Closer to home, Kuterra, in B.C., launched with \$6 million in federal funding missed its production targets, failed to attract the capital needed to grow and ultimately abandoned Atlantic salmon. It is now a small steelhead operation, with a capacity of 300 tons for the local market.

The Georgian Bay Salmon Project environmental impact study done by the University of Guelph in 2022 has brought the project to a halt.

1920 Finally, the Nova Scotia government commissioned a viability study in May 2014 – it’s called feasibility of land-based closed containment Atlantic Salmon Operations in Nova Scotia, submitted to the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. It was written by Gardner Pinfold and says:

1925 “The main findings of land-based salmon farming is a well-established technology. There are some aspects that spoke favourably about the possibility of a viable operation if it is large enough and has the appropriate expertise and management to operate it. But – and I’ve condensed things for time – the salmon may attract a premium price, but sustainability is mainly about market access. Empirical analysis of the impact of eco-certification of seafood products indicates that it facilitates market access but does not necessarily provide a basis for price premium.”

1930 It further says that:

1935 “Operators may be able to carve out a niche market for Atlantic salmon as operators have done with other species, but competitors can enter the market with the same product or close substitutes, thereby eroding the price premium. On the demand side, tastes and preferences may change.”

1940 "Government support – The Government of Nova Scotia has provided financial support to aquaculture projects in the past, including ones involving land-based technology. Some of these projects would have been characterized as developmental or even experimental at the time, where both technical and financial feasibility were uncertain.

1945 "The risk for government in providing finance support at the developmental stage is that there is little to ground the technology and its eventual commercial expansion in Nova Scotia. The province could be investing in local technology development but seemed rewards in terms of economic impact reaped elsewhere."

1950 That's from Nova Scotia where their economy and workforce is built on the seafood industry, but the viability study indicates that the project is questionable, even with that expertise in history.

I am at a place where I'm realizing that Pontiac cannot afford another failed project where the costs and the risks are too high. I have not seen the local benefits being demonstrated with – well, tonight, we've heard a little bit of money that might come in.

1955 Even the promised job opportunities are not guaranteed for local people. We don't know if they're going to be paying market value wages, construction spending may be across the river during the time of the built, and the environmental risks have not been tested on the ground for this side of the operation, and the baseline data has not been measured throughout the impacted area. Speaking as a resident of Portage-du-Fort, checking a couple little corners doesn't work for the way the bay turns.

1960 So, therefore, as a resident and as a taxpayer, I could not find a good reason to support this project, but I do await the BAPE report with a lot of curiosity and hoping to get a better picture, and I thank you for the opportunity and for your commitment to this process.

1965 Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

1970 Thank you very much, Ms. Poetschke. There is a lot in your presentation, so I will have a few questions and maybe my colleague also.

From my understanding of what you're saying to us is that you doubt that this project will actually bring the economic benefits to the region that it pretends, am I right in...

1975 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

That is correct.

1980 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Okay. So, and we heard earlier that, you know, there are not too many projects that have been, you know, of that scale, that have been proposed for the region. And so, I'm just wondering what other alternatives do you see for the economic development of the region which I understand everybody sees as a need?

1985 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

1990 My vision of what Pontiac could be, would be to recognize who we are. We are agricultural, so we have the farming to better support our existing farms and to continue to develop the existing farms, but additionally, we are a community that has many seniors, and we talk a lot about the importance of attracting youths because somehow, youths are a magic button.

1995 My vision, my look would be, how can we attract seniors and better care for seniors and become a Québec destination point for seniors, because that is who we are. Rather than trying to create something based on a model in the 1960s, '70s where it's all about business and young people and working, but to recognize that there are seniors who have decent incomes. If we have world class senior care, to become a senior's population.

2000 And there's models, we know Elliot Lake in Northern Ontario that was a disseminated mining nightmare and its toxic. Learning from that community because they did indeed attract an entire seniors' committee, affordable seniors' housing with supports and with a quality of life that is unmatched, learning from the mistakes of Elliot Lake, not further contaminating our lands and our rivers.

2005 Rather than becoming something that was 1950s or trying to put more value on having youths and young people, to recognize who we are. To be honest about who we are and to draw on the strengths of whom we are in this community, because there are incredible strengths here.

