

## **The Outaouais has the potential to develop a series of hydroelectric projects**

**Montreal, October 6, 2011** – According to an *Economic Note* published today by the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI), several regions of Quebec could develop medium scale hydroelectric power plants (from 50 to 125 MW), a niche that has yet to be exploited and that would generate several million dollars' worth of private investments.

In the Outaouais region, the Kipawa reservoir, built by the Canadian government at the beginning of the last century, is already more than sufficient to add a full-time 70 MW power plant without significantly impacting the environment. Developed by the community, this project would be by far the most profitable in Quebec at this time, and would provide a return on investment within just a few years.

Between the Mercier Dam and the Paugan Reservoir, in the Maniwaki – Grand Remous region, there are at least three interesting sites for projects, for a total potential on the order of 130 to 160 MW. One of these is situated on the Kitigan Zibi native reserve, just south of Maniwaki. In their current state, the very steep banks make the river difficult to access. The project could include exceptional touristic and outdoor development, in addition to providing an important road link between the two banks of the Gatineau River.

“When we think of hydroelectric dams, the first things that spring to mind are gigantic projects like the one in James Bay, which are Hydro-Québec’s specialty. But there are many projects of a more modest scale that could be put forward by local communities, whose economic impact analyses would take into account tourist and recreational as well as real estate considerations,” says F. Pierre Gingras, specialist in industrial engineering and associate researcher at the MEI. He cites as examples the Taureau and Gouin reservoirs, which resulted directly from hydroelectric projects and are among Quebec’s most heavily frequented leisure, fishing and outdoor activity sites.

The author also reminds us that hydroelectricity is a clean and renewable energy source. It was officially recognized as such by 154 countries at the 2004 Bonn International Conference for Renewable Energies. Mr. Gingras estimates that each megawatt installed avoids on average the combustion of 2,500 tonnes of fuel and the emission of 10,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases, as compared to a thermal power plan like the Tracy generating station.

The Economic Note, entitled *The Neglected Potential of Medium Scale Hydroelectric Projects*, prepared by F. Pierre Gingras, specialist in industrial engineering and associate researcher at the MEI, can be consulted free of charge at [www.iedm.org](http://www.iedm.org).

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- 30 -

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