

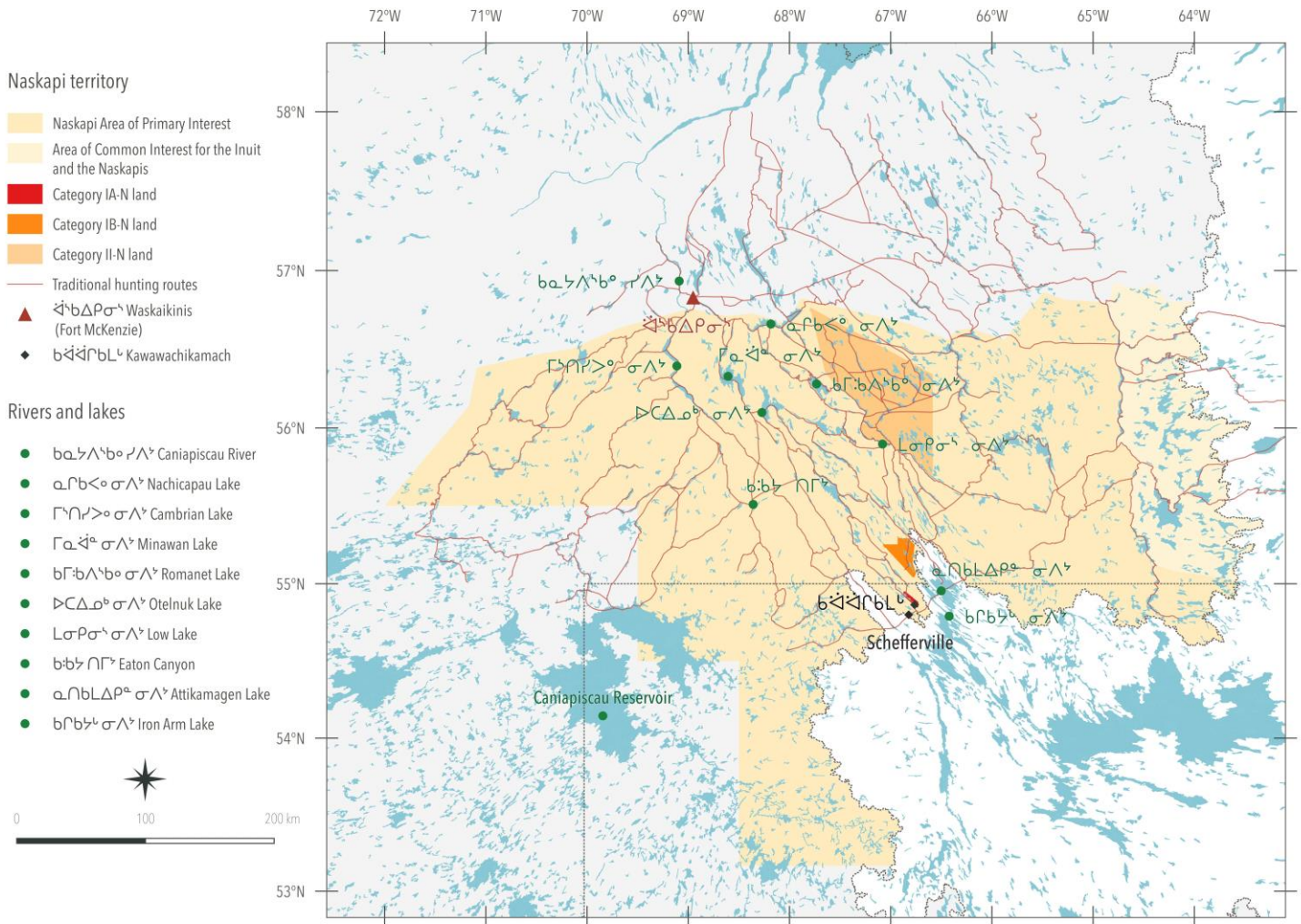
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NASKAPI NATION OF KAWAWACHIKAMACH  
*Position Paper on Specific Claims and Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement*  
*presented to*  
*the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs*  
24 October 2017

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# The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach



The Naskapis have "in the past always depended on caribou."<sup>1</sup> Prior to contact, they occupied and lived off a vast territory spanning from the Lower North Shore area of the Province of Québec in the South, up to Ungava Bay in the North, and including a large portion of what is known today as New Québec, Nunavik, and the Labrador Peninsula.