2010 But the endless push towards growth and consumer and bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and more – we can't even afford the fish, I mean bigger and bigger does not speak to who we truly are. We're regular working people and seniors.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2015 Thank you. Another question, you've been sort of also – you seem to have documented the industry, the land-based fish farming, and to conclude that, you know, there is no viability for this type of industry. Now, I just want to make sure that in terms of the... because you also mention in your brief that several studies have proven that.

2020 You've mentioned one which is the 2014 study related to the... that was done by the Nova Scotian Government. You also provided SeaWest News as a source, are there any other sources that you can – that you have consulted that could support some of your analysis?

SYLVIA POETSCHKE:

2025 Those are the primary sources. There are many, many, many, many both in favour and against. Full disclosure, I'm a citizen, I'm busy, you know, that...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2030 I totally understand.

SYLVIA POETSCHKE:

2035 But what I have six bankrupt projects and a Nova Scotia Government viability study, that left me with enough questions to come to a conclusion. There are many, many more. You can spend months, and...

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Have you encountered others that contradicted that?

SYLVIA POETSCHKE:

Oh, there are – of course, there are... okay, I did not find anything that indicates that it was financially viable.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Okay.

SYLVIA POETSCHKE:

I'm sure they are there because there's operations that are running where people are making money. Yes, I did not see any and I was probably searching with bias.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Any questions? Oh, yes, yes. In your brief...

LE COMMISSAIRE :

I can go, and my English is not very good, but I go. Could you elaborate on the role and composition of the citizen committee your are proposing in your brief as a potential way to improve the project?

SYLVIA POETSCHKE:

Yes.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Yes?

2075 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

Yes, I would like to see that. If this moves ahead, definitely a citizen engagement that is outside of elected officials so that it would be citizen-based, interest-based and commitment-based.

2080 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

How would you see the role? What would be the role of that committee and how would you see it composed?

2085 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

2090 The role would be as to raise any concerns within the citizens with the business and to have the business respond to that, and to bring it back to the communities to determine whether the response is adequate or whether there needs to be collaboration or additional work to resolve issues, ideally before they become big problems.

2095 And we don't – there are a lot of unknowns, we all agree that there are many unknowns. Just as an example, I have concerns about the noise level of the generators. I live not far away from it, and sound travels down the river very loudly. A citizen group could say, hey, your generators have run for three days, they're too loud and together, we could say, okay, Samonix needs to put up the highway barriers, the sound barriers. It's not a big insurmountable problem, and it can be solved together.

2100 Another one is the measurement of the water. In Portage-du-Fort, that's a huge concern. On Amazone, a quick look, \$2,000 you can find a sailing detector that you can put at the water intake. So, together, you know, is there a much more sophisticated measurement tool for any contamination coming towards those fragile Portage-du-Fort treatment facility that Samonix will invest in putting in and co-monitoring, i.e. together.

2105 Additionally, things where perhaps Samonix is saying, we need to rebuild our road around the side, when is a good time that will work with Ladysmith October Fest, whatever it is, so that planning can happen together and I would like to see that right from the approval stage of the project so that there is a voice of the community that can say, they're going to have a particularly noisy week, you know, but guess what, they sponsored the ball teams, so we're good with that.

2110 So that people are informed of what to expect when the sirens go off, we have the sirens for the dam, when the dams open, well what does Samonix have? Do they have fire alerts, you know? When they have their regular staff fire drill, do we all go running out of our homes?

2115 Just information and problem solving before it becomes litigation.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Thank you.

2120

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Thank you, yes. Thank you very much.

2125 **SYLVIA POETSCHKE:**

It's good? Okay, thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2130

Thank you. Good night.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

2135 Good night.

MRC DE PONTIAC (DM16)

JANE TOLLER

LE PRÉSIDENT :

The next person is Jane Toller. Good evening.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Good evening.

JANE TOLLER:

Bonsoir, good evening.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Merci de vous joindre à nous.

JANE TOLLER:

Honourable members of the BAPE, my name is Jane Toller, prefect or warden of MRC Pontiac dans mon troisième mandat et ma première expérience avec BAPE dans la MRC Pontiac.

We are fortunate and I would like to thank you for your time and efforts, and I am confident that all environmental issues will be addressed.

