

Posted by Joan Russow
Tuesday, 15 August 2017 13:09 -

T̓SILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Ts̓ilhqot'in Commend Federal Intervention to Permanently Stop Taseko Mines Limited's

Drilling Program at Teztan Biny

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Williams Lake, B.C. – The Ts̓ilhqot̓'in Nation welcomes news that the Federal Government has commenced its own court action to permanently prohibit Taseko Mines Limited (“Taseko”) from carrying out its drilling program at Teztan Biny (Fish Lake).

As a result of the Federal Government's intervention, and a commitment from Taseko that it will not proceed with the drilling program at this time, the BC Supreme Court has withheld its decision on the interlocutory injunction application argued by the Tsilhqot' in two weeks ago.

The Federal Government [filed a petition in the BC Supreme Court](#) on August 10, asserting that Taseko's drilling program would violate the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, and seeking a permanent injunction to prohibit Taseko from undertaking this work.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation had previously brought legal challenges to the Province's approval for Taseko to conduct extensive drilling, road building and excavation at the Ts̓ilhqot̓'in sacred site of Teztan Biny (Fish Lake) and Nabas. The provincial permit was granted in the dying days of the BC Liberal Government, in support of the rejected New Prosperity Mine proposal.

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The Tsilhqot'in Nation looks forward to the full hearing of its legal challenges to this provincial approval, and could return to court to seek a decision on its interlocutory injunction application in the future, if needed.

The Government of Canada rejected Taseko's New Prosperity mine proposal in 2014, and the mine cannot legally be built as matters stand. Prior to taking court action, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency [advised the company](#) that the provincially approved drilling program would violate the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*.

The Ts̓ilhqot'in are mounting a public campaign to call on the BC NDP to do the right thing. A [petition](#) to the Premier has over 8,000 signatures, and a social media campaign has started on TNG's Facebook page. The public is invited to upload videos to support Ts̓ilhqot'in efforts. Details can be found [here](#).

Quotes:

Chief Russell Myers Ross, Chief of Yunesit'in and Director of the Ts̓ilhqot'in National Government:

"The work our Nation has done to protect Teztan Biny is worth celebrating. The Tsilhqot'in

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Nation has poured its energy into two Federal assessment processes and has maintained the same position: this is the wrong place for mining activity. It remains clear that we do not want this place disturbed and can only pray that Taseko Mines will respect this. As a leader of Yunesit'in, I intend on investing time through the Dasiqox Tribal Park to define what we want to see in Nabas and Teztan Biny."

Chief Roger William, Chief of the Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government and Vice-Chair of the Ts̓'ihqot'in National Government:

"We commend the Federal Government for demonstrating the leadership to enforce its environmental laws and to help us ensure that Taseko cannot continue to tear up a very special place to our people, all for a project that has been rejected and cannot be built. It sends a powerful message to our people that the Government of Canada also considers Taseko's drilling program illegal and is ready to go to court to protect our interests and the environment. This is Xeni Gwet'in's trapline and inside one of Canada's only Court Declarations of Aboriginal rights."

Federal Government Petition to BC Supreme Court (*Canada v Taseko Mines Limited*, para. 45):

"There is no public purpose served in allowing Taseko to cause listed environmental effects in pursuit of a mine that has twice been denied the necessary Federal environmental assessment approval as a result of unjustified significant adverse environmental effects."

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Media kit available (click [here](#)) and includes backgrounders, legal documents, photos and more.

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