



T̓SILHQOT̓'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Media Release
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T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Seeking Injunction Today

Williams Lake, BC: The T̓silhqot̓'in Nation will be at the BC Court of Appeal today seeking an injunction against a drilling permit issued to Taseko Mines Ltd. (TML) for the cultural and sacred site of Težtan Biny.

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 lawfully be built.

On March 1, 2019, the B.C. Court of Appeal issued a judgment recognizing the Težtan Biny area as 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.

Quotes:

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

“We are grateful to be surrounded by our supporters today in Vancouver as our human rights as Indigenous peoples continue to be threatened back at home. After a decade of standing up to this unacceptable mining project—resulting in two rejections by the Federal Government—our people still face this direct threat to our culture, to our place of ceremony and healing. It seems like government, industry, even the courts are not prepared to show our spirituality, our sacred places and our burial grounds the same respect as their own. The fight is not finished.”

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

“Our Elders and people are here today at the BC Court of Appeal to demonstrate that the lands at issue today have been home for our people for generations – and are actively used today, to maintain our culture and to teach our youth. We rely on these lands to practice and pass down our culture. We know the damage that Indigenous peoples suffer when our lands are taken and our connection is broken. That cannot and will not happen here. Today it about moving forward – it's about ensuring history is not repeated.”

Media Package: <https://bit.ly/2WfaNYS>

Resources:

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

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