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**Task Force on Tax Assistance for the Resource Regions
and the New Economy**

First Day of Meetings in Val-d'Or

Québec, September 12, 2007 - The Task Force on Tax Assistance for the Resource Regions and the New Economy initiated its series of meetings in Val-d'Or, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, on September 11. The meetings will continue September 12 in Montréal. They will resume on September 19 in Saint-Georges.

Summary of the first day of meetings

During the morning, the three members of the Task Force met with representatives of four companies from the region, all of which benefit from tax assistance for the resource regions or the new economy.

The afternoon was given over to public hearings. The Task Force received opinions and suggestions from four organizations dedicated to the region's economic development.

- The four organizations emphasized the positive impact of the tax assistance on the region's companies that have had access to it. They all insisted on the challenge facing Abitibi-Témiscamingue to diversify its economy, as well as on the impact of the current mining boom on wage levels.
- In particular, members of the task force questioned the organizations on the links made between the tax assistance, job creation and investment, as well as on the duration of the support provided by the government.

Exchanges took place on the tax competition between companies in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and those of other resource regions and central regions. The organizations were also invited to give their view on the need for the tax assistance measures analyzed by the Task Force, and on the form that alternative measures might take. The complete recording of the public hearings will soon be available at: www.gtaf.gouv.qc.ca

The Québec government set up the Task Force on June 27, 2007. Its mandate is to assess the tax assistance for the resource regions and the new economy and its impact, as well as to propose new avenues for the development of the specific territories and activity sectors concerned. The Task Force is chaired by Robert Gagné; the other two members are Luc Godbout and Guy Lacroix.