

## **The Public Hearing Office on Environment (BAPE) makes a Positive Decision on the NIOCAN Project**

**Montreal, October 29, 2002** Following a directive from the Minister of Environment, Mr. André Boisclair, on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the Public Hearing Office on Environment (BAPE) carried out an inquiry on the NIOCAN project in Oka.

The hearings held by the BAPE have allowed the public to present their concerns as well as questions. Various experts from federal and/or provincial ministries as well as consulting experts came to testify and present the results of their work and analysis of the project.

After a detailed review of data and expert studies, the BAPE concluded:

- that the discharge of effluents containing some radioactive substances (process and mine water) would not have a measurable impact on the quality of underground waters. The project would have a minor impact on the natural level of radioactivity in surface waters which would not affect its use for agriculture and on aquatic life;
- the storage in underground stopes of radioactive materials (slags and mine tailings) will not have a measurable impact on the quality of underground waters;
- the storage of mine tailings in the proposed tailing park will not have a measurable impact on the radioactivity of underground waters, surface water and of the atmosphere;
- the discharge of dust from the plant will not have a measurable impact on the quality of air;
- it is unlikely that an increase of radon infiltration into residences can be measured even in the vicinity of the mine as a result of blasting or other mine activities.

This decision reinforces the Environment Impact Study prepared by Roche Ltée, and Senes Consultants Ltd., for NIOCAN.

Questioned on the impact of this decision by the BAPE on the agricultural communities of Oka and Kanesatake; NIOCAN said, *"Both communities together with NIOCAN welcomed the decision of the Minister of Environment last April for an enquiry by the BAPE."*

*The technical expertise of the BAPE combined to expert's studies has revealed that the NIOCAN project is of the highest standards in terms of environment. This should fully reassure both communities and eliminate any doubt whatsoever as to the quality of the agricultural products on the carbonatite of Oka and the absence of any impact by the NIOCAN project".*

NIOCAN now awaits the decision of the Quebec Administrative Tribunal (TAQ) due in November 2002 to confirm the 2001 positive decision taken by the Agricultural Land Commission (CPTAQ) with regards to the use of some land for the construction of the project.

As soon as the TAQ delivers its decision, NIOCAN will endeavor to complete all remaining requests from the Ministry of Environment as soon as feasible so as to obtain its Certificate of Authorization (C.A.).

The C.A. is required before making a production decision and the senior financing.

**Niocan Inc. is a minerals resource company that owns deposits of niobium in the Oka area. Current proven and provable reserves point towards a minimum 17 years of operation and an estimated recoverable value of more than \$1.0 billion. Niocan is working towards a start-up of these operations and the production of ferroniobium. Ferroniobium is used in the growing production of specialty alloys used in the aerospace and power generation industries, as well as in high strength low alloy steel used in the automobile, construction and pipeline sectors.**

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