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# The Gaspé **SPEC**

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## CEMENT PLANT:

# Environmental groups and Lafarge Canada use courts to get BAPE to intervene

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON: - The *Centre québécois du droit à l'environnement*, *Environnement Vert-plus* and Lafarge Canada have united to ask the Quebec Superior Court to force Quebec's Department of Environment to submit the Port Daniel Cement Plant project to an assessment by the *Bureau d'audiences publiques en environnement*.

The legal action aims to nullify the authorization issued by Environment Minister David Heurtel in June to build the plant. Construction of the \$1.055 billion venture started slowly during late spring but is now moving ahead.

The two environmental groups and Lafarge Canada, a competitor of the Port Daniel Cement Plant want to convince the courts that the Quebec government was wrong when they considered the 1995 cement plant project and the similar 2014 project.

"The actual project is totally different. It is more than double the size of the 1995 project," summarizes lawyer Michel Bélanger, of the *Centre québécois du droit à l'environnement*. Mr. Bélanger created the environment group 25 years ago to defend ecological causes, sometimes all the way to court.

To support his argument, Mr. Bélanger gives the exam-

ple of the power dam built several years ago on the Ste. Marguerite River, near Sept-Îles. "The project was submitted to the BAPE (*Bureau d'audiences publiques en environnement*) the first time, and came close to being sent a second time because five years had elapsed between the government's authorization and the start of construction. In the case of Port Daniel, we're talking about a 15-year delay! We are also talking about burning a type of fuel (petroleum coke) which is extremely polluting," adds Mr. Bélanger.

He also emphasizes that the Port Daniel plant alone will emit close to 10% of Quebec's industrial greenhouse gases.

In 1995, the first promoter of the Port Daniel Cement Plant project, Cimbec Canada, obtained two authorizations from the Quebec government. One authorization was for preliminary work and one for a marine terminal, from where the expected yearly production of cement, one million tonnes, was to be exported.

Back then, the project was submitted days before the new environmental act came into force, subjecting every major industrial venture to a full public environmental assessment presided over by the BAPE.



Photo: C. Dow

## 55 years selling boats!

Cynthia Dow

You have probably passed him on Route 132 many times without knowing his name. Hector Le Gresley of Newport, 69 years of age, has spent the last 55 summers selling miniature sailboats to tourists on the side of the road. "I learned from a Mr. Albert of Newport, who actually began making the boats in Ontario," he explained. "He would bring his boats here to sell in the summer." Mr. Le Gresley was originally a lumberjack and then worked at the former fishplant in Newport for many years. He enjoys spending his winters making the boats, with an axe and carving knife, out of mostly cedar and maple. His wife helps with the varnish, but Mr. Le Gresley does everything else, including sewing the tiny sails. He said this year the tourism season seems particularly slow, and even if people do stop they often don't buy, or buy the cheaper models. During a recent gorgeous summer day he told SPEC that in the 1970s and 80s there were about 40 craftsmen working on the tiny boats in the area, now "I am one of only a few."

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