Following various unilateral decisions by the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as Indian Affairs, which were made without consideration of the Naskapis' interests and concerns, the Naskapis were finally relocated to Kawawachikamach. According to anthropologist Alan Cooke:

For nearly a century and a half, at least since the Hudson's Bay Company closed Fort Chimo in 1843 and "attached" the Naskapis to Fort Nascope, the

<sup>1</sup> Cooke, Alan. *A History of the Naskapis of Schefferville (preliminary draft)*. Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1977.

Naskapis have had no control over their destiny as a people and that they have, during the past 20 years, been virtually prisoners in Schefferville.<sup>2</sup>

Located 10 km northeast of the town of Schefferville, near the Québec-Labrador border, Kawawachikamach is the only Naskapi community in the Province of Québec, with a population of approximately 904 community members, out of a total of 1,356 registered members in 2017.

In 1978, the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach (the “**Nation**”) entered into the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement* (“**NEQA**”) with the Province of Québec (“**Québec**”) and Canada. The NEQA is a modern treaty, protected by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. As such, its provisions are legally binding for Québec and Canada, and the rights granted therein to the Naskapis attract constitutional protection.

The NEQA was signed in the same historical and political context as the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (the “**JBNQA**”), and effectively puts the Naskapis on par with the Crees and the Inuit under the JBNQA, as Québec’s and Canada’s treaty partners.

The JBNQA and the NEQA perform on a vast tract of land corresponding to the area previously known as Rupert’s Land (the “**Territory**”).

The land regime of the Territory falls under the auspices of both the NEQA and the JBNQA. Namely, the NEQA establishes the “**Naskapi Area of Primary Interest**”. The NEQA also delineates a portion of the Territory shared between the Naskapis and the Inuit, referred to as the “**Area of Common Interest**”. Together, the Naskapi Area of Primary Interest and the Area of Common Interest form the “**Naskapi Sector**” which covers more than 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The Naskapi Sector represents approximately 10% of the area covered by Québec’s Plan Nord, and is straddled by the Labrador Trough, a mineral-rich belt where major mining development has taken place since the 1950s.

The NEQA and the JBNQA lay out some rights, structures, processes, and resources necessary (but not always sufficient) to the development of the Nation. They allowed the creation of a strong local government in Kawawachikamach, and ensure the provision of services in policing, healthcare, social services, and education, in the community. Since 1978, the community has grown significantly, and investments in infrastructure include a school, a CLSC, a police station, and numerous public facilities. Several business opportunities were also created by the Nation, promoting economic development and Naskapi employment.

Since the signature of NEQA, the Nation has developed significantly, and the realities of Naskapis, including their needs, have dramatically changed. Thirty-nine years after its establishment, a dialogue needs to be opened to revisit NEQA, in a manner so as to improve its enforceability, and pertinence.

The following is a non-exhaustive summary of components of the NEQA and JBNQA, which we believe, should be improved.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



## Health and Social Services

a) After years of delivering health and social services in a deteriorated and unadapted facility, a new CLSC building was constructed with Québec funding and became operational in October, 2017. The new facility built for this specific purpose promises better services in Kawawachikamach.

b) Under section 10.3, the NEQA's Complementary Agreement No. 2 stipulates that "Québec shall, with the appropriate resources, be responsible for the delivery to the Naskapis of Québec residing in the Territory of the full range of health and social services in accordance with the provision of this section and according to the needs of the Naskapis residing in the Territory."

However, operational funding allocated to the Naskapi CLSC is insufficient to deliver an appropriate level and quality of health and social services to Naskapis residing in Kawawachikamach. The following table compares the budget allocated to the Cree Community Miyupimaatisiun Centres (CMC) and the Naskapi CLSC.

