

The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach and IOC sign the “Aganow” agreement

31.01.2023 | [Business Wire](#)

The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach and the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) today signed an agreement to establish a mutually beneficial relationship based on dialogue, collaboration and trust between the company and the community over the coming decades. The agreement was named "Aganow", which refers to "iron ore" in the Naskapi language.

This socio-economic agreement aims to create opportunities for greater participation by Naskapi people in IOC's activities through training and development, employment, collaboration on environmental projects, and procurement. It will also protect and encourage the practice of traditional activities and provide long-term financial benefits to the Naskapi Nation.

Chief Theresa Chemaganish of the Naskapi Nation said: "Naskapi recent history is closely linked to that of IOC's. Our grandparents left Fort Chimo (now Kuujjuaq) by boat and by foot, in the 1950's, to settle in IOC's new mining town of Schefferville and had to adapt to a completely different lifestyle. Times have changed tremendously since then and our Nation now has its modern treaty, is self-governing since the 1980's and is focused on its future.

"The Aganow Agreement will help the Naskapi address many priorities, such as protecting and promoting its language and culture, providing adequate housing, creating meaningful and satisfying employment opportunities, protecting the environment and improving general quality of life. Our Elders have suffered prejudice and discrimination, most often quietly. The Aganow Agreement is not a conclusion, but rather a new chapter in the reconciliation process and will hopefully help those who suffered to heal and find meaning."

IOC President and Chief Executive Officer Mike McCann said: "Aganow reflects IOC's solid commitment to developing mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous partners. Over the last ten years, we have made significant progress, signing agreements with all five Indigenous communities present in the regions where we operate. We appreciate the meaningful collaboration we have had with the Naskapi Nation and look forward to working together with them as we continue to integrate our goal of reconciliation in our daily actions."

The agreement is the result of approximately two years of negotiations. It includes an expression of regret from IOC for its lack of understanding of the Nation's historic reality, culture and livelihood in the past.

In recent years, IOC and the Naskapi Nation have had the opportunity to collaborate on a number of projects, including sharing expertise with Tshiuetin Rail Transportation, of which the Naskapi Nation is a shareholder, bringing fiber optic to the community and supporting a prefeasibility study for a caribou farm project.

Notes to editors

The community of Kawawachikamach is located near Schefferville, Quebec, where IOC carried out mining operations and exploration activities between 1954 and 1982. IOC's operations straddled the Quebec-Labrador border. Approximately 975 Naskapi live in Kawawachikamach and the surrounding area today.

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Category: IOC

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Die URL für diesen Artikel lautet:

<https://www.rohstoff-welt.de/news/434409--The-Naskapi-Nation-of-Kawawachikamach-and-IOC-sign-the-Aganow-agreement.html>

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