

# Hydro-Quebec hires crisis-team PR firm

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OTTAWA — Hydro-Quebec has hired one of the largest public relations firms in the world to help it further damming of the Great Whale River.

The New York based Burson-Marsteller also works for the British Columbia forest industry — under siege at home and abroad for its environmental record — and the Canadian pulp and paper industry, regarded as one of Canada's biggest water polluters.

Burson-Marsteller is famous for crisis management, including the

Union Carbide poisonous gas explosion in Bhopal, India.

In taking Hydro Quebec as a client, Burson-Marsteller is now doing public relations on three of the most high-profile and controversial environmental issues in Canada.

"Our objective is not to whitewash any situation," said Harold Burson, the company's chairman of the board in an interview from New York. "These are major societal problems — they need a lot of resources."

The Cree of northern Quebec fear

the Great Whale project, and the New York environmental movement has taken up their cause. More than 100 native-rights and environmental groups are waging a campaign to get the New York Power Authority to reject a critical \$17 billion contract for electricity from Hydro Quebec.

One of their biggest victories came in August, when New York Gov. Mario Cuomo announced the power authority would take another year to consider the contract. As a result, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa said Great Whale would be delayed one year.