
News Release Communiqué

LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT WITH THE CREES OF EYYOU ISTCHEE (QUEBEC): FULFILLING LONG-STANDING PROMISES

CHISASIBI, Québec, July 7, 2010 – The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Dr. Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), and the Honourable Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut, today signed the *Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement* (EMRLCA).

The Agreement provides certainty with respect to the ownership and use of lands and natural resources in the Eeyou Marine Region, balancing the rights of the Québec Crees and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. The Agreement settles issues dating back to the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* of 1975, to which the Crees are signatories.

"This Agreement guarantees that the Crees can continue to occupy and use the offshore area as they have traditionally done. If development comes to the offshore area, the Crees will have a say in how it is carried out and in how remediation and compensatory measures are decided. Moreover, the Cree Trappers Association will participate in the research to be done in the offshore and in the rules that guide wildlife harvesting and conservation," stated Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come.

"With this Agreement, the Crees of Eeyou Istchee are in a position to have a greater control over their destiny and to help build healthy and sustainable Cree communities," said Minister Strahl. "It also shows our government's commitment to resolving land claim issues through productive negotiations rather than litigation."

"On behalf of Nunavummiut, congratulations to the Crees and Canada for concluding this outstanding Agreement. The development of long term Agreements such as this is critically important to the future of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. We look forward to working with the Crees of Eeyou Istchee in the management of our shared resources and in the implementation of this Land Claims Agreement," said Premier Eva Aariak.

The Agreement covers an area of approximately 61,270 square kilometres along the Quebec shore in James Bay and south-eastern Hudson Bay. The islands in this area represent approximately 1,650 square kilometres of land mass of which almost 1,050 square kilometres will be owned by the Crees, including rights to the land and subsurface resources. Islands in the southern Hudson Bay which



cover an area of nearly 400 square kilometres will be jointly owned with the Nunavik Inuit. The federal government will retain ownership over some islands representing approximately 200 square kilometres of land mass in the area. Canada will also retain jurisdiction over the marine waters and ownership of the seabed.

The Agreement sets out three co-management regimes in the Eeyou Marine Region on which the Crees, Canada and Nunavut will be represented. These are the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission, the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board and the Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board.

The Government of Canada will provide a capital transfer to the Crees of \$50 million to be paid over a period of nine years and implementation funding of \$5 million upon the coming into force of the Agreement.

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) represents approximately 16,000 Cree of Québec. In March 2010, following a round of community presentations, a ratification vote was held in the nine Cree communities across the northern part of Québec where most of the Crees reside. Some 70 per cent of all eligible Cree voters endorsed the Agreement. Of those who voted, 95 per cent voted in favor of the Agreement.

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