

Technical landfill site, Gaspé replies to ecologists

Regional environmental board supports the town

Thierry Haroun

GASPE: - The Mayor of Gaspé, François Roussy, thinks that his request to the Québec Ministry of Environment for raising the volume of the town's technical landfill site from 16,000 to 40,000 metric tons (MT) is fully justified. Mr. Roussy is therefore firing back to ecologists who are currently blocking the town's procedure.

Last week's SPEC reported that the Town of Gaspé technical landfill site (LET) which is supposed to be up and running by January 19 according to the Environment Law is facing a deadlock. Why? Because the *Front commun québécois pour une gestion écologique des déchets* (Common Front), an independent environmental board promoting better waste management across the province, refuses to give the go-ahead to the Town's request to the Québec Ministry of Environment to raise the volume of garbage. It will be collected from the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé and Rocher-Percé.

The Common Front has an official say in this story because since the creation of the LET years ago it is involved in the environmental mediation process which includes environmental boards and the Town of Gaspé (the manager and owner of the LET). It was negotiated at the start that the LET would receive 16 000 MT, but last April, the Town of Gaspé asked the Ministry of Environment to raise it to 40,000 MT through a decree modification.

In an interview with SPEC, the mayor of Gaspé, François Roussy explains the reason why such a request has been recently made. "By asking for 40,000 MT we want to give ourselves a manoeuvring



Photo: T. Haroun

Gaspé Mayor, François Roussy,

very seriously but we need a little more oxygen for the LET."

"Yes", admits Mr. Roussy, "there will be tight negotiations between Québec, the Town and the Front commun, but we would also like to see a little more openness from the Front commun and hope that it stops blocking the process."

As for the *Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Gaspésie et des Îles*, the region's environmental board which is not part of the LET environmental mediation, it supports the Town of Gaspé's request. Caroline Duchesne, the director general of the

Conseil says that "the Front Commun looks at this issue only through the environmental lens. In that regard, they are right about the 24,000 MT they propose but this issue should consider other aspects, such as the efforts made by the MRCs over the years, the situation of the regional economy and the social realities."

But then again, the Conseil doesn't give a blank check to the Town of Gaspé. "The Town will have to require from its future clients a clear and immediate commitment regarding the waste management file," concludes Caroline Duchesne.