



TŜILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

253 – 4th Avenue North • Williams Lake, BC V2G 4T4 • Phone (250) 392-3918 • Fax (250) 398-5798

ATTEMPT TO REVIVE PROPOSED PROSPERITY MINE MUST END NOW

Company submits option already reviewed and found to be worse than original plan

OTTAWA, October 19, 2011: The Tsilhqot'in Nation, supported by BC and national chiefs, today called on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) and the federal government to reject the re-bid Prosperity mine project without further waste of time and tax dollars.

“The company is on record admitting this new option is worse than the one that was rejected last year, and a CEAA review panel has already agreed with that assessment,” said Chief Joe Alphonse, Chair of the Tsilhqot'in National Government, which represents six First Nations. “To proceed any further will place an unjustified burden on us and on taxpayers and will demonstrate the excessive influence that this company, its lobbyists and hired guns have on government.”

Xeni Gwet'in Chief Marilyn Baptiste said: “It is obvious there are no grounds for wasting more time on a project that has already been deemed worse than its rejected predecessor. This company's attempt to ignore the myriad of devastating impacts from either version of this project tells us that they have learned nothing from the previous rejection, or about how to respect our rights and culture.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs said: “First Nations across BC and Canada strongly oppose this project. To have permitted it last year would have destroyed faith in the EA process and shown utter disregard for First Nations' culture and rights. To allow this even worse project to proceed would be unthinkable. It is the poster child for all that is wrong with the mining system, and a source of confrontation and mistrust that makes it difficult to find a way to work together.”

Last summer, the CEAA review panel report stated that Taseko Mines Ltd's proposed Prosperity mine would have devastating and immitigable impacts on fisheries and wildlife and on existing and future First Nations rights. It concurred with the company's own assessment that the option that is now being pushed would be even worse. Ottawa emphatically rejected the project, with then-environment minister Jim Prentice calling the panel's report “scathing” and “probably the most condemning” he had ever read.

Chief Baptiste said: “The federal government did the right thing last year when it upheld its Constitutional duty to protect First Nations' rights and its responsibility to the environment. No amount of costly reviews will change this. We are looking for that same leadership again, so let's end this now.”

Chief Alphonse said: “The CEAA is expected to announce next steps on November 7, and logic would dictate that it should refuse to proceed any further. Why should other, more sustainable projects be put on the backburner while we deal with a bid that is even worse than the one we have already rejected? Let us focus on more positive initiatives for our people and for the region, and let's prevent the company from adding to the damage it has already caused on our territories by doing further drilling and exploration in pursuit of a project that can never proceed.”

Media Contacts: Sean Durkan: 613-851-2151. JP Laplante: 250-267-3759