



TŚILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

Tsilhqot'in Aboriginal rights and title: Shifting business landscape

Tsilhqot'in Territory, BC (May 26, 2016): The Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG) has reaffirmed the long held view that successful business needs to respect Aboriginal rights and title. This is in response to the recent Supreme Court of Canada's (SCC) decision dismissing the application of Taseko Mines Limited (TML) for leave to appeal the denial of its preliminary motion in one of the two judicial reviews launched in response to the Federal Government's rejection of the New Prosperity project.

The SCC's historic declaration of Tsilhqot'in Aboriginal title in June 2014, along with the declaration of Tsilhqot'in Aboriginal rights, continue to direct businesses to meet with TNG as a governing body. The watered down model of consultation is being replaced by a model of consent, as mandated by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*.

TML's application for the rejected New Prosperity Project, situated in an area where the Tsilhqot'in hold proven Aboriginal rights, has been drawn out for years. The political environment is changing rapidly with First Nations increasingly recognized as equal partners in shaping how and when resource development occurs. Repeating a history of failed litigation is increasingly recognized as futile. Business looking to be successful needs to recognize Tsilhqot'in practices, policies and most of all, inherent rights to govern our lands.

Quotes:

Chief Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman of the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Chief of Tl'etinqox:

"Whatever level of consultation is required elsewhere is one thing, but the standard in Tsilhqot'in Territory is our consent, and it applies throughout our territory - to all industry. If anyone is thinking of sticking to the old way of doing business, they just need to look at TML to learn that it's a path to failure. We are prepared to go before and win in the courts to reinforce our rights and title. Business should be very aware of that reality."

Chief Roger William, Chief of Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government:

"Unsound mining practices are not welcome in our territory. We will continue to fight for the protection of our sacred sites with honour and integrity. Our declaration of Aboriginal title in 2014 states that the land must be used in a manner that protects it for future generations. This is a principle that should be followed for all resource development in Canada."

More Information:

- May 19, 2016 SCC Decision: <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/news/en/5242/1/document.do>
- Summary of the issue: <http://www.scc-csc.ca/case-dossier/info/sum-som-eng.aspx?cas=36807>
- *Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia* (2014): <http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/PDFs/SCOC%20Decision.pdf>

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