

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Nisga'a Nation demands a halt to proposed Kitsault Mine Project pending proper environmental assessments

Gitlaxt'aamiks, BC, March 13, 2013 - Today the Nisga'a Nation commenced dispute resolution under the Nisga'a Treaty against British Columbia and Canada. The Nisga'a Nation was compelled to take this step in response to the referral by the BC Environmental Assessment Office of the proposed Kitsault Mine to provincial Ministers for decision immediately before the upcoming provincial election. Any decision to approve an environmental assessment certificate for the proposed mine, if made on the basis of the existing information, would be a breach of the Nisga'a Treaty.

Mitchell Stevens, President of the Nisga'a Nation, stated "Despite the Nisga'a Nation's best efforts to ensure that British Columbia and Canada properly assessed the potential impacts of the mine on the environment, the health of Nisga'a people, and the social and economic effects on the Nisga'a Nation, this has not yet been done. We fear that the current political environment could be driving a premature decision by provincial Ministers to approve this mine before all the facts are in."

The Nisga'a Nation and leading scientists agree that the environmental assessments conducted by the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency have not yet properly assessed the environmental impacts resulting from the discharge of heavy metals into the freshwater and marine environments. Moreover, the project effects will include a loss of approximately 50% of the aquatic life and habitat in a significant local watershed downstream of the mine site. This could have potential but as yet unknown corresponding effects in Alice Arm. The Nisga'a Nation has harvested food from Alice Arm and adjacent water bodies since time immemorial.

Information set out in the economic, social, and cultural impact assessment for the proposed mine suggests that the mine will likely have negative effects on Nisga'a people. Yet inexplicably, the report submitted by the EAO to the Ministers concludes that the project "may result in a modest improvement in the economic well-being of Nisga'a citizens".

"The Nisga'a Nation hopes that a court action to halt the proposed project will not be necessary. We respect the provisions of our Treaty that contemplate that the parties will attempt to resolve disputes without the need for costly and unnecessary court proceedings," stated President Stevens.

"We are open for business and working well with project proponents in a variety of sectors in northwestern British Columbia. We look forward to participating in the many opportunities for economic growth. However, the Nisga'a Nation will not allow the health and welfare of Nisga'a people to be put at risk for this project. The Nisga'a Nation fought hard to ensure that our Treaty guaranteed proper environmental assessment of projects within our area. We will not allow these constitutionally protected guarantees to be ignored," commented President Stevens.

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