



T̓SILHQOT̓'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Media Release
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T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Disappointed at BC Court of Appeal Decision

Williams Lake, BC: The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation is disappointed by the BC Court of Appeal's decision to allow an exploratory drilling permit at Težtan Biny (Fish Lake) and surrounding area.

The permit approves an extensive drilling, road building and excavation program by TML that purports to advance its rejected New Prosperity Mine project. The permit authorizes TML to clear 76 kilometres of new or modified road and trail, 122 drill holes, 367 excavated test pits and 20 kilometres of seismic lines near Težtan Biny (Fish Lake) and Nabas, an area of cultural and spiritual significance for the T̓silhqot̓'in. The Government of Canada rejected TML's New Prosperity mine proposal in 2014, and the mine cannot legally be built as matters stand. Two independent federal panels have confirmed the area is of unique and special importance to the T̓silhqot̓'in, and this was a large factor in two unprecedented federal rejections of a mine in this location.

The public can take the time to view information on the [Dasiqox Tribal Park](https://dasiqox.org/support-us/take-action/), an initiative of Xeni Gwet'in and Yunešit'in to further protect this critical area for future generations and sign a pledge of support at <https://dasiqox.org/support-us/take-action/> calling on the BC Government to put an end to this conflict.

The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation is extremely disappointed and concerned by the devastation this permit stands to cause. The Nation will be reviewing all options to protect this critical cultural area.

Quotes:

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman, T̓silhqot̓'in National Government:

"The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation will not stand by as Taseko Mines Ltd. moves forward with a drilling program for a mine that was rejected twice by the Federal Government and, located within an area of proven Aboriginal rights. The fact that this permit could have been approved in the first place is absolutely appalling. For decades now we have fought against industry running roughshod over our territory. Doing nothing is not an option at this point."

"This cannot be a reasonable outcome when you consider the impact it will have on the T̓silhqot̓'in people. The constitution is here to protect people – the courts have failed to do that in this case. This now is a spiritual war – a war to protect our areas of immense spiritual and cultural significance. The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation will be assessing all options in the fight against this drilling permit."

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

"If ever there were a moment to put words into action – now would be the time. A lot is being said about the protection of Indigenous rights and title and our inherent jurisdiction over the land. Actions that we all know to be devastating to future generations and indigenous relations continue to prevail."

“Given the movement since the Supreme Court of Canada Tsilhqot'in decision, and the national understanding of Title along with consent and the implementation of UNDRIP, it's appalling that a permit of this sort could be approved. To transition from conflict, our communities have provided an alternative in the Dasiqox Tribal Park. We no longer want to live with the threat of government and external industries deciding how our land should be managed.”

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

“The approval of this permit by the BC Court of Appeal is not the end. BC and TML need our consent. We're well past the stage of consultation. Actions like this put a strain on relations with the Province of BC in a time when we are supposed to be working together. The drilling program stands to displace our families, threaten our sacred sites, and interrupt our ceremonies and teaching opportunities to our youth.”

“The area around Težtan Biny is one of the last ecosystems intact that sustains unique wildlife and one of the strongest sockeye runs in the world. We must protect this for as long as we can. No amount of money can match the importance of this resource.”

More Information:

- Težtan Biny: www.teztanbiny.ca
- Video: www.tsilhqotin.ca/News-Media
- Dasiqox Tribal Park: <https://dasiqox.org/>

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