



NEWS RELEASE  
For immediate release

## **Clarifications regarding the municipality of Grenville-sur-la-Rouge's position and willingness to protect the Rouge River**

***The municipality is acting within its legal authorities and financial capacities to protect the local economy and land bordering the Rouge River, and to preserve its public character.***

**Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, April 4th, 2019** - The future of Hydro-Québec surplus lands located on the edges of the Rouge River corridor is currently the subject of significant media coverage, and the municipality believes it is essential that it clarify some of the comments which have been made so that the interests of its citizens are defended, and its desire to preserve the Rouge River is heard.

The recreational/tourism vocation of this portion of our territory has already been established for several years, and consultations with our citizens over the years have confirmed it. The document « Réflexion territoriale stratégique et participative portant sur le corridor de la rivière Rouge et ses environs – Plan d'action » (Strategic and Participatory Territorial Reflection on the Rouge River Corridor and its Surroundings - Action Plan) which is available on the municipality's website clearly illustrates this positioning.

This sector of the Rouge River is already highlighted by various activities of this type, including rafting companies and campgrounds. We want these organizations to continue to operate and grow, and our actions are in that direction. We want to preserve the rights they currently enjoy.

We issued a joint announcement with the MRC d'Argenteuil this morning asking Quebec Premier François Legault to put an end to the current sales process in which Hydro-Québec intends to dispose of these lands on the public market in order to offer it to private interests.

According to the Regulations which govern the conditions of disposal of surplus immovable assets applicable to all government Departments and public entities (chapter C-65), division III clearly states that the disposition of immovable assets must first be in favour of the municipality and the MRC. We intend to fully exercise this right, and are surprised that Hydro-Québec is refusing it.

As a response remains pending regarding the government's position for a disposal in partnership with Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec (SÉPAQ), and considering Hydro-Québec's expiring deadlines, the municipality filed an offer to purchase the land on December 21st, 2018 at the asking price. This was refused on January 10th, 2019 by Hydro-Québec, which declined any request for discussion or negotiation from the municipality. This offer modified certain initial conditions set out by Hydro-Québec, in order to respect the legal framework, and also adjusted certain usages.

In its offer, the municipality considers acquiring the lands to preserve their recreational/tourism vocation, and to enlarge its infrastructures, in particular its municipal camp-site and the addition of a public parking. A limited portion of the land suitable for this purpose could be sold for projects that respect the vocation of the community, making it possible to increase the property value of the municipality and thus help finance the acquisition.

The Municipality of Grenville-sur-la-Rouge reiterates its interest in the preservation of this valuable natural environment, and hopes that joint discussions with the Government of Quebec, Hydro-Québec, the MRC and our representatives can take place to promote the valuation of this exceptional site.

Although the municipality of Grenville-sur-la-Rouge made an offer to purchase in order to preserve this valuable environment, the scenario still favoured by the municipality and the MRC d'Argenteuil remains that the Quebec government should be the purchasers of these lands and that their management be entrusted in the SÉPAQ, in accordance with the resolutions adopted during the summer of 2018. This scenario preserves the public character in perpetuity, and contributes to the development of the network of protected zones in Quebec, while having significant economic benefits for the region.

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**Source:** Municipality of Grenville-sur-la-Rouge

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