La MRC de Pontiac est située dans l'ouest de la région de l'Outaouais, le long de la rivière des Outaouais qui forme une frontière naturelle avec l'Ontario. Elle compte une communauté fière, unie, et 15 000 personnes qui vivent dans 18 municipalités reliées en grande partie par les routes provinciales, Highways 148, 301 and 303.

It has predicted that our population, especially after when all the mills closed would continue to decrease. And actually, we have reversed that. We have increased our population to over 15,000

residents which is actually higher now than when the mills were open, and we have momentum. And so, the timing for this project is perfect.

2175

The Pontiac is a vast rural region where the history rooted in natural resources, agriculture and forestry. Over the decades, the region has experienced difficult economic cycles marked by the decline of certain industrial activities and the closure of facilities that supported local employment.

2180

Against this backdrop, the MRC has been working for several years towards sustainable economic diversification, notably through the Vision Pontiac 2030 initiative which aims to redefine the socio-economic future of the Pontiac's communities.

2185

Although Pontiac was built with forestry, 32% of our jobs are with agriculture, and we really need to diversify. And I see this salmon farm as the type of agriculture. There are not many businesses being offered to our region today that are offering 100 permanent jobs.

2190

The Samonix Inc. project is in line with the strategy. According to the documentation submitted, in the case file, it estimates production about to 12,000 metric tons of salmon per year. It represents an investment of approximately 300 million USD and could generate up to 100 permanent jobs.

2195

It aims to commence operations in 2029 with a first harvest in 2031, which tells me that this is very similar to wild salmon in a natural cycle. It isn't like the aquaculture in many of our Eastern provinces where the fish are actually being fed steroids and being – their growth is being accelerated.

2200

Beyond its scale, this project has the potential to reposition the Pontiac region within a modern food production economy focussed on local markets. The MRC sees this as an opportunity for diversification.

2205

And salmon, especially wild salmon without antibiotics, which they have told us in a previous presentation, and without steroids, is one of the healthiest foods we can eat. And Québec currently exports at only 9%, so there is a lot of growth potential.

La municipalité de Litchfield a délivré un certificat de conformité attestant que le projet respecte les règlements d'urbanisme applicables sur son territoire. La MRC a par ailleurs adopté la résolution depuis – it's CM2424 in June –, et ce geste ne se substitue ni à l'analyse environnementale menée par les autorités compétentes ni au présent processus public du BAPE.

2210

Il démontre toutefois que du point de vue de l'aménagement régional, le projet a été dûment évalué au regard des outils de planification du territoire.

2215

Le schéma d'aménagement révisé reconnaît l'importance de consolider la vocation des secteurs présentant un potentiel et de permettre une diversification des activités dans le respect de l'aménagement du territoire.

2220

Dans cette perspective, le projet peut être compris comme une diversification des usages productifs à forte valeur ajoutée en milieu contrôlé.

2225

The project is proposed for a site that already has an industrial forestry history. For the MRC this is a significant factor. The regeneration of sites that have already been developed is an approach consistent with sustainable development. It concentrates new economic activities on existing sites rather than placing pressure on unspoiled natural environments.

2230

In a region that has experienced the closure of facilities and lost of jobs, this regeneration forms part of our regional commitment to rebuild the economic foundations using the region's existing assets.

2235

It's true that we have been experiencing perhaps more outages than any other MRC in Québec, and this is the reason why we have been given the authorization and approval of a modernization of lines that are 100 years old, and a new substation. This will be commissioned by 2031, so the timing is excellent.

We also are looking at a lot of renewable energies here in the MRC of Pontiac, in particular solar because we received more sunlight than any other part of Québec.

La MRC considère que le projet pourrait générer des retombées économiques importantes pour la région, notamment la création de près d'une centaine d'emplois directs et indirects – as it

2240 has been said, 100 jobs because we've had many people need to leave the Pontiac to work in mines and forests in other parts of Canada, just to support their families. So, these people will now be able to work at home.

2245 L'attraction de nouvelles compétences techniques, la diversification de la base économique régionale, la valorisation d'un ancien site industriel, le développement de liens avec des fournisseurs locaux et régionaux et une contribution à la sécurité alimentaire locale – food sustainability, regional and national. And I have been told that sales will be available to our residents – it is not all being exported – at an affordable price.

2250 Dans une région rurale qui doit constamment travailler à retenir sa population et à maintenir ses services de proximité, la création d'emplois durables représente un enjeu central. La Chambre de commerce du Pontiac et l'UPA Pontiac ont d'ailleurs transmis des lettres de soutien au projet.