*2013-2014 Budget comparison between Cree Community Miyupimaatisiun Centres and the Naskapi CLSC (Marcel Lortie, 2013-2014)*

	Budget allocated	Sustaining population	Health budget per capita	Staff size per facility
Chisasibi CMC	\$6,782,616	4,143	\$1,637	82
Mistassini CMHC	\$8,935,961	3,512	\$2,544	137
Waskaganish CMC	\$5,671,546	2,159	\$2,627	74
Waswanipi CMC	\$5,561,916	1,710	\$3,253	76
Wemindji CMC	\$5,311,795	1,403	\$3,786	71
Ouje-Bougoumou CMC	\$3,265,185	793	\$4,118	50
Whapmagoostui CMC	\$4,301,156	888	\$4,844	59
Nemaska CMC	\$3,929,489	722	\$5,443	56
Eastmain CMC	\$3,714,297	680	\$5,462	49
<b>CMC Total/average</b>	<b>\$47,473,961</b>	<b>16,010</b>	<b>\$3,746</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Naskapi CLSC</b>	<b>\$2,953,753</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>\$2,522</b>	<b>23</b>

The table above classifies data according to the health budget per capita in an ascending order. When taking into consideration data from the individual Cree CMCs only, there is a negative correlation between the sustaining Cree populations and the

health budget per capita; the latter decreases as the population increases. This might be explained by general economies of scale in delivering health services.

However, the Naskapi CLSC stands out in this trend, as its health budget per capita is second to lowest, between Chisasibi CMC's (population of 4,143) and Mistassini CMC's (population of 3,512), while its sustaining population is only 1,171. This suggests that the Naskapi CLSC operates with a budget that is significantly lower than one that would allow the adequate delivery of health and social services to Naskapis living in the Kawawachikamach-Schefferville region, at least to equivalent level and quality that are offered to Cree beneficiaries. For example, Whapmagoostui's CMC, which serves a population size slightly lower than Kawawachikamach, has a budget of \$4,844 per capita comparatively to \$2,522 for the Naskapi CLSC.

The table also suggests a positive correlation between the size of the sustaining population and the size of the CMC staff. Mistassini aside, with its incredibly large size of personnel (137 workers), a larger community size translates into a proportionally larger health staff size. This seems crucial to ensure the effective delivery of services, including to prevent workers' burnout and to protect their mental health. Again, the Naskapi CLSC stands out in this trend with a lower number of staff compared to Cree communities with similar population size. For example, the Whapmagoostui CMC has a staff composed of 59 workers comparatively to 23 workers for the Naskapi CLSC.

#### c) Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)

According to Section 10.6 of the NEQA's Complementary Agreement No. 2, "the budget of the [CLSC Naskapi] shall also include funds to ensure the delivery of services which are not normally offered to the general population of Québec, but which Canada offered on January 31, 1978 to the Naskapis".

This commitment was also made in the JBNQA towards Cree beneficiaries. According to the Programme for Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) as Applicable to Cree Beneficiaries of the JBNQA, Cree beneficiaries receive non-insured services "regardless of their place of residence" on the basis of "100% cost recovery."

In comparison, the Naskapi CLSC does not receive funding from Québec specifically to cover the actual needs of Naskapis for non-insured services. Instead, the Naskapi CLSC is expected to cover non-insured services with its operational budget, which means that the delivery of non-insured services affects the delivery of other essential health and social services.

d) In other words, the delivery of services of the Naskapi CLSC is constrained by a fixed and limited operational budget that is not adapted to the needs of the Naskapis. In order to be financially sustainable, the Naskapi CLSC is forced to prioritize some Naskapi needs over others, as a manner so as to accommodate the limited Québec budget.

Therefore, in regards to providing adequate financial and human resources to deliver health and social services at an appropriate level and quality, Québec is not fulfilling its obligations towards Naskapis residing in Kawawachikamach.

## **Education**

Pursuant to NEQA, a Naskapi school was created: the Jimmy Sandy Memorial School (“JSMS”), which offers the following education services.

### **a) Primary and Secondary Education**

The JSMS in Kawawachikamach offers a quality primary and secondary education to Naskapi beneficiaries.

### **b) Adult Education**

Pursuant to Section 11.15.3, specifying that “[the annual budget of the Naskapi School shall include] the cost of an adult program for Naskapis residing on Category IA-N lands,” funding was allocated to JSMS to initiate an Adult Education program in 2016-2017, following long negotiations. However, the lack of adequate infrastructure means that adult education is currently offered at a converted residential house.

