



## TŜILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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### **Tsilhqot'in Statement of Commitment to protect the land that sustains us and our future generations**

**Williams Lake, BC: November 2, 2011:** Today marks the anniversary of the Federal Government's decision rejecting the Prosperity Mine proposal and protecting the environment, waters, fish and fish habitat, grizzly and grizzly habitat and our constitutionally protected rights as First Peoples in our homelands. Once again, we thank the Minister of Environment Jim Prentice and the Federal Government for protecting the public interest and for upholding the rights of First Nations under the Canadian Constitution.

Unfortunately, this dire threat to our people, our lands and our way of life as Tsilhqot'in people continues to this day. The proponent has already submitted a proposal for "New" Prosperity, a mine alternative that it has described in the past as even more environmentally damaging. At the same time, British Columbia recently issued approvals that authorize the proponent to extensively drill, build roads and clear trees throughout this area of such critical importance to our people.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation considers the approvals issued by British Columbia unlawful because of the Province's failure to meaningfully consult or accommodate our Nation or to justify the impacts on our proven Aboriginal rights to hunt and trap throughout those lands. We remain confident that the Federal Government will continue to do the right thing and once again reject this clearly unacceptable mine proposal.

On this, the anniversary of our successful defence of the lands and waters that sustain our people and our culture, the Tsilhqot'in Nation stands united in its sacred commitment to our ancestors and to our future generations – we will honour and we will protect the lands that give us life.

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### TEN REASONS WHY PROSPERITY MINE BID WILL FAIL

Investors hoping to cash in on Taseko Mines Ltd's second Prosperity Mine bid should think back a year. Despite assurances from the company and its president that it would proceed, the company's original bid was soundly rejected by the federal government and share prices plunged.

Once again, there is a proposal before the federal government's Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) and the company's president is saying he is confident it will be approved.

And once again the federal government has no choice but to reject it. Here are 10 reasons why.

1. The company knows its new option is worse than the one that was rejected last year. Here are just two quotes that show it knows it cannot save Teztan Biny (Fish Lake) – only prolong its death throes:

*“Developing Prosperity means draining Fish Lake. We wish it were otherwise. We searched hard for a different way. A way to retain the lake and have the mine. But there is no viable alternative. The lake and the deposit sit side by side. It is not possible to have one without the loss of the other.”* - Brian Battison, V.P. Corporate Affairs, Taseko Mines Ltd. Opening Presentation at the CEAA Review Panel Hearings, March 22, 2010

*“What happens to the water quality in Fish Lake, if you try and preserve that body of water with the tailings facility right up against it, is that over time the water quality in Fish Lake will become equivalent to the water quality in the pore water of the tailings facility, particularly when it's close.”* Scott Jones, V.P. Engineering, Taseko Mines Ltd. Panel Hearing Transcript, CEAA Reg. Doc#2253, v.29, p. 5450

2. The CEAA review panel report was *not* almost the same as the BC EAO rubber-stamp decision. Not even close. The CEAA review panel report found immitigable, devastating impacts to the local fish stocks and endangered grizzly populations, and to the existing and future rights of the Tsilhqot'in and its youth. The problems were so serious that then Minister of the Environment Jim Prentice described the report's findings as *“scathing”* and *“probably the most condemning I have ever read.”*

3. This is *not* a new proposal and does *not* address the issues. It is Mine Development Plan 2, which the company reject lasted year, and which the federal review panel rejected in its report: *“The Panel agrees with the observations made by Taseko and Environment Canada that Mine Development Plans 1 and 2 would result in greater long-term environmental risk than the preferred alternative.”* Federal Review Panel Report, p. 65
4. TML states on page 20 of its new project description that it is submitting the previously rejected second alternative. Quote: *“Option 2 is the basis for the New Prosperity design ...The concepts that lead to the configuration of MDP Option 2 have been utilized to develop the project description currently being proposed.”*
5. The new \$300 million in spending is not for previously unheard of mitigation to make this alternative acceptable. TML states in its Project Description: *“The new development design, predicated on higher long term prices for both copper and gold, would result in a direct increase in capital costs of \$200 million to purchase additional mining equipment to relocate the tailings dam and to move the mine waste around Fish Lake to new locations. This redesign also adds \$100 million in direct extra operating costs over the 20-year mine life to accomplish that task.”*
6. The federal government is required under the Constitution to protect First Nations, which have been found to be under serious threat in this case, and is internationally committed to do so under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This resubmitted plan places even more onus on the federal government to live up to these duties.
7. To approve this mine would show the EA process is meaningless, and would demonstrate that governments are ignoring their obligations - as the Assembly of First Nations made clear this summer in a national resolution of support for the Tsilhqot’in.
8. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has opposed this project since it was first raised in 1995. It soundly rejected it again last year. It has no reason to support it now, nor does the Ministry the Environment, which, as the federal Panel report notes, found last year that Option 2 would be worse than the original bid.
9. In our view, the project cannot get federal approval. The question is will it be rejected on Nov. 7 when CEAA announces next steps, or will be first have to go through a pointless, costly and divisive new review.
10. Natural Resources Canada estimates there are \$350 billion - \$500 billion worth of potential projects on lands that involve aboriginal Title, claims and rights. It makes no sense for governments, industry and investors to back this bad, confrontational proposal and rebuff efforts by First Nations to find a way to create a better mining system.