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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Nations Leadership Council commends Kemess North review panel for doing the right thing

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – The First Nations Leadership Council is extremely pleased that the Kemess North Review Panel did the right thing today by recommending Northgate Minerals' unsustainable mine application not be approved by either the federal or provincial governments. We call on both governments to respect the Panel's major recommendation not to proceed with the project.

"The Panel did the right thing in this instance. However, federal-provincial environmental assessment processes continue to fall far short of First Nations expectations. First Nations must be fully and directly involved whenever a proposal has the potential to impact their aboriginal title and rights and their communities," said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive and First Nations Leadership Council.

"The local First Nations who fought both the process and the project went through hell," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and member of the First Nations Leadership Council.

"And while they are no doubt elated by this decision, they are likely still feeling pain and anguish from the wounds that the process has caused them. They should not have been placed in this situation in the first place. The process through which today's decision was reached must be changed," added Phillip.

"Today is a good day for First Nations in British Columbia and for all Canadians who celebrate with us the sacred beauty of this land," said Shawn Atleo, Regional Chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations and member of the First Nations Leadership Council.

"We must continue to work toward finding common ground on how this land can serve our present economic interests without unnecessarily taking away from future generations, including that which is sacred to us all," added Atleo.

The First Nations Leadership Council fully expects that both governments and the proponent will respect the panel's unequivocal recommendation not to proceed with Kemess North, which was deemed too risky for environmental, social and cultural reasons.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

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