



## **PRESS RELEASE** **For immediate release**

### **The opposition is growing: eleven organizations seek to intervene in the CQDE's lawsuit against C-5**

**Gatineau, April 27, 2026** – Eleven environmental, scientific, medical, and human rights organizations from across Canada are seeking leave to intervene in the legal action brought by the Quebec Environmental Law Centre (CQDE) against the federal *Act respecting national interest projects (C-5)*.

In its lawsuit against this law — passed under closure in June 2025 despite strong opposition from environmental groups, Indigenous communities, and civil society — the CQDE condemns the granting of excessive and highly discretionary powers to the federal government. The organization also warns against the risk of circumventing environmental laws in the name of an undefined “national interest.”

By asking the courts for permission to intervene in this case, Amnesty International, the *Association des biologistes du Québec (ABQ)*, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (ACME), Équiterre, Greenpeace Canada, the Trottier Energy Institute (IÉT), the David Suzuki Foundation, MiningWatch Canada, *Nature Québec*, SNAP Québec, and the *Regroupement des organismes environnementaux en énergie (ROÉÉ)* intend to support the CQDE's initiative.

These organizations seek to voice their concerns in court regarding a law they worry will have serious consequences for the environment, public health, the integrity of science, and human rights.

#### **C-5: A Threat to the Environment**

Équiterre, Greenpeace Canada, Mining Watch Canada, *Nature Québec*, the ROÉÉ, and SNAP Québec are asking the courts to hear their case to highlight the dangers the Act poses to the environment.

These environmental groups believe that by circumventing and weakening essential environmental protection mechanisms to accelerate industrial megaprojects, C-5 opens

the door to arbitrary decisions made without rigorous assessments of impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, and the climate.

“Quebecers have been clear: they prioritize projects that improve the resilience of their communities and their living environments. C-5 risks doing exactly the opposite without giving people a say. We have no guarantee that the public interest will take precedence over vested interests, which will do everything in their power to ensure that the selection and approval process for megaprojects — which will be decided behind closed doors — works in their favor.” - Marc-André Viau, Head of Government Relations at Équiterre

*“While dozens of countries are currently meeting in Colombia to plan their transition away from fossil fuels, Canada is passing a law to accelerate their development. C-5 is not a response to the climate crisis; it’s a step backward.” - Louis Couillard, Climate and Energy Campaign Manager at Greenpeace Canada*

*“We’ve seen it too often: when communities aren’t properly involved, mining projects leave lasting scars on the land and the people. C-5 opens the door to extending these mistakes on a massive scale — and faster than ever.” - Jamie Kneen, National Program Co-Lead at MiningWatch Canada*

*“We have enacted laws designed to protect the land and biodiversity. C-5 allows the federal government to circumvent them with the stroke of a pen. This is a direct attack on our collective autonomy and on environmental laws.” - Alice-Anne Simard, Executive Director of Nature Québec*

*“The energy transition is a collective choice, not a decision the government can make on its own. C-5 bypasses this essential democratic debate at the very moment we need it most.” - Jean-Pierre Finet, energy analyst at ROEE*

*“Laws essential to the protection of our species and natural environments can now be swept aside with a simple executive order. C-5 jeopardizes environmental gains developed over decades to guide government action, and it is our responsibility to defend them.” - Alain Branchaud, biologist and executive director of SNAP Québec*

## **C-5: A Threat to Canadians’ Health**

For their part, the CAPE and the David Suzuki Foundation wish to voice their concerns about the law’s impact on public health.

These two organizations believe that by allowing environmental laws to be circumvented, C-5 exposes people to increased health risks. Decisions made without comprehensive analyses could have direct consequences, particularly on air and water quality and living environments, in addition to depriving communities of the legal recourses necessary to challenge these decisions.

*"The links between environmental degradation and human health are well-documented, measurable, and irrefutable. C-5 allows decisions with potentially irreversible impacts on public health to be made without rigorous assessments; this is exactly the opposite of what medical ethics and the evidence require." - Dr. Helen Hsu, physician, representative of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment*

*"Protecting the health of Canadians means protecting the environment in which they live. C-5 sacrifices this protection in the name of short-term economic growth, with no regard for communities — and in particular for Indigenous peoples whose territories and rights are directly at stake." - Sabaa Khan, Executive Director of the David Suzuki Foundation Quebec and Atlantic*

### **C-5: A Threat to Science**

The ABQ and the IET are concerned that C-5 undermines the proper and rigorous consideration of science in decisions with major impacts. By allowing certain projects — hand-picked at the executive's discretion — to bypass safeguards intended to govern risk assessments, it undermines the integration of evidence in decision-making processes for the benefit of all.

By seeking to promote and accelerate the implementation of certain projects at all costs, the government is depriving itself of the crucial expertise of biologists and climate and energy scientists. Without adequate consideration of science, the government is exposing the public to increased risks.

*"Biologists document, measure, and assess environmental impacts on a daily basis. To disregard this expertise in decisions that have lasting effects on living organisms is to opt for improvisation where scientific rigor is non-negotiable. The expertise of biologists is precisely aligned with this approach to risk prevention and anticipation." - Bernice Chabot-Giguère, Executive Director, Association des biologistes du Québec*

*"Major energy decisions involve decades of infrastructure and billions of dollars in public funds. Making such decisions without relying on comprehensive, independent analyses or close monitoring jeopardizes the transition at the very moment when Canada should be accelerating it." - Normand Mousseau, Scientific Director, Institut de l'Énergie Trottier*

### **C-5: A Threat to Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

The human rights organization Amnesty International, French-speaking Canadian section, wishes to bring to the Court's attention the heightened risk of erosion of the rule of law posed by the Act. By establishing an unprecedented concentration of powers in the hands of the executive branch, Amnesty International is concerned about the delegation of excessive powers without adequate safeguards, which runs counter to the separation of

powers — a critical requirement of the rule of law.

Furthermore, by infringing upon access to justice for challenges to decisions made under the Act, the legislation risks undermining the right to a healthy environment as well as civil and political rights, which are protected by the Canadian Constitution and international law.

*“The concentration of powers that C-5 confers on the executive branch is not just an environmental issue; it is a human rights issue. When a government can set aside its own laws by executive order, without adequate oversight mechanisms, the rule of law itself is threatened. Canada has obligations under international human rights law and these apply fully here.” - France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director of Amnesty International, French-speaking Canadian Section*

In support of the CQDE’s legal action, which asks the courts to strike down the law, these organizations hope that their participation will enable the Court to fully assess the scope of this law and its consequences.

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#### **Signatory organizations:**

Amnesty International  
Association des biologistes du Québec (ABQ)  
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)  
David Suzuki Foundation  
Équiterre  
Greenpeace Canada  
Institut de l’énergie Trottier (IÉT)  
MiningWatch Canada  
Nature Québec  
SNAP Québec  
Regroupement des organismes environnementaux en énergie (ROÉÉ)

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