### **c) Vocational and Post-Secondary Program**

Pursuant to NEQA, financial support for Naskapis to further their education at the vocational and post-secondary level outside the community has been an important investment to the community at-large.

However, it is usually very difficult for Naskapis to study outside the community, because of the culture shock, and the distance from their circles of support. Some of the programs outside of the community are also not adapted to Naskapis and the needs of the community.

JSMS and the Nation would like to see more vocational and post-secondary programs in Kawawachikamach, such as in construction, as well as healthcare and administration, to allow for Naskapi youth to stay home, and to address actual needs of the community while reducing unemployment rates. The Nation has organized in the past such local training, but lacks funding to continue offering them.

The JSMS and the Nation are in discussion since the last few years with Québec and Canada to establish a state-of-the-art Complex offering Adult Education, Vocational Training and Post-Secondary Studies in Kawawachikamach in order to ensure education success of Naskapi adults.

d) The implementation of NEQA in the education of Naskapis should be rethought to be flexible and adapted to actual needs of employment in the community and beyond.

## Police

Section 13 of the NEQA addresses the establishment, operation and funding of a Naskapi local community police force (the “Naskapi Police Force”). Canada and Quebec are responsible for funding the direct costs of the Naskapi Police Force. The cost-sharing agreement with Section 13 is subject to review and renegotiation from time to time. Although the wording of Section 13 has remained unchanged since 1978, the implementation of certain elements have been modified: for example, in 2007, the basic criterion for officers to population was revised from one officer to every 500 Naskapi persons, including floating population, to one to 215, and the cost-sharing between Canada and Quebec was revised from 60% - 40%, respectively, to 52% - 48%. These modifications were negotiated following the implementation of similar modifications negotiated by the Grand Council of the Crees in 2002.

In 2013, Council decided to implement a 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week policing schedule in order to address the community's concerns with issues such as increasing drug use, domestic violence, vandalism and impaired driving. The decision resulted in increased costs, which were funded by the Nation.

Between 2013 and 2015, there were numerous exchanges and discussions between the Nation, Canada and Quebec in an effort to address police funding. These efforts did not produce any meaningful results. Subsequently, in April 2015, the Nation instituted legal proceedings against Canada and Quebec due the failure of the said governments to respect their undertakings and constitutional obligations towards the Naskapis with respect to the funding of the Naskapi Police Force. Later that year, and further to discussions, both Canada and Quebec responded positively to commencing negotiations to address police funding and the legal proceedings were suspended. As a demonstration of good faith, Canada agreed to enter into a bilateral funding agreement with the Nation, in an amount of \$300,000, to offset the costs of certain infrastructure and equipment needs of the Naskapi Police Force.

Between late 2015 to the present time, discussions have continued with Canada and Québec to develop a new template for a tripartite funding agreement through which funding will flow to the Naskapi Police Force effective 1 April, 2018. This process is nearly complete. In addition, initial drafts to update and modernize section 13 have been discussed and shared with Canada and Quebec. While the foregoing discussions are proceeding well and have resulted in the continued abeyance of the legal proceedings, the biggest (and continual) obstacle remains the level of funding to the Naskapi Police Force. Budget proposals have shared with Canada and Quebec, revised and shared again. Discussions have been open and, although they appear promising, neither level of government has responded officially to the Nation's budget proposal.

The lack of response appears to be based largely on the current situation with the First Nations Policing Program, through which Canada flows its funding to First Nation police forces across the country. Although the continuation of the Program, along with new funding, was announced in Budget 2017, the details of how those funds will be distributed have yet to be announced by Public Security Canada. As such, Canada has not responded officially to our budget proposals, which is not unlike its response to our earlier endeavours to address funding between 2013 and 2015.

The delay in confirming funding levels concerns the Nation greatly because the current tripartite police funding agreement expires on 31 March, 2018. While we recognize that



Canada and Quebec have a constitutional obligation to fund the Naskapi Police Force beyond that date, we do not know the level of funding that is being contemplated.

