

Office of the Premier

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Partnership to explore iron production facility in Belledune

BELLEDUNE (GNB) – The provincial government will partner with Maritime Iron Inc. to explore the feasibility of an iron production facility in Belledune valued at more than \$1 billion, Premier Brian Gallant announced today.

During construction, 1,000 jobs would be created. Following construction, the plant would employ about 200 people and make use of the extensive infrastructure at the Port of Belledune. This project is one of several options being explored to maintain and grow the economy on New Brunswick's north shore.

"We are pleased to form this partnership to explore the feasibility of this important economic development opportunity," said Gallant. "This project would bring over a billion dollars of investment and create about 1,000 construction jobs to build the iron production facility. Once complete, the iron production facility would create approximately 200 permanent jobs. There is still lots to do, such as more consultations with community leaders and First Nations people, as well as going through the appropriate environmental assessments, but today is a big step forward for this important economic development opportunity."

The facility is projected to produce 1.5 million tonnes of iron annually with a lower environmental footprint due to its use of FINEX iron-making technology developed by POSCO, Korea's largest steelmaker.

"This is a great day for the steel industry in Canada and for New Brunswick," said Maritime Iron executive chairman Greg McKenzie. "With this announcement, we are launching the next wave of iron production and bringing a world-class technology to northern New Brunswick, thanks in large part to our partnership with both the province and with POSCO's FINEX technology."

Following feasibility studies and environmental assessments, Maritime Iron is targeting a construction start in 2019, with first production expected by 2022. Constructing the iron plant will create up to 1,000 construction jobs over the 2.5-year construction period.

“The Carpenters Union in Atlantic Canada is committed to this project which will benefit our members, their communities and New Brunswick as a whole,” said Debra Romero, executive secretary treasurer of the Atlantic Canada Regional Council of Carpenters, Millwrights and Allied Workers. “We believe in this project so strongly that we not only support it but we have invested in it with our own money. Private sector unions need to step up and engage in the development of projects like this and not just stand at the gate looking for jobs after construction. This project will provide significant employment during construction and operations. This is good news for the north Shore and for all of New Brunswick.”

The council represents about 10,000 skilled trades workers in Atlantic Canada including about 3,500 in New Brunswick.

The new iron facility will produce an energy-rich process gas, which could be used by NB Power as an alternative fuel at the Belledune Generating Station. This process gas would reduce coal use at the station and allow for the continued operation of the power plant beyond 2030.

“Maritime Iron has respectfully expressed its commitment to communicating the details of its business plan, and to meaningfully consult and work directly with the Mi'gmaq First Nations of the region,” said Chief David Peter Paul of the Pabineau First Nation and executive member of the Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn. “Maritime Iron understands and fully recognizes the significance of the Relationship, Engagement and Consultation Protocol recently signed with the Belledune Port Authority. They are enthusiastic about partnering with First Nations, reducing carbon emissions at the Belledune Generating Station, and providing contract and long-term employment opportunities for Mi'gmaq people as well as others in Northern New Brunswick.”

The company will produce a refined form of iron for sale to steelmakers and foundries in North America, Europe and the Middle East. There are currently no significant North American producers selling refined iron to steelmakers. Maritime Iron will use iron ore produced in Quebec and Labrador as feedstock, keeping the iron ore value-chain within Canada.

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