



T̓SILHQOT̓'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Media Release
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T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Welcomes Injunction Halting Taseko Drilling Program

Williams Lake, BC: The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation welcomes the decision by the BC Supreme Court today, granting an injunction that prohibits Taseko Mines Ltd. (TML) from moving forward with its exploratory drilling program in Teẓtan Biny (Fish Lake) and Nabaš (the surrounding area).

The BC Liberal Government granted Taseko a drilling permit in July 2017, on its last day in power. The drilling program aims to advance the New Prosperity Mine – despite the fact that the Federal Government rejected New Prosperity in 2014 and the mine cannot be built as a result. The Federal Government rejected New Prosperity in part because of significant and unavoidable impacts on T̓silhqot̓'in culture, heritage and rights.

Teẓtan Biny and Nabaš is an area of profound cultural and spiritual importance for the T̓silhqot̓'in peoples. Two independent expert panels have confirmed the unique and special significance of this area for the T̓silhqot̓'in as a place of ceremony and healing, as an active cultural school, as a resting place for ancestors, and as highly valued hunting, trapping and gathering grounds. It is also one of few areas in Canada subject to a court declaration of proven Aboriginal rights.

The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation will now have its day in court to prove at trial that the drilling program represents an unjustified infringement of its proven Aboriginal rights. In the meantime, today's judgment protects Teẓtan Biny and Nabaš from disruption and degradation by TML before a full hearing of this important constitutional issue.

Quotes:

Nits'ilẓin (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman of the T̓silhqot̓'in National Government:

“The judgment of the BC Supreme Court today reinforces that New Prosperity is a dead project and will never proceed. Taseko has been nothing but disrespectful and the message to them here today is loud and clear – stop threatening our cultural and sacred lands because it's a battle they aren't ever going to win. That is the way of the past. Industry needs to work with First Nations on projects that support our vision and our way of life; that's the only way. Taseko is the poster child for what industry should not and cannot do.”

Nits'ilẓin (Chief) Russell Myers Ross, Vice-Chair, T̓silhqot̓'in National Government:

“The BC Supreme Court's decision today is a victory for the Nation as this matter continues to unfold in court. Through the Dasiqox Tribal Park initiative, we have set out a different vision for these lands and waters that respects our culture and our aspirations and creates a space for healing. We will continue to work to see that this vision becomes a reality for our people and that future generations benefit socially, economically and environmentally from all the sacrifices that the Nation has and continues to make.”

Nits'il?in (Chief) Jimmy Lulua, Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government:

“Today we see promise that the BC courts can deliver justice, but we have to remain vigilant, because our people have been here before. We will continue to protect our culture and our sacred places from threats like Taseko and we will never stop standing up for our rights and our future when BC and Canada fail to do so. The mining industry and government have to adapt to new title and rights that were recognized in 2014, and we are finally seeing this transition phase occur.”

Resources:

- Te?tan Biny: www.Te?tanbiny.ca
- Video: www.tsilhqotin.ca/News-Media
- Dasiqox Tribal Park: <https://dasiqox.org/>

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