The current abeyance to the legal proceedings expires on 31 October, 2017, therefore the Nation will soon need to take a decision whether to extend it yet again. In that regard, we are making concerted and sustained efforts with both levels of government to achieve a sufficient level of comfort this week in order to justify a further abeyance. We are negotiating in good faith and we feel that the funding issue can be quickly resolved. Once that matter is resolved, we are confident that the substantive discussions to update and amend Section 13 of NEQA will also be completed within a short timeframe.

## **Program to Assist Hunting, Fishing and Trapping**

The Naskapis historically occupied its ancestral land with practices such as hunting, fishing and trapping, and heavily depends on caribou. Camp trips continue to be popular today, as a way for youth and Elders to reconnect to the land, as part of crime prevention, mental wellness, and offender rehabilitation initiatives.

The Hunter Support Program, established under Section 19 of NEQA, provides funding for Naskapi beneficiaries to pursue hunting, fishing and trapping activities, being the essence of Naskapi culture. The program is crucial in preserving Naskapi cultural heritage, and helping the Naskapi wildlife way of life perpetuate, following decades of colonial contact and governmental efforts to assimilate Indigenous cultures into “mainstream” lifestyles.

In 1978, Hunter Support Program Funding was set at \$60,000 per year pursuant to Article 19.7 of the NEQA. Pursuant to the same section, this amount is subsequently “indexed annually according to the increase in the cost of living determined by Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index for Regional Cities (Québec), or any successor index”. Therefore, the HSP Funding has remained the same in constant dollars over the years, while the population has almost tripled since 1978, when the funding amount was set.

For this reason, the Hunter Support Program has not been receiving adequate funding to fulfill its mandate. Funding per Naskapi beneficiary is now significantly lower than the Inuit and Cree programs, for which funding have been adjusted according to population and participation level increase. The Nation is currently trying to negotiate a funding amount that is commensurate to the participation rate, population growth and cost of living in Kawawachikamach. Hence, Section 19 of NEQA should be revised to resolve this issue.

## Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee

The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (the "HFTCC") was created by the provisions of Section 24 of the JBNQA, in order to review, manage and in certain cases, supervise and regulate the hunting, fishing and trapping regime established by the JBNQA and NEQA. The HFTCC may submit recommendations to the responsible Provincial or Federal Ministers, who shall have discretion to act upon such recommendations.

The HFTCC's composition is the following:

Government of Québec: 4 members  
Government of Canada: 4 members  
Inuit (Makivik): 3 members  
Cree Nation Government: 3 members  
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach: 2 members

The chairmanship of the HFTCC is exercised by one of the members for a period of one year, in the following rotation order: Cree party, Quebec party, Inuit party, Federal party. The Naskapi party is exercising the vice-chairmanship every second year. The chairman has the breaking vote.

For any matter under provincial jurisdiction, the Federal party is giving its votes to the Quebec party. This situation creates a «double decision-making power» exercised by the Quebec party, since it takes decisions at two levels:

*First Level:* Having 8 votes for all resolutions with respect to matters of provincial jurisdiction such as caribou, since the Federal party is giving its votes to the Québec party.

*Second Level:* The Minister has the ultimate discretion to act upon or not on the HFTCC'S recommendation. If the Minister decides against, he has the obligation to consult the HFTCC a second time. Past experiences have demonstrated that the second consultation is essentially only a communication of the Minister's decision.

Concretely, no matter what are the natives party would like to recommend, it will never happen if it is not in the provincial minister view. The best example for that are the closing of the caribou sport hunt on the George river herd (see *Corporation Makivik v. Québec (Procureure générale)* 2014 QCCA 1455). The situation still persists even after winning this courts case in the court of appeal.

This HFTCC functioning should be reviewed to ensure empowerment of the indigenous parties during decision processes.

## **Environmental Consultation of the Nation**

The Nation feels that the provincial and federal consultation processes provided in the JBNQA and the NEQA do not provide adequate consultation and protection for the Naskapis and Naskapi Sector and Naskapi traditional territory, especially in the context of Environmental Assessments in Nunavik.

### **a) Provincial Environmental and Social Impact Assessments**

The Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (“KEQC”) is responsible for drafting the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (the “Directive”), analyzing the impact study prepared by the proponent, and rendering its decision to the Ministère du Développement durable, de l’Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (the “MDDELCC”) as to whether or not a project should be authorized or not. It does not have the obligation to consult with the Naskapis when a project is located on Category III lands. As for projects located on Category II-N and IB-N lands, it has to communicate with the Nation but still has the final word.

