



# Impact assessment of industrial projects in Québec: What the last eight years have taught us

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# Background

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- 1972: Environmental Quality Act
- 1978: Environmental Public Hearings Board
- 1980: Environmental assessment regulation
- 1996: Major industrial projects, mines and gas pipelines subjected to process

# EA process overview

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1 Project notice  
Guidelines



2 Preparation of the impact assessment statement  
Analysis of admissibility



3 Public participation



4 Environmental Analysis



5 Minister's analysis and recommendation  
Gouvernement decision  
Ministerial authorization



6 Monitoring, control and follow-up

# Public participation

Under the responsibility of the Public Hearings Board  
(*Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement - BAPE*)

45 day information and consultation period  
(compulsory for all projects)



Request for public hearing sent to minister



When request is deemed founded



Mediation (2 months)

or



Public hearing (4 months)

# Interquisa project

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- 500 000 tons per year purified terephthalic acid plant
- Main contaminant : vinegar odour
- Industrial area with petrochemical plants
- Existing problems with air quality
- 700 m from nearest dwelling

# Interquisa project

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- Citizens' insistence : we have had enough
- Fear of boosting the petrochemical industry
- Communication structure already in place between heavy industry and citizens
- Open and respectful attitude from promoter
- Citizens committees during plant construction and operation

# Aluminium plant in Alma

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- 370 000 tons per year electrolysis plant
- Important regional employer since 1940's
- Foreseen fine particulates, fluorine and sulfur emissions

# Aluminium plant in Alma

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- New plant seen as progress
- Public hearings on economic impact
  - solid employment opportunities for young people
  - contracts for local contractors
- Some impacts on health, but an improvement over old technology
- Citizens committees to maximize economic spin-off



# Suroît project

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- 800 MW, gas-fired combined cycle power plant
- Upwind from urban center (Montreal)
- Hydro source of 94 % of province electricity
- 3% raise in provincial greenhouse gases

# Suroît project

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- Main opposition after government approval
- NGOs involved, mass participation in public demonstration
- Important media coverage, mostly negative
- After initial approval, government re-evaluating

# Soil treatment projects

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- Three different projects :
  - St-Ambroise, Québec (operating)
  - Kirkland Lake, Ontario (abandoned)
  - Belledune, New-Brunswick (in construction)
- Thermal oxydization of contaminants
- Public consultations

# Soil treatment projects

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- Quebec project operating within approval limits
- Local opposition well organized in St-Ambroise
- Government “reluctance” in Kirkland Lake
- Government approval in Belledune
- Ongoing opposition in New-Brunswick and the Gaspé

# Senneterre cogeneration

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- 30 MW power plant fed with sawmill waste
- Small town in northern Quebec experiencing a decrease in population
- Air quality problem brought about by PAH

# Senneterre cogeneration

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- Provincial opposition to clear cutting operations
- Showing of movie “L’Erreur Boréale”
- Familiar technology
- Residential heating using wood burning stoves prominent in area

# Conclusions

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- Interquisa : an open and respectful attitude helps to build trust
- Senneterre and Suroît : the public is getting to be well-organised, with more information
- Alma : environment can take second place to employment
- Soil treatment projects : sometimes, nothing works