2255 La MRC estime néanmoins que ces retombées, pour être pleinement au rendez-vous, devront s'appuyer sur des engagements concrets en matière d'emplois et d'approvisionnements locaux, un aspect que l'étude d'impact et le suivi devra documenter.

2260 Local and regional food production has become a strategic issue. International supply chains are more vulnerable than before, and consumers are placing increasing importance on the origin, traceability and environmental footprint of food.

2265 An inland aquaculture project located near the major markets of Québec, Ontario and Northeastern North America is a real interest in this regard as it reduces dependence on imports and long-distance transport. The MRC sees this as a way of integrating the Pontiac region into a modern food value chain.

2270 La MRC reconnaît qu'un projet de cette ampleur suscite des questions légitimes en matière environnementale. Des citoyens, des groupes et des organismes du milieu ont exprimé des préoccupations qui témoignent de l'attachement de la population à son milieu de vie.

La MRC est confiante que le promoteur et les autorités compétentes sauront bien répondre dans le cadre du présent exercice et elle souhaite porter à l'attention de la commission, les éléments qui lui apparaissent les plus sensibles pour ses communautés.

2275 And this talk about excrement going in the water, it was clearly expressed at a previous BAPE presentation that two ten-wheel trucks will be on a daily basis taking all of the excrement away to another place in Québec to be – with bio-methanization. And we've even had a lot of farmers asking eventually, could it be placed, you know, on their farms, but I think that Samonix has shown great responsibility because initially, salt in the water and effluents going in the water were the biggest concerns.

2280 The project involves the abstraction of water from the Ottawa River estimated at between 2,300 and 4,000 metres cube per day to meet the needs of the aquaculture farm's processes. The MRC is interested in all these methods chosen and with respect to salt, I agree with Lee Bourdon that currently, there is far too much road salt that is leaching from the roads. Yes, we use sand, but
2285 there is more salt being used and I think that this project is now raising the issue that this is something that we need to look at.

I know in Banff National Park, they never use salt, it's just sand or other materials.

2290 Also, there was a good diagram showing with a minimal amount of salt going into the river will be diffused in such a way that it will really have no impact.

2295 La protection de l'eau potable. Plusieurs municipalités s'approvisionnent en eau potable dans la rivière des Outaouais. La MRC accorde une grande importance à la protection de ces sources et sait que cet enjeu fait partie de ceux qu'aborde l'étude d'impact. Elle est d'avis qu'un suivi de qualité de l'eau contribuerait à rassurer les communautés situées en aval.

2300 The section of the river in question is home to species of special concern, including the olive back caddisfly, the green sandpiper, the bald eagle and the map turtle. The MRC wishes to ensure that the project's effects on these species and their habitats are taken into account and that appropriate mitigation measures are put forward.

2305 La rivière des Outaouais reçoit déjà des apports de diverses sources, notamment les sels – I've talked about that.

Emergency measures. As with any project of this nature, the MRC welcomes the development of an emergency response plan in collaboration with the municipal civil protection

authorities, so as to respond to unforeseen situations and where necessary, inform the residents concerned.

2310

Off-site sludge management and recovery according to the developer's documentation – I've talked about that – the sludge generated will go to treatment systems and it would be dewatered, stored in containers and recovered off-site rather than discharged into the river.

2315

La MRC appuie l'idée que les données relatives à l'eau prélevée et rejetée soient rendues accessibles au public. Un dialogue ouvert, dialogue ouvert avec le milieu tout au long du projet, contribuera à la confiance de la population et à l'acceptabilité sociale du projet.

2320

And like Sylvia has just said, the MRC also supports a citizen committee for communication after the project has opened because it's quite common – I know with energy from waste facilities, etc., they always have a citizen committee, and it just is good to have that ongoing oversight and dialogue, and Samonix supports this.

2325

Our expectations, finally. In light of these concerns, the MRC has set out a number of wishes:

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- That the concerns set out in Section 6 be addressed within the framework of the BAPE's recommendations;
- That the analysis is taking into account the specific conditions of the site and its environment;
- That an environmental monitoring and follow-up program be put in place and that its results be made publicly available;
- That an ongoing dialogue be maintained with the community throughout the project;
- That local benefits be promoted, particularly in terms of employment training and regional procurement;
- And I'm adding that opportunities for education and training be introduced in our high schools for students and people in the Pontiac who could be trained while this is being built and be among the first to be hired.