Moreover, KEQC does not have the obligation to consult or even communicate with the Naskapis in drafting Directives, regardless of the location of the project.

Although a Naskapi may be appointed as a member of KEQC, this has never happened since KEQC began operations. Of the nine members, five are appointed by Québec and four are appointed by the Kativik Regional Government (“**KRG**”). At least two KRG representatives must either be Inuit, or composed of one Inuk and one Naskapi (or representative thereof).

### **b) Federal Environmental and Social Impact Assessments**

The federal process for development projects under federal jurisdiction is very similar to the provincial one. First, a Screening Committee must determine if projects not automatically subject to or exempted from environmental assessments should be conducted, and to which extent. They provide their recommendation to the Federal Administrator who has the final word. The Screening Committee has four members. Two are named by Canada and two are named by KRG. The two named by KRG can either be both Inuit, or one Inuk and one Naskapi. The members each have one vote and the Chairman, appointed among the four members alternately each year by Canada and KRG, has a second vote. If no Naskapi is appointed on the Screening Committee, KRG must appoint an alternate Naskapi member suggested by the Nation, only when a project is located in Category II-N and IB-N lands.

Next, the proponents submit their environmental assessments to the Environmental and Social Impact Review Panel (the “Review Panel”), composed of three members appointed by Canada, and two members appointed by KRG. The two named by KRG can either be both Inuit, or one Inuk and one Naskapi. Canada also appoints the Chairman. The Review Panel communicates its recommendations to the Federal Administrator, who makes the final decision.

Although the Naskapis may provide observations to the Review Panel, there is no obligation to inform them of the projects being contemplated, nor to take their observations into account. Moreover, it does not have the obligation to consult with the Naskapis when a project is located on Category III lands.

c) Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

A similar situation exists with respect to the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (“KEAC”). KEAC is the consultative body responsible for the development and application of laws and regulations concerning environmental and social protection in Nunavik. KEAC is formed by three members appointed by Canada, three members appointed by Québec and three members appointed by KRG.

The Nation feels strongly that one of the four members of the KEQC and one of the three members of the KEAC appointed by the KRG should be a Naskapi representative.

In this light, the Nation believes that the NEQA and JNBQA should be modified to enable the Nation to appoint one member on KEQC, the Screening Committee, the Review Panel and KEAC, and ensure that the Nation’s unique perspective and particular interests are taken into account throughout the consultations in general, and in environmental assessment processes in particular.

As thing stand, the JBNQA and NEQA create inequality for the Naskapis. There is no reason why the Naskapis should be left out of the decision-making processes affecting the Naskapi Sector and Naskapi traditional territory.

## Regional and Territorial Governance

a) Pursuant to Section 8.1 of NEQA, “the Naskapis of Québec shall be incorporated as a municipal corporation that [...] exercise the jurisdiction conferred upon it pursuant to the present section over the Category IB-N lands.” According to Section 8.2, “the municipal corporation shall be represented on the council of KRG, established pursuant to Section 13 of the JBNQA, by the mayor of the municipal corporation, who shall be a regional councillor within the meaning of said Section 13.”

Hence, the mayor of the Naskapi Village of Kawawachikamach, who is also the Nation's Chief, has a seat on KRG's Council.

b) KRG has numerous competencies and delivers services in various sectors, including:

- Local administration
- Transport and communication
- Policing and civil security
- Employment, training and income support
- Sports and recreation
- Municipal infrastructure
- Childcare services
- Cost of Living Reduction Measures

However, all the above services and competencies in Kawawachikamach fall under the auspices of the Naskapi local government. The only exception is for the Cost of Living Reduction Measures, for which the Naskapis have no program in place in Kawawachikamach despite having a cost of living similar to Nunavik. In this context, the Nation requested to join the KRG program, but KRG Council refused and responded that it will be better if the Nation has its own program.

