



NAK'AZDLI BAND COUNCIL

P.O. Box 1329, Fort St. James, B.C. V0J 1P0
Telephone (250) 996 – 7171
Fax (250) 996 – 8010

For Immediate Release

December 3, 2009: “The federal government has joined the BC government in riding roughshod over the law and disrespecting the Courts by granting environmental assessment approval to Terrane Metals plans to open a low grade copper and gold mine on Nak'azdli traditional lands,” Chief Fred Sam said today. “We are the people who live here therefore shouldn't we decide if a mine is ‘not likely to have significant adverse environmental effects’ not a Federal Minister in Ottawa who has never been to Shus Nadloh?” asked Chief Sam.

As with BC's earlier approval, the federal approval for the Mt. Milligan (Shus Nadloh) mine is a flagrant violation of the Court-ordered duty to consult with First Nations and must be overturned. It violates Canadian constitutional law that requires Canada to assess impacts of a proposed project on Aboriginal rights and title at every stage of federal approval, and the federal government has failed to respect our decision-making authority on Nak'azdli lands.

“Given this information and the fact that Nak'azdli have already filed its case against the Province's approval and a court date is set for March 22, investors in this project still have nothing to celebrate”, said Chief Sam.

“The provincial government might be desperate to take the edge off its surprise record deficits and its planned HST tax grab by implying that major mining projects are about to make their return to BC, and the federal government might think there is political gain to be made in BC with a possible election looming next spring,” said Chief Sam

“Investors and the public need to be aware that the province and federal government ignored all of our concerns about the impacts of this proposed mine on our traditional lands and their vital headwaters and watersheds, and snubbed all our efforts to be involved in a meaningful environmental review process,” Chief Sam said.

“Their cavalier dismissal of Nak'azdli was made clear when, despite the fact this mine will be built on our traditional lands, neither government saw fit to inform us of their approval,” said Chief Sam. “We had to find out from the media.”

Chief Sam said investors should ask themselves if they really believe the courts will accept political considerations and corporate needs as justification for the blatant violation of their rulings and the law. “And those in the local area who believe the promised jobs will make up for any destruction of the land and environment should ask themselves if they really understand the dangers,” he said. “And do they really believe that local unemployed people will get the good jobs, rather than experienced but unemployed miners from other parts of the province?”

Nak'azdli have tried to avoid confrontation by seeking a way to be properly consulted and included in the review processes, but once again a First Nation in BC is forced to meet its duty to protect its aboriginal rights and title by asking the courts to yet again relate to its previous rulings. Given the government's approach to date, the the Terrane Metals proposal (backstopped by Goldcorp.) risks turning into another Mackenzie Valley pipeline debacle that will still be just an idea after 35 years of discussions. “This project has already been shelved once and without Nak'azdli's support the proposed Mt. Milligan project could be shelved again” added Chief Fred Sam.

Media contact: Anne Marie Sam - 250-649-8284 or 250-996-7171