



T̓SILHQOT̓'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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

Media Release
March 15, 2019

T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Calls on Supporters in Wake of Court Decision ***Gathering for Sacred Water planned on March 22***

Williams Lake, BC: The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation will be seeking a further injunction from the BC Court of Appeal on March 22nd in order to halt a drilling program approved for Te̓t̓tan Biny and surrounding area, an area of profound cultural and spiritual importance for the T̓silhqot̓'in people. The Nation calls on all supporters to attend in solidarity for the environment, human rights and Indigenous peoples across Canada. The court hearing and an evening Gathering for Sacred Water coincide with the United Nations' World Water Day.

The drilling permit was issued by the outgoing B.C. Liberal Government in 2017 for the stated purpose of advancing Taseko's New Prosperity mine proposal – despite the fact that the Federal Government has twice rejected this project and it cannot be built.

On March 1, 2019, the B.C. Court of Appeal issued a judgment recognizing that the Te̓t̓tan Biny area is an active cultural school for the T̓silhqot̓'in, a resting place for ancestors, a site for spiritual and ceremonial activities and “a place of unique and special significance for the T̓silhqot̓'in cultural identity and heritage.” The Court of Appeal even stated that a decision by government to reject the drilling program “may well have been reasonable,” but nonetheless upheld the provincial approval for this extensive drilling program.

The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation is applying to the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal this judgment.

The area in which the extensive drilling permit has been issued is a site of proven Aboriginal rights to hunt, fish and trap and adjacent to an area of proven and recognized Aboriginal title.

The approval of this permit in the face of such severe cultural and spiritual impacts for the T̓silhqot̓'in people is a direct violation of the United Nations' *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the current Provincial government has committed to implement and legislate. Taseko Mines Ltd. has informed the T̓silhqot̓'in that they intend to begin the drill program on March 19, 2019. The T̓silhqot̓'in have requested that the company hold off on their work until the injunction hearing is heard on March 22. To date the company has refused to stand down.

The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation calls on everyone to stand up for future generations and show support at the court hearing or at a special event in the evening in Vancouver. Drummers, Elders and leaders will gather outside the BC Court of Appeal (800 Hornby St #400, Vancouver, BC) from 8:30am-9:15am before entering the court room. In the evening of March 22nd, the T̓silhqot̓'in will co-host a Gathering for Sacred Water. More details to follow on the T̓silhqot̓'in National Government's [Facebook page](#).

Quotes:

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

"We call on all supporters to take action on the injustice and nonsense of this drilling permit being approved and potentially moving forward. The Nation sees no benefit in the mineral exploration given that the proposal does not have federal approval. In our opinion, it is meant more to exercise their will and add insult to their failed proposals. With all the talk of reconciliation and intentions of implementing UNDRIP, projects such as these show how shallow Crown laws are in regard to respecting Indigenous peoples' rights and perspectives of land and governing authority. We will fight this, by any means, to protect Te̓tan Biny and Nabas."

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

"We welcome everyone to come out and show their support for us and Indigenous rights at the B.C Court of Appeal on World Water Day, March 22nd. The T̓silhqot'in are the only recognized Aboriginal title holders in Canada – to an area directly adjacent to this proposed drilling permit. We continue to fight to keep our sustainable ecosystem intact with the strongest and most consistent wild sockeye run on the Fraser river system in the world. We will fight any threat to our environment or our ability to practice our traditional and cultural ways across generations."

More Information:

Support and Drumming at Court Hearing

Location: BC Court of Appeal, 800 Hornby St #400, Vancouver, BC

Time: March 22, 2019: 8:30am-9:15am

Gathering for Sacred Water with the T̓silhqot'in

Location in Vancouver: To be announced

Time: March 22, 2019: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Please check <https://www.facebook.com/TsilhqotinNationalGovernment/> for more information.

Resources:

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

Media Contact:

Myanna Desaulniers

Communication Manager

T̓silhqot'in National Government

[\(250\) 305-7885](tel:2503057885)