

Declaration of Support for Tsilhqo'tin National Government re Prosperity Mine

June 9, 2010: The members of BC's First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining are in absolute support of the Tsilhqot'in National Government and its call for the federal government to acknowledge the serious concerns raised by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency panel report on the proposed Prosperity Mine and prevent the project from proceeding.

The process by which Taseko Mines Ltd has developed and advanced its project against the wishes of the TNG and its member First Nations, the unfettered support it has received from the BC government, the failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations, and the disregard for the environment that has been displayed all provide a textbook case of how not to pursue mining in British Columbia.

Approval of this project would not only destroy a pristine and culturally sacred lake and surrounding environment, but also it would set back relations between BC First Nations and the mining industry.

What is more, the damage to the environment and to First Nations traditional lands, culture and way of life would not result in a net benefit to local communities or British Columbians as a whole. A detailed analysis of the claims of economic benefit by the company and the BC government shows that the estimates are inflated and that off-set costs have not been factored in.

In fact, the subsidizing of the electricity the mine would need to operate would alone cost BC Hydro and its ratepayers at least \$35 million a year. Analysis indicates British Columbians would pay \$20 million a year out of pocket even after once all positive government revenues are factored in.

British Columbians are being asked to support a project that would destroy a pristine lake, set back relations with First Nations, create conflict in the mining sector – and take money from their wallets.

The Prosperity proposal was born of a free entry system that allows companies to explore and develop projects on First Nations traditional lands without their support or involvement. It was nurtured by provincial laws and an environmental review process that are weighted in favour of industry and against First Nations, as was detailed in an independent study by Harvard Law schools Human Rights Clinic released in June.

Far from being a flagship for a mining renaissance in BC, the prosperity proposal threatens to be a setback for all companies that are seeking to genuinely work with first nations to develop responsible and sustainable projects.

- This statement is endorsed by FNWARM's members: Dolly Abraham - Chief, Takla Lake First Nation, Marilyn Baptiste - Chief, Xeni Gwet'in First Nation, Tsilhqot'in National Government, Bev Sellars - Chief, Xat'sull (Soda Creek) First Nation; Cat Lee, Chief, Dease River First Nation; Anne Marie Sam, Councillor, Nak'azdli First Nation; Betty Patrick - Member and Former Chief, Lake Babine First Nation; Verna Power - Councillor, Lake Babine First Nation;; Kathaleigh George - Councillor, Takla Lake First Nation.