2335

Conclusion: Tonight we have several mayors in the audience, I'm proud to say, and the Council of Mayors supports the study of this opportunity.

2340

The Pontiac MRC supports the principle behind the Samonix Inc. project. It sees real potential in the project for economic diversification job creation, the regeneration of the industrial site and local food production.

2345 However, this support is neither unconditional nor uncritical. For the MRC it is based on the conviction that the promising economic project and rigorous environmental standards are not mutually exclusive but go hand in hand.

2350 I have a business in a small out park in Newfoundland, and that community continues to thrive because of aquaculture, and yet, I believe that the farm that is being proposed for Pontiac will be healthier.

2355 The MRC hopes that the BAPE process will clarify the issues raised and that the developer's commitment will be clearly documented and monitored.

The Pontiac region needs projects capable of creating sustainable value while respecting his land water and communities that live here.

2360 Under these conditions, the MRC believes that the Samonix Inc. project has a place in our future. And it is true that in the past, since the forestry mills closed, there were projects promised and not delivered, but this project is entirely different.

2365 Why? I first read about this in approximately 2018. Here we are, 2026. The promoter, Mathieu Farley, has persevered and has invested personally. This did not happen in those other projects that didn't materialize. And so, that is why we've actually reached the point to have a BAPE hearing. This is a major sign of progress.

2370 I'm confident that all the concerns of our residents will be addressed to the Ministry of Environment. I place my hope on behalf of the residents of the Pontiac in this project and we do say welcome to Samonix.

Thank you.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Thank you very much. We have a few questions. Okay, so we have read your brief before you present it, so we have a few questions that were elaborated after reading that brief. So, one of the things you mentioned, and you just mentioned that for the project to fully deliver its potential, you say that the economic benefits should be supported by concrete commitments regarding local employment and procurement. You mentioned that in your brief.

So, what type of commitments are you referring to and have you had any discussions already with the proponent on this matter?

JANE TOLLER:

Yes. Yes. We've certainly voiced our hope that there will be, and it's been described that there could be some specialty jobs that initially would be people from elsewhere, but we also believe and know that we have a high level of education here, we also have the more les métiers trade jobs, and so I think that the fact that there is the combination of both, it's going to be a huge employment opportunity.

And more and more, in Pontiac, for example, we needed fire fighters; all the fire fighters were retiring, growing older. We went into our high schools, and we now have nothing to worry about because we have so many students who have now fulfilled the commitment for Fire Service 1, and they are – they are out fighting fires. They are part of force.

We're going to be the same with nursing to guarantee that we have enough nurses in our hospitals; in our hospitals and our CLSC.

So, by the same token, I think the idea of be getting some training and education with our students, we have an expectation, and I think we have to have that, that the first jobs will go to residents of the Pontiac.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

So, are you talking about an expectation or commitments? Are you looking for...

JANE TOLLER:

2410 Well, I haven't got something. I have – I have an understanding and agreements that this is important.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2415 Okay.

JANE TOLLER:

2420 Because Samonix wants to see the Pontiac thrive.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Okay.

2425 **JANE TOLLER:**

And also, people who have that special training that need to work here, well they'll need homes, they'll need to use our schools and our medical services. So, it will just only help our population.

2430 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

2435 So, on that note, we had a few questions before about the capacity of the region to have this new population come in if, you know, if attracts new workers, and is there – do you feel that the region is ready or has the capacity to provide the housing, you know, the schooling and all the community's services that are required to...

JANE TOLLER:

2440 In each of our 18 municipalities, there is a plan subdivision. This has existed for a long time. And if you just take Shawville, for example, it is unbelievable how many units have built just in the last years. They are rentals, but they are accommodations.

2445 And we also have more and more local trades and construction companies, and they are actively building. Since COVID-19, we have had a lot of people renovate their cottages to year-round, so that also has increased our housing stock.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2450 And you...

JANE TOLLER:

2455 And we also have a lot hospitality places that are being opened up and built. A lot of Airbnb's, a lot of people that understand the importance of having an income property so they may have a home, but they purchase another couple of buildings that they are renting out.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2460 Excellent. You also probably heard tonight different perspectives on the benefits for the municipalities?

