



Communique

Town of Huntingdon

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAISON RUSSET'S INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Huntingdon, February 27, 2023 – In the context of the wastewater treatment problems of Maison Russet Inc. and consequently, the problems of foul odours coming from the aerated ponds of the wastewater treatment plant, the Town of Huntingdon wishes to inform its citizens of its decision to cease treating the company's process wastewater until such time as the company respects the concentrations of their wastewater set out in the industrial agreement concerning the use of municipal wastewater treatment facilities.

Facts

First, it should be noted that for the past few years, the results of the analysis of the organic material in the effluent of Maison Russet Inc. have shown extremely high values. In 2020, the Town mandated an expert firm in wastewater treatment to accompany the municipal staff in the follow-ups made with the company. After several meetings, the company finally informed us of the corrective measures it intended to take and the pre-treatment system it intended to install. From the outset, the experts hired by the Town advised the company that the proposed solution was inappropriate and that the company would not be able to comply with the prescribed standards with this equipment. In August 2021, despite this, the company proceeded with the installation and commissioning of their pre-treatment equipment.

The results of the analysis of the wastewater of Maison Russet Inc. carried out at the end of August 2021, after the realization of their work, showed that the company had not succeeded in reducing the concentration of its discharges which, on the contrary, had reached exceptional values. Furthermore, it appears that, despite being aware of the issues related to their load exceedances and non-compliance with the discharge standards set out in the agreement, the company increased its production.

In December 2022, the Town of Huntingdon mandated an independent consulting firm to conduct a continuous characterization of Maison Russet's discharges over a 7-day period. The characterization report produced by the firm showed loads that averaged 336% more than the maximum daily load allowed under the agreement.

Problematic: Issues arising from non-compliance with the industrial agreement:

The loads discharged by the company to the municipal sewer system are problematic on several levels:

- a) They significantly increase the level of sludge in the lagoons which will require a new sludge emptying in the short term as the Town has already proceeded with its emptying in the fall of 2020 at a cost of \$870,000;
- b) It causes oxygen deficiency. The odour problem could be very significant during the spring thaw of 2023.
- c) They are likely to end up in the environment because the municipality's treatment plant does not have the capacity to treat this type of load. In the event of overflow at the overflow structures between the company and the treatment plant, the company's loaded water would end up in the Châteauguay River.
- d) As provided for in section 6 of the Regulation respecting municipal wastewater works, chapter Q-2, r. 34. 1, the effluent from any wastewater treatment plant must comply with the discharge standards set out in the said by-law, which provides for administrative penalties of \$10,000 and penal penalties ranging from a maximum of 3 years imprisonment, a fine of \$30,000 to \$6,000,000 or both, to the operator of a municipal wastewater treatment works, in this case the Town of Huntingdon, who does not comply with a discharge standard.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the MPP have been informed in advance of the situation and rest assured that the Town will continue to work in collaboration with the company and the various governmental authorities in this matter. We believe that the reduction of the organic load generated by Maison Russet and the temporary addition of surface aerators to our lagoons will reduce the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and reduce odours.

The Mayor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "André Bernier", is written below the text "The Mayor,".