



Press release
For immediate release

TEMISCAMING REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO A POLICE PRESENCE ADAPTED TO REGIONAL REALITIES AND REMINDS PROVINCIAL LEADERS THAT THEIR DECISIONS COULD BECOME THE GREATEST THREAT TO THE VITALITY OF OUR REGIONS

Temiscaming, October 31, 2025 — The Town of Temiscaming strongly reacts to the Sûreté du Québec's announcement regarding the potential reduction of police services in several regions, including ours.

As a border town and gateway to Quebec from Ontario, Temiscaming occupies a strategic position in terms of public safety. Issues related to interprovincial travel, drug trafficking, and property crimes require a constant, stable, and well-adapted police presence. For decades, local SQ leadership and municipal officials have recognized this undeniable reality.

A role that extends beyond security

In regional areas, police officers represent far more than a law enforcement presence. They play a key role in community life — participating in school committees, conducting prevention activities, mentoring youth, and supporting social organizations. Their involvement directly contributes to community cohesion and safety.

"Public safety cannot be managed from hundreds of kilometres away" said Temiscaming Mayor Alain Gauthier. "Local realities must be considered in every decision that affects the safety of our citizens. The loss of our officers' community involvement and the reduction of prevention efforts would be an immeasurable loss. It would be a short-sighted saving."

Repeated and troubling signals

Quebec Premier François Legault and Minister of Public Security Ian Lafrenière have already stated that the SQ's proposed plan would be rejected. However, the Sûreté du Québec must still reduce its spending and both the Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM) and the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) have requested an emergency meeting with SQ management.

The Town of Temiscaming is calling to be part of these discussions to ensure that the border and territorial realities of the Temiscamingue region are fully considered. Public safety and regional economic vitality must remain top government priorities.

Decisions that weaken our communities

In recent years, Temiscaming has faced several administrative decisions with serious consequences:

- The loss of the healthcare corridor to Ontario and the closure of short-term care beds in Temiscaming by the CISSSAT.
- The attempted relocation of the Temiscaming SQ investigator position to Ville-Marie
- An 80% reduction in the number of wildlife officers, despite the importance of hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in the region.

"This is the slow drip torture that successive governments have imposed on us" lamented Mayor Gauthier. "When cuts are made to essential public services such as health or safety, the very vitality of our regions is at risk. For every service lost or relocated, families, seniors, and vulnerable citizens leave. These government decisions have become, on their own, the greatest threat to the vitality of our territories."

Governance that must stay close to the ground

"A simple principle should guide public administration: any administrative decision that affects regional vitality should fall under the responsibility of elected officials, because it is inherently a political matter" added Mayor Gauthier. "In the case of the SQ, this is especially true, as the service is funded not only by provincial taxes, like other services, but also by municipalities. It is inconceivable that such decisions could even be contemplated without consulting the communities concerned."

The Abitibi–Temiscamingue region, recognized as a resource-based economy, already faces an economic imbalance of \$850 million compared to the rest of Quebec. Undermining its vitality also undermines its productivity.

A message of resilience and vigilance

The Town of Temiscaming wishes to reassure its citizens: no final decision has yet been made. The Government of Quebec has reacted quickly, and discussions are ongoing to ensure that regional areas continue to receive adequate service from the Sûreté du Québec.

"Our citizens can rest assured that we will defend their interests with the same determination as we did during the healthcare corridor issue with Ontario" concluded Mayor Gauthier. "We want a community that is safe, vibrant, and respected."

Accountability and governance

Mayor Gauthier also added: *"We are asking the government to clearly define its expectations for public service managers and to establish stronger guidelines governing the decision-making powers of non-elected officials. Administrative decisions that directly affect the vitality of our communities should not fall within their authority."*

The Town of Temiscaming joins the Town of Senneterre and all regional municipalities in demanding equal access to public safety and all other essential public services, regardless of place of residence.

Source :

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