



## Press release

### **Launching the Research Chair in Coastal Ecosystems and Industrial, Port, and Maritime Activities**

**Québec, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – The Université Laval, the Institut Nordique de Recherche en Environnement et en Santé au Travail (INREST), and the Port of Sept-Îles have announced today the launch of the Research Chair in Coastal Ecosystems and Industrial, Port, and Maritime Activities. The event took place in the presence of the Minister for Transport and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montréal Region, Chantal Rouleau, and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Minister Responsible for the Côte-Nord Region, and acting Minister Responsible for the Capitale-Nationale Region, Jonatan Julien.

The Chair's mission will be to further the knowledge on coastal ecosystem functions in industrial port zones, in order to identify practices that will ensure a sustainable management of these environments.

“It is estimated that coastal regions account for over three quarters of the economic value of the world's ecosystem services, i.e. the benefits to human populations that arise from ecosystems, particularly through the fishing, tourism, and transport industries, or flood protection”, said biologist Philippe Archambault, professor at the Faculty of Science and Engineering of Université Laval, and one of the founders of the project. “However, there is still little data on these environments, hence the necessity to establish a research structure that will allow us to better understand the complex interactions that take place in them.”

Specifically, the Chair's objectives will be:

- To measure the footprint of human activities associated with industrial port zones;
- To describe and quantify the effects of these activities on different coastal sectors;
- To develop methods and tools to distinguish the main natural environmental changes from those associated with human activities;
- To advise and guide organizations in planning and establishing sustainable solutions in order to adapt to the issues that will have been identified.

This Chair is made possible thanks to a \$1 M contribution over five years from INREST (\$500,000) and the Port of Sept-Îles (\$500,000).

“It is with pride that we support the Université Laval and INREST in this partnership to establish this Chair”, declared Pierre D. Gagnon, President and CEO of the Port of Sept-Îles. “Having

initiated the first observatory in the St. Lawrence and the Bay of Sept-Îles in partnership with INREST and the City of Sept-Îles in 2013, it is with conviction and without the slightest hesitation that the Port Authorities support the creation of an innovative Chair that will develop fundamental research to further our knowledge about our precious coastal ecosystems. There is no doubt that this initiative will stimulate the creation of numerous research projects. Partnerships, and collaborations in various regions of our majestic St. Lawrence.”

“The launch of this new Research Chair is a significant moment in INREST’s history and that of its partners”, added INREST’s Executive Director, Julie Carrière, PhD. “This project, which will allow us to develop tools that are adapted for port, industrial, and maritime activities, was initiated by Philippe Archambault and myself, while we were working together on the Environmental Monitoring Observatory for the Bay of Sept-Îles and on projects from the Canadian Healthy Oceans Network (CHONe II), which were partly funded by the Port of Sept-Îles. The collaboration between INREST and the Chair will allow the Institute to increase its reach throughout the scientific community, as well as the port and industrial communities, at provincial, national, and international levels.”

“The creation of this Research Chair is fully in line with the initiatives that our government wishes to see come to life as part of Quebec’s new maritime vision for 2035”, highlighted the Minister for Transport and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montréal Region, Chantal Rouleau. “This maritime vision, which is currently under development, will constitute a flagship element that will guide the government in order to reconcile economic, social, and environmental progress in Quebec.”

“As Minister Responsible for the Côte-Nord Region, I am very happy about the active participation of two institutions from Sept-Îles in this Chair”, commented the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Minister Responsible for the Côte-Nord Region, Jonatan Julien. “As acting Minister Responsible for the Capitale-Nationale Region, I am proud to see these two regions, which I have had the privilege of representing, work together on a common project. And as Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I feel even happier, considering the importance of the natural resources sector in the regional economy.”

### **About INREST**

The Institut Nordique de Recherche en Environnement et en Santé au Travail (INREST) is a non-profit organization that focuses on matters relating the environment and occupational health and safety. INREST stood out on the international scene by establishing the largest environmental observatory in an industrial port zone for the conservation of Quebec’s marine ecosystems, as well as by creating the Centre for Industrial Port Expertise (CEIP), a division of INREST.

### **About the Port of Sept-Îles**

Boasting diversified and cutting-edge facilities, the Port of Sept-Îles is the largest ore-handling port in North America, with an anticipated volume of close to 35 million tons for 2020. A

pioneer in the St. Lawrence with the establishment of the first environmental observatory for its marine ecosystem, sustainable development is firmly anchored in its values and its actions.

**Source :**

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