



JOINT RESPONSE
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Adopting the REAFIE: a missed opportunity to adequately meet environmental realities

MONTREAL, September 3, 2020 – After months of consultations, the Regulatory scheme applying to activities on the basis of their environmental impact (REAFIE), keystone of the reform to the Environment Quality Act (EQA), has officially been adopted on September 2nd. Although there have been some improvements such as clarity and structure, the adopted regulation does not adequately meet the objectives of the EQA's reform and the environmental issues we are facing today. Even though there has been a commitment to ensure Quebec will establish an authorization scheme that meets the highest standards for protecting the environment and for the government to actively listen, this has not been reflected in the adopted version of the regulation. The Quebec government just closed a window of opportunity to develop an accurate climate test as well as tools that would allow better understanding of environmental impacts such as climate and cumulative effects from activities taking place in its jurisdiction.

“Despite a strong consensus in Quebec for combating climate change and protecting the environment, and unlike other jurisdictions that have been doing it for several years, the government refuses to seriously consider the climate effects of activities under its environmental authorization scheme,” said executive director of the Quebec Environmental Law Center (CQDE) Geneviève Paul. “Whether it is from a scientific, economic, or social viewpoint, it was the responsible action to take. It is hard to justify such a decision in a context of climate emergency.”

“Except for maintaining some significant improvements in the accessibility of information for the general public,” she adds, “the regulation undermines some of the main advances allowed by the reform of the EQA.”

“If the government is serious about trying to reach the targeted greenhouse gas emissions of a 37.5% reduction by 2030, they need the Minister to assess emissions before and after projects, including their cumulative effects,” says Suzuki Foundation co-executive director (Interim) Diego Creimer. “This target is already well below what science is recommending today.”

The CQDE and the David Suzuki Foundation deplore the lack of an accurate climate test within the draft REAFIE as well as insufficient examination of the planned activities' cumulative effects. The two organizations hope that these fundamental issues will be fully integrated when the regulation will be revised.

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About CQDE:

The [Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement](#) (Quebec Environmental Law Centre), Quebec's only environmental law charity, offers independent legal expertise and education tools to citizens and law students, contributes to the development of robust and effective environmental laws and uses the law to protect the environment and citizens' rights to access justice.

About the David Suzuki Foundation:

The [David Suzuki Foundation](#) provides environmentally friendly life solutions. Our key drivers of change are science, education, and civic engagement. We seek to encourage all Canadian citizens to address the environmental challenges we are facing as a community. Our foundation is an independent charity organization supported by nearly 30,000 donors as well as thousands of additional sympathizers.