



Via Fax: (250) 398-5798

July 9, 2010

Tsilhqot'in National Government
253 Fourth Avenue North
William Lake, BC V2G 4T4

To the Tsilhqot'in Chiefs:

Re: Federal Panel decision for the "Prosperity" Mine

First, let me congratulate you and your communities on raising your voices so successfully against the destruction of an area of such profound cultural and spiritual importance to your people.

First Nations struggle every day to express their relationship to their traditional lands in the environmental assessment processes. We know that these processes are not our processes and often First Nations are not heard or understood. Your people have made a difference by speaking for your lands and your sacred places from the heart. I know how difficult these processes can be – efforts like yours move us forward on the challenging path of reconciliation.

I understand that the panel established by the federal government concluded that this project would permanently destroy productive fisheries, including an important traditional fishery that has fed your people for generations, without any prospect of mitigation. The panel said in no uncertain terms that a site of "spiritual power and healing for the Tsilhqot'in" would be destroyed for the storage of mining waste. The panel said the lakes and surrounding lands that would be lost to the mine are of "unique and of special significance" to your people and culture. It said the impacts on your proven and asserted Aboriginal rights would be significant and that the mine would have "high magnitude, long term irreversible" impacts on your people and culture.

I understand that the decision is now in the hands of the Federal Cabinet. In many ways, this decision speaks to the future of reconciliation for First Nations in Canada. It can move us forward or it can set us back. If the federal government were to approve this mine for the profit of others, notwithstanding these clear and unequivocal warnings from a federal panel, then it is hard to see how this is any different from the long, painful process of colonization that we are told Canada as a nation has moved beyond. I am hopeful and confident that there is another path.

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You have the full support and commitment of the Assembly of First Nations at every stage of this process. This project cannot be approved and your lands must be protected.

Respectfully,



Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
National Chief