



## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2021

### **T̂silhqot'in Attend Final Hearing of Gibraltar Tailings Effluent Discharge Appeal**

**Williams Lake, BC:** Today marks the first of the last two days of the Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) virtual hearing of the T̂silhqot'in Nation's challenge of an amendment to an effluent discharge permit issued for the Gibraltar Mine by a Director of the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The T̂silhqot'in Nation is appealing the amended permit on the grounds that the Director did not properly consider T̂silhqot'in laws and principles in the consultation and accommodation process, and that the amended permit fails to protect the environment, as required for the Director to amend this type of permit under BC's *Environmental Management Act*.

The T̂silhqot'in Nation is seeking to have the 2019 amended permit suspended and sent back for redetermination through a process that provides for adequate Crown consultation and reasonable accommodation of the Nation's asserted Aboriginal rights and interests, including its Indigenous laws. If the Appeal is allowed, Gibraltar Mines Ltd. would not be permitted to increase its rate of mine tailings effluent into the Fraser River by 50%. The Gibraltar mine would however, still be able to discharge at their previous permitted rate which remains of grave concern to the T̂silhqot'in Nation given the lack of sophisticated treatment before discharge into this waterbody that supports the sensitive white sturgeon. A decision on this Appeal is expected soon.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Nits'il?in (Chief) Troy Baptiste, ?Esdilagh First Nation**

"Effluent is being pumped into the Fraser River when it does not meet BC water quality guidelines where the discharge pipe enters the River. The fact that the Province of BC has a policy that allows for this to happen is appalling and goes against our own laws, including the [?Elhdaqox Dechen Ts'edilhtan \("Sturgeon River Law"\)](#). Our waterways and the life they support must be protected from cumulative impacts and permits like the Gibraltar discharge permit."

#### **Nits'il?in (Chief) Francis Lacey, Tl'esqox**

"The conduct of the Province of BC in allowing this discharge over the T̂silhqot'in Nation's objections and BC's commitment to the United Nations Declaration is nothing short of Environmental Racism. As Indigenous people, we fish from these waters and we used to drink these waters before so much pollution was allowed by BC. We still hunt wildlife that don't know better and continue to drink from it. I

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believe the discharge would be treated very differently if it were near a major city. Altogether, actions that disregard Indigenous laws and ways of life must be stopped.”

**More Information:**

- Livestream the virtual EAB hearing: [http://www.eab.gov.bc.ca/hearing\\_schedules/index.htm](http://www.eab.gov.bc.ca/hearing_schedules/index.htm)
- Webpage: [www.tsilhqotin.ca/gibraltar](http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/gibraltar)
- Media Package: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14lURUafU9322B091N1-hcmZDeLk86r-L?usp=sharing>
  - Media Backgrounder
  - 2019 Discharge Permit
  - Photos and maps available for use
  - Sturgeon River Law (May 2020)

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