

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

A PETITION IN FAVOUR OF PROTECTION MONT-ORFORD NATIONAL PARK TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL GATHERS ALMOST 8000 SIGNATURES... AND COUNTING!

Magog, March 21 2005 – Representatives of a group that calls itself “*Orford pour un parc sans condos*” (Orford for a park without condos) will be present at the National Assembly in Quebec, tomorrow Wednesday March 23, for the official presentation of the first part of a petition that gathered almost 8000 signatures requesting the protection of Mont-Orford National Park.

Shefford MNA and Committee on Culture president, Mr. Bernard Brodeur, will submit the petition at 2 p.m.

The petitioners have signed the following statement:

I AM OPPOSED TO THE REMOVAL OF LANDS FROM THE MONT ORFORD NATIONAL PARK AND I ASK THE PREMIER, JEAN CHAREST, TO RESPECT THE PARKS ACT AND THE SPIRIT OF THE ACT BY REFUSING BOTH THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CURRENT BOUNDARIES OF THE PARK AND THE PROPOSED ILLEGAL LANDSWAP AND IN SO DOING MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE MONT ORFORD NATIONAL PARK.

It is important to underline the personal implication of each and every petitioner who had to provide their address and sign the petition before forwarding it by mail. This shows support from citizens that are involved and ready to actively defend their park. It carries a lot more weight than simply adding series of names taken from lists of organizations.

These thousands of signatures are added to the many briefs and verbal presentations that explained the need to protect the Park that were made during last month’s hearings of the Bureau d’audiences publiques en environnement. These briefs were supported by many experts, lawyers and regional and national environmental groups. According to the group, the sum of the briefs, presentations and thousands of signatures is proof that the promoters have **no social consensus** on this project but that quite the contrary, it generates **strong and massive opposition** because of its impact on the conservation park that is Mont Orford Park.

The petition is still in circulation and the group will keep gathering signatures until Cabinet renders its decision.

Surprised by Minister Reid’s position, Mrs. Gisèle Lacasse Benoit, spokesperson for the group, said that “We deplore the fact that Mr. Reid, MNA for Orford, has come out in favour of this project. To our knowledge, it is the first time in the BAPE’s history that a MNA has publicly announced being in favour of a project while one of their colleagues, Environment Minister Mulcair in this case, is still studying the report of the BAPE. At this point, Mr. Reid has a duty of reserve and cabinet solidarity. To take a position even before

having read the conclusions of this important commission of inquiry shows a lack of respect not only for the Bureau d'audiences publiques en environnement but also for his colleague, Mr. Mulcair, who is in charge of the file.”

Mont Orford Park is a park that deserves to be respected, not to be hacked to bits.

La Fondation Marécage Memphrémagog

L'Association de préservation du lac Magog

L'Association des propriétaires riverains du lac Bowker

L'Association pour la protection de l'environnement du lac Orford

L'Association pour la protection de l'environnement du lac Stukely Inc.

Le Club de conservation chasse et pêche Memphrémagog

Le Memphrémagog Conservation Inc.

Les Amis du Marais de la Rivière aux Cerises

Les Amis du parc du Mont-Orford

Et le regroupement Orford pour un parc sans condo

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Au nom du regroupement Orford pour un parc sans condos