Therefore, KRG competencies and services having a bearing on the Nation, when they are applied on the Naskapi Sector and Naskapi traditional territory (the "**Naskapi Territory**"), have in effect been limited to:

- Environment;
- Lands and regional planning;
- Protected area development; and
- Park development and operations.

c) Over the years, the Nation realized that having KRG responsible for the above areas on the Naskapi Territory has not been efficient, nor at the best interest of the Nation. For example, when these subjects are discussed by the KRG Council, the Nation has only one vote out of 17 votes, which means that the rest of Council can make decisions about important subjects concerning the Naskapi Territory without the Nation's consent.

Moreover, for these areas, KRG often acts as the spokesperson vis-à-vis Québec and Canada for issues pertaining to the Naskapi Territory without the full involvement of the Nation. In spite of repeated requests by the Nation to participate in some committees with Québec and Canada, such as for protected areas, KEAC and KEQC, KRG has systematically refused to include the Nation, which created a lot of tensions.

d) In summary, KRG's current structure allows the Inuit majority to decide on issues involving the Naskapi Territory. It creates a peculiar situation where an Indigenous group overpowers another Indigenous group on its own territory.

In light of this situation, the Nation wishes that the NEQA and JBNQA be revised to extend self-governance and self-representation to the Naskapi Territory.

## **Other Services: Housing and Daycare**

As demonstrated above, NEQA covers some public services, such as education, healthcare and policing. However, it does not cover other essential public services, such as housing and daycare services.

### *Housing*

The conditions in which people live are important determinants for social development and health. Similarly to other communities, the Nation has been affected by overcrowding and worsening housing stock quality. The current housing situation puts families at risk, including health issues due to mould, and exposure to violence and substance abuse.

The Social housing funding has not increased in accordance with the Naskapi population, characterized by a high birth rate. The Nation receives about 30 housing applications every year for the allocation of only two houses. In light of the foregoing, we believe that appropriate housing funding should be guaranteed by the NEQA.

### *Daycare Services*

Public daycare services did not exist when the NEQA was signed. Quality daycare services for all children in Kawawachikamach could have a significant positive impact on social condition, such as increasing education success, increasing women's employment rates and reducing poverty.

Yet, in recent years, the public daycare in Kawawachikamach having limited spaces has not been able to accommodate all children of the community. Daycare services should be included in the NEQA to secure and guarantee a minimum level of services for children and parents in Kawawachikamach.



## **Conclusion**

In almost 40 years of hindsight, a disparity has further deepened in the funding allocated to implement NEQA and JBNQA, on the one hand to the Naskapis, and on the other hand to the Inuit and the Crees.

As detailed in this document, funding per Naskapi beneficiary is lower than per Cree beneficiary in regard to health and social services. The same situation applies to the Program to Assist Hunting, Fishing and Trapping when comparing the Naskapi program with the Inuit and the Cree programs. For education, the Inuit and the Crees have set up vocational training centers in their communities when the Naskapis still thrive for one for the education of their youth and adult members. Funding for policing is another problem area for the reasons cited herein.

Numerous other instances of funding disparity between the Naskapis, and the Crees and Inuit could be added to this list, yet these three treaty holders should be treated on par. One of the circumstances that could explain the disadvantage that the Naskapis face is the degree of political influence that one, small First Nation, can exert on various levels of government. The Nation, being a smaller group with relatively less political weight than that of the Cree and the Inuit, might not be given proper attention and priority when pressing Canada and Quebec to properly fulfill its NEQA commitments. This should not be a reason to underfund efforts to implement NEQA.

Furthermore, the affiliation of the Nation with the Inuit under KRG has not been efficient, and continues to undermine the Nation's participation and self-determination over decisions regarding the Naskapi Territory, as well as in environmental assessment processes. This democratic imbalance on the Naskapi Territory created by the JNBQA and NEQA should be corrected.

While the Nation has benefited greatly from the NEQA and continues to do so, there are several areas as stated above that need to be improved upon. The Nation is currently addressing a growing number of those areas in separate, file-specific negotiations with Canada and/or Québec. As the scope and number of the files under negotiation broadens, the Nation is now reflecting on complementary approaches to consolidate its efforts to modernize the NEQA and to enhance its current form of self-government, and it will soon approach both Canada and Québec to request the establishment of a table to begin discussing these matters.