

## **Court of Quebec Rejects UPA's Niocan Project Appeal**

**Montreal, November 25, 2003** — The Cour du Québec rejects an appeal of the Quebec Administrative Tribunal's (TAQ) decision supporting the Niocan niobium mining project in Oka, brought forward by the Union of Agricultural Producers (UPA) Outaouais-Laurentides.

Since Niocan tabled a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of its project, Niocan received favourable decisions from the following regulatory agencies:

- The Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources, recognizing the quality of the project, awarded Niocan a mining lease, as well as other required authorisations.
- On June 26, 2001, a crucial step in the process was successfully completed with the project's approval, by the Quebec Agricultural Lands Protection Commission (CPTAQ), authorising the use of 9.2 hectares of agricultural land for the mining complex's infrastructure.
- The Bureau des audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), were mandated to report on the potential environmental and public health impacts of radioactivity resulting from Niocan's mining and niobium refining operations. Following an exhaustive analysis, the BAPE concluded: "... the environmental impact associated with the project will be negligible and no impact on public health should be seen".
- On June 16, 2003, the TAQ, mandated to review any opposing views to the CPTAQ's decision, issued a 156 page report retaining the Commission's appropriation of land for the project, as well as the conditions it stipulated.
- Five federal ministries, including the Ministry of the Environment, concluded, after reviewing all environmental data on the project, that there were no issues that required their intervention.

**The way is now clear for the issuance of the project's Certificate of Authorisation, by the Quebec Ministry of the Environment. Niocan management and engineering consultants from various firms have been exchanging information with the Ministry over the last three years. All issues raised by the Ministry are well documented and have been thoroughly discussed in numerous meetings.**

**Having successfully cleared all regulatory and public hearings on the project, Niocan is confident that the Ministry will issue its Certificate of Authorisation before the end of this year.**

**Niocan is a mineral resources company with proven and provable deposits of niobium for at least 17 years of operation, with a current mineral value estimated at \$1 billion. The company's focus is on the development of its ferroniobium project. Ferroniobium is used in the production of special alloys used in the aerospace industry, in turbines and in high strength steels used primarily in automobiles, building structural components and pipelines.**

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