JANE TOLLER:

2465 Yes. With the tariffs.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2470 Yes.

JANE TOLLER:

Oh, yes.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

We would like to hear a little bit more about your perspective on that as, you know, as the prefect of the MRC. What kind of impacts would it have on, you know, the municipal contributions to the MRC and to the capacity of the MRC to support growth and development?

JANE TOLLER:

Well, I'll begin with the example that Winston Sunstrums used. Winston Sunstrums was one of the mayors at the Council of Mayors from l'Isle-aux-Allumettes, and he really put it well when he said that with the closure of all those mills, it was like a domino effect in 2008. It was soon after that they saw that there were no – there was quite a lot of tax money coming in.

I could ask the mayor, she's here: Was it \$300 million? It was maybe not quite that much. How much, what were the taxes that came in from Smurfit, do you remember? Remember exactly? Well, just to help me out.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Yes. Because for the people online...

JANE TOLLER:

Right. So, I'll just explain. We had 18 municipalities, we're all in it together, some are small, some are larger populations, some have, you know, more business than others, but we have the assessment of properties and from that, come taxes, and the shares are proportionate to the number of taxpayers in each municipality.

2505 But if we lose major business, then the pot becomes smaller, which means that at that one municipality that lost the business, the other municipalities have to make up the difference. So, that was why he was describing that in Allumette Island, all of a sudden, it went up 25%, twice.

2510 So, to have – again, you know, most of the businesses that have been coming are small businesses, entrepreneurs, we have a few potential sites that could be transformed into a new business, but we don't, today, have any other business offering 100 permanent jobs.

2515 So, just the fact that they're investing the amount of money that they are, the fact that a number of people will be employed at good salaries will have an impact on what each municipality will now have to pay for the services they receive. That's what the shares are. They're paying for the services the MRC is providing.

2520 And as someone else said, I think – I can't remember who it was, whether it was Madame Larivière or not, but when one municipality gains, the whole Pontiac gains. You know, what's good for one is good for all, and that's how we have to look at it.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

Thank you.

2525 **LE COMMISSAIRE :**

Just one question. Can you provide us your Vision of Pontiac 2030 Strategic Plan? We cannot open it on Internet.

2530 **JANE TOLLER:**

We will provide that to you, yes.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

2535 Yes? Okay, thanks a lot.

JANE TOLLER:

2540 Oh, and I would just like to quickly say that when we put together that strategic vision, it's for a 10-year period of time.

2545 And initially, when I first was elected, the plan for the strategic vision was that with the current situation, the population will continue to decrease. With the current situation, the number of businesses will decrease, and, you know, as a Council of Mayors, we decided that is not the vision that we want. We want to go here. We want to think about what do we need to have for the Pontiac to go back up?

2550 So, I think, just the fact that our population is already to the level that it was before the mills closed, we have great – great promise. We have great potential here, and we have also moved from being – I think we were second poorest out of 89 MRCs, we already up to maybe 5th poorest, but I mean, we're going in the right direction.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

2555 Excellent.

JANE TOLLER:

2560 I'm not bragging about it.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2565 Thank you very much.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

Thank you.

2570 **JANE TOLLER:**

Thank you.

2575 **JULIE BERTRAND**
(Présentation verbale)

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2580 La prochaine personne est madame Julie Bertrand. Bonsoir.

JULIE BERTRAND:

Good evening.

2585 **LE PRÉSIDENT :**

Good evening.

2590 **JULIE BERTRAND:**

I have not presented a brief, and I actually just decided this evening that I wanted to speak, so thank you for letting me do that.

2595 My name is Julie Bertrand and I'm speaking on behalf of myself, and just so you all know, I support the Samonix project.

2600 I've been a resident of Litchfield for more than 50 years. I'm presently the director general of Litchfield, but have owned my own businesses over the years. I have owned and operated my own café, and I have managed a rafting company for more than 20 years.

My husband operated a logging business for more than 55 years in the Pontiac and sold thousands of tons of wood to the Stone pulp mill until it closed in 2008.

2605 The mill employed approximately 300 people when it closed. The economic impact was severe for many families in the Pontiac. The Samonix project offers hope to all the residents in the Pontiac and has the real potential to offset some of that negative impact with offering up to a potential 100 permanent jobs.

