



Motion Regarding Opposition to Continued Colonialism in the North (Plan Nord)

Whereas, in May 2011, Jean Charest's Liberal government introduced a 25-year plan to exploit the resources of Northern Quebec, covering 1.2 million square kilometers above the 49th parallel including James Bay, Nunavik, and the North Shore by investing \$80 billion in public and private money towards mining, logging, the construction of dams, and the building of infrastructure to support these activities,^{1,2,3}

Whereas, First Nations including but not limited to the Inuit, the Innu, the Cree, the Naskapis of Schefferville, the Algonquin, and the Atikamekw have voiced concerns about the Plan,^{3,4}

Whereas, members of these First Nations communities have expressed their opposition to the Plan through direct actions, such as when Innu activists blockaded highway 138 in protest of the La Romaine Hydroelectric Complex megaproject,⁵

Whereas, many environmental groups^{6,7} have criticized the Plan Nord's destructive policies, such as deforestation (only 10 per cent of forests are to be protected,¹ and the development will have devastating ecological and human consequences^{8,9,10,11}) and the infrastructure that will allow exploitation.

Whereas, the Plan Nord violates the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, impeding on indigenous communities' lands and right to hunt, harvest, fish, and trap in these regions,¹²

Whereas, in the context of extraordinary poverty among women and non-men in the North, the Conseil du statut de la femme has described the Plan as created by men, for men, with the vast majority of jobs to be created going to men,¹³

Whereas, McGill University has deep ties to the Plan Nord, including investments in 15 companies lobbying for the Plan, at least 5 out of 25 Board members involved in promoting the Plan including the President of Hydro-Quebec, and at least one law firm that lobbies for the Plan,¹⁴

Whereas, articles VII and VIII of the Constitution of the SSMU read,

VII) The Students' Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The Society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic, and environmental surroundings.

VIII) The Students' Society commits itself to groups, programs and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or social class



Students' Society of McGill University
Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Office of the Speakers
Bureau de Présidents du Conseil

Whereas, the Plan Nord represents a serious concern in all three issues of human rights, social justice and environmental protection,

Whereas, colonialism is a form of systemic oppression, and can be defined as, “the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples or areas,”¹⁵

Resolved, that the SSMU actively oppose the Plan Nord as a form of colonialism;

Resolved, that the SSMU cut ties with firms and corporations that profit from, lobby for, or are members of professional organizations or interest groups that lobby for the Plan Nord, to be determined by the Financial Ethics Research Committee;

Resolved, that the SSMU work to support indigenous communities in their resistance to the Plan Nord by allocating resources, educating community members, producing informative materials, and pressuring the McGill administration to divest its holdings in companies profiting from or lobbying for the Plan Nord.

Moved by:

Robin Reid-Fraser, Vice-President (External Affairs)
Zachary Rozentsveig, Clubs and Services Representative

References

¹ <http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/english/documents/action-plan.pdf>

² <http://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/363204/coup-de-frein-sur-la-route-du-nord-quebecois>

³ <http://rabble.ca/news/2012/04/jean-charests-destructive-plan-nord>

⁴ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/story/2012/09/28/aboriginal-romaine-river-plan-nord.html>

⁵ <http://www.indigenoussolidaritymontreal.net/press-release-leading-indigenous-opponents-of-plan-nord-to-hold-press-conference-to-challenge-business-convention>

⁶ http://www.naturequebec.org/fichiers/Aires_protegees/CO12-10-02_NouveauPlanNord.pdf

⁷ <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/fr/campagnes/Forets/foret-boreale/a-vous-dagir/gel-du-plan-nord/>

⁸ <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/fr/Blog/rapport-confidentiel-plan-nord-et-coupes-fore/blog/41953/>

⁹ <http://www.ledevoir.com/environnement/actualites-sur-l-environnement/358063/nouvelle-menace-pour-le-caribou-forestier>

¹⁰ <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/01/gold/larmer-text/3>

¹¹ <http://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/3254>

¹² <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2012/10/still-we-colonize/>

¹³ <http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/361729/plan-nord-plan-male>

¹⁴ <http://decorporatizemcgill.wordpress.com/mcgills-investments/>

¹⁵ <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/colonialism>