



Regroupement
Vigilance Mines
Abitibi-Témiscamingue



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIVE ORGANIZATIONS ARE ASKING THE MINISTER TO WITHDRAW
5161 MINING CLAIMS AFFECTING THE ESKERS OF ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE**

Val-d'Or, May 25, 2022 - Five regional and national organizations are joining forces to ask the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to withdraw all 5161 mining claims covering all or part of the eskers in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region and to immediately withdraw mining activities on eskers that are not currently claimed. An official letter to this effect with a 30-day deadline was sent to the Minister this morning by representatives of Québec Meilleure Mine, Eau Secours, Action boréale, Regroupement vigilance mines de l'Abitibi et du Témiscamingue (Revimat) and Mining Watch Canada.

This request is based on sections 82 and 304 of the *Mining Act*, which allows the Minister to withdraw mining titles in order to prevent prospecting, research, exploration and mining activities for utility purposes and the public interest. Eskers are unique geological structures that owe their formation to the ice ages and a particular pattern of sedimentation. The eskers of Abitibi-Témiscamingue are also known for their ability to filter, retain and store the water that flows through them, and are particularly likely to harbour a rich biodiversity including endemic species. Due to their highly porous nature, eskers are fragile and susceptible to groundwater contamination across large distances.

Although they occupy less than 7% of the region's territory, nearly 60% of the area of the eskers is wholly or partially subject to mining claims. The territory covered by the groups' request represents barely 4% of the region's territory, for a combined area of approximately 2,600 square kilometres.

According to the Quebec Ministry of the Environment's Ecological Reference Framework, the region of the Abitibi lowlands has a serious deficit of protected areas (8.41%) — far from the international and Quebec targets of 17% per natural province by 2020, and the goal of 30% by 2030. A major impediment to achieving these goals is the fact that the region is largely covered by mining claims.

This joint request comes on the eve of the [2022 Esker forum](#) organized by the Société de l'eau souterraine Abitibi-Témiscamingue, which will be held on May 26 and 27, 2022 at the Val-d'Or campus of the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The forum will include participation by the signatories.

Data on eskers and mining titles in Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Area of Abitibi-Témiscamingue under mining titles (2022, GESTIM)	1 426 673 ha 14 267 km²
Area of eskers in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (2022, MFFP)	443 275 ha 4 432 km²
Area of mining titles covering entirely or partially eskers in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (2022, GESTIM)	261 972 ha 2 620 km²
Quantity of mining titles in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (2022, GESTIM)	28 108
Quantity of mining claims on eskers (mai 2022, Gestim)	5 161
Percentage of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue area covered by mining titles (2022, GESTIM)	22,07 %
Percentage of the area of Abitibi-Témiscamingue covered by eskers (2022, MFFP)	6,86 %
Percentage of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue territory under mining titles covering entirely or partially eskers (2022, GESTIM et MFFP)	4,05 %
Percentage of the area of eskers fully or partially under mining titles in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (2022, GESTIM et MFFP)	59,1 %

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Source : MiningWatch Canada

[Letter](#) sent to the Energy and Natural Resources minister

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