2610 Much of the infrastructure that was in place at the time of the mill operating remains in place today and perhaps has even improved. I believe and have faith that this BAPE process and the ministries responsible will ensure that the reject of water produced by the Samonix operations will be monitored and that Samonix will meet all the requirements put forth to ensure their operational process is safe and successful.

2615 A successful Samonix will bring success to all of the Pontiac, its businesses and its residents. That's just how I feel, so thank you for letting me say so.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2620 Thank you very much. That was quite clear, thank you very much.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

2625 Thank you.

JULIE BERTRAND:

2630 Thank you.

MOT DE LA FIN

LE PRÉSIDENT :

2635

So, thank you everybody for participating tonight. I'm down to my closing remarks. So, bear with me a few minutes, I have to say a few things.

2640

Donc, ceci clôt officiellement la 2e partie de l'audience publique.

Les enregistrements des séances seront disponibles sur le site Web du BAPE dans un délai de 48 heures.

2645

Nous poursuivons notre enquête sur le projet dans les prochains mois afin de remettre notre rapport d'ici au 24 décembre prochain à la ministre ou au ministre responsable de l'Environnement – that we'll know later.

2650

So, we will continue our inquiry into the project over the coming months and submit our report to the minister responsible for the Environment by December 24th.

Ce rapport fera état de vos préoccupations et de vos opinions ainsi que de notre analyse, nos constats et nos avis sur le projet.

2655

Nous vous invitons à vous inscrire à l'alerte du dossier sur le projet dans notre site Web pour être informés lors de la sortie publique du rapport, qui se fera au plus tard le 8 janvier 2027.

So, we invite you to sign up for the project alert on our website to be notified when the report is made public, which will be no later than January 8, 2027.

2660

Notez qu'en parallèle de l'enquête du BAPE, le ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs analyse le projet et produira également un rapport.

2665 *Based on that report and on the BAPE report, the minister responsible for the Environment will make a recommendation to the “Conseil des ministres” on the decision to be made regarding the project.*

2670 *So, I would like to thank everyone who came to share their views tonight. Your opinions, suggestions and proposals will help inform our analysis of the project.*

As part of our efforts to improve our services, we also welcome your feedback. Please take a moment to tell us about your experience with the BAPE by completing the survey. You will find the link in the “Q & A” section of the webcast.

2675 *If you're actually listening online, please note that the online survey is available in French only.*

For those attending in the room, the link and paper copies of the surveys, in English and French, are available at the welcome desk.

2680 Enfin, merci à toutes les personnes qui ont permis le bon déroulement de cette rencontre en salle et à distance, en commençant par mon collègue – merci beaucoup.

- Karim Chami et Yefagafie Ismaël Silue, nos deux analystes;
- Kim Maloney, la coordonnatrice, au fond, que vous connaissez bien;
- 2685 • Cristophe Marquis, conseiller en communication qui nous écoute sûrement ce soir;
- Et Ulriche WelchinaM Iyalou Taty, qui est agente de secrétariat.

- Aussi, l'équipe responsable de la sonorisation : Sid Belkhiri et Michel Guimond.

- 2690 • Et l'équipe responsable du service de la traduction : Walid Ghariani, Anna Haguette et Olivia Fasan.

- La sténographe également, Mme Yolande Teasdale.

- 2695 • Et, pour conclure, l'équipe de Webdiffusion du BAPE : Marie-Eve Gendron, Karine Fortier, Pierre Dufour et Jérôme Turcotte.

Alors, encore une fois, merci à tous.

2700 *Thank you, everybody, for your participation, it was great fun to be here with you for the last few weeks, and have a pleasant evening.*

Thank you very much.

2705 **AJOURNEMENT**

FIN DE LA 2e PARTIE DE L'AUDIENCE PUBLIQUE.

2710

Je soussignée, YOLANDE TEASDALE, sténographe officielle bilingue, certifie sous mon serment d'office que les pages qui précèdent sont et contiennent la transcription exacte et fidèle des propos recueillis par moi, au meilleur de la qualité sonore et des enjeux liés à une audience par visioconférence.

2715 Le tout conformément à la loi.

Et j'ai signé :

2720 *Yolande Teasdale*

Yolande Teasdale [Membre : 289085-2]

Sténographe officielle bilingue