



## TŚILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

253 – 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North • Williams Lake, BC V2G 4T4 • Phone (250) 392-3918 • Fax (250) 398-5798

# PRESS RELEASE

### Taseko Mines Limited Remains in Denial Post Title Decision

**Williams Lake, BC (July 3, 2014):** Though celebrating and reflecting on the strength of our people, culture and traditions, the Tsilhqot'in National Government is not surprised by Taseko Mines Limited's (TML) continuing lack of respect for First Nations' Aboriginal rights and title. At a time when the Supreme Court of Canada has called for a new and just relationship with First Nations, TML denies the implications of the *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* decision.

The New Prosperity project was long dead before this decision was released. A majority Conservative government has rejected this project – twice – after two failed environmental assessments, describing significant and immitigable impacts on the environment and on Tsilhqot'in cultural practices and cultural heritage.

Contrary to TML's recent press statements, nothing about last week's judgment changes those fatal findings for its fundamentally flawed project. In fact, the Tsilhqot'in Nation holds proven Aboriginal rights to hunt and trap throughout that area – yet another reason that this project was firmly rejected twice.

The times have changed, but TML is clinging to the past. The Tsilhqot'in Nation, with support from the Supreme Court of Canada decision and the majority of the Canadian public, is sending the message to TML, along with its President, Russell Hallbauer, that no mining will occur in our traditional territory unless it respects our laws, our culture and our vision for the future of the Tsilhqot'in people.

In response to what we see as TML's reckless disregard for First Nations, the Tsilhqot'in Nation calls for investors and shareholders to think twice about where their funds are placed. The economic landscape of Canada is shifting and investors should be following suit.

Chief Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chairman of the Tsilhqot'in Nation, states, "After this 'game changer' it's time TML finally started showing respect for our people. We have held proven Aboriginal rights to the area since 2007. The project has been rejected twice because of the serious negative impacts that two independent panels have found. TML's strategy has failed twice and as arrogant as they are they still attempt to push this project through. Prosperity mine is a dead issue. I would suggest they make significant changes to their company's leadership if they ever want to see progress on any other project."

Xeni Gwet'in Chief Roger William expressed, "In this moment it is easy to know who your supporters are. Instead of taking the respectful path, TML has once again chosen to make statements against the reality of our peoples and lands."

Chief Russell Myers-Ross, Yunesit'in Government, states, "Taseko took its name from the second largest lake in Tsilhqot'in territory, Dasiqox Biny, which drains into the Chilko, through to the Fraser River. It then proposed a mine site only kilometers from this precious watershed. Taseko wrongfully appropriated this name from the Tsilhqot'in people in the same way it tried to appropriate and exploit some of our most critically important lands for a massive open-pit mine. This project was a perfect example of how not to work with First Nations. The judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada makes it clear, through its emphasis on consent, that those days are over for British Columbia and Canada. It is time for government and industry to forge equal partnerships and seek consent on projects of mutual benefit."

Media Contacts:

Chief Joe Alphonse: (250) 305-8282

Chief Roger William: (250) 267-6593

Chief Russell Myers-Ross: (250) 302-2189