



Gouvernement régional
d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James
Eeyou Istchee James Bay
Regional Government

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Regional representatives unanimous:
Deconfinement must be planned jointly for Crees and the Jamesians***

Matagami, May 1, 2020 - The Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG) indicates that the Cree and Jamesian representatives continue to stand together during the pandemic. During a meeting held on April 30, all were unanimous: the deconfinement and reopening of the region must be cautious, gradual, with a common schedule for all communities within the territory.

While the Quebec government develops guidelines and steps to reopen certain industries and regions, the leadership of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay region is working closely with Public Health to establish a clear path, progressive and responsible, with proper risk management before deconfining the territory.

"We believe that our communities will benefit from taking the same steps to reopen at the same time and prevent inconsistencies.", mentions Abel Bosum, President of the EIJBRG and Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees." A common and prudent strategy to ensure that all communities, Cree and Jamesian, are aligned with one deconfinement plan will be developed.

All representatives agree: maintaining the closure of the region remains a good decision at the moment. The progressive, step-by-step deconfinement will allow Public Health to assess the reopening of the region while protecting the territory's health system capacity. "At this moment, it is critical that we preserve our health network's capacity," says the President. "Opening checkpoints and lifting restrictions too early would be detrimental to the efforts made by all to protect one another. Given that our region is at least

2 weeks behind the pandemic curve, it will be to our benefit that we take this opportunity to observe the reopening strategy and adapt accordingly.

The first phases of deconfinement announced last week by the government of Quebec are progressive and will depend on compliance with health guidelines. "It is important to understand that, whether borders are closed or open, non-essential travel between cities and regions remains prohibited. The gradual reopening of certain regions is intended for travel linked to economic recovery only", says Manon Cyr, Vice-President of the EIJB RG and Mayor of Chibougamau.

The GREIBJ congratulates the citizens of Eeyou Istchee James Bay for their resilience to the confinement and health directives. "This consistent discipline has given us in an enviable regional status: there are currently seven cases for the Jamesians and eight among the Cree. We are the only region in Quebec with no community contamination. This is exceptional." notes Grand Chief Bosum.

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