



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST NATIONS OPPOSE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO METAL MINING EFFLUENT REGULATIONS THAT WOULD SEE FISH- BEARING LAKES DESTROYED

Coast Salish Territory (West Vancouver) – The First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly, who wrapped up three days of meetings in North Vancouver today, have passed by consensus, a firm resolution to oppose the recently proposed amendments to the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The resolution states that the First Nation Summit Chiefs “seek assurances from the Government of Canada that not one natural fish-bearing water body in British Columbia will be impacted by unwarranted mining projects or any other industrial activity, without the free, prior, and informed consent of affected First Nations.”

First Nations in British Columbia were not involved in any consultation process on proposed changes to these upstream regulations, all of which would pose serious and detrimental impacts on their Aboriginal title and rights, especially given that the proposed changes would facilitate the use of natural fish-bearing water bodies (lakes, rivers, etc) as tailing impoundments areas (TIA) for new mines or for other industrial developments.

“The proposed changes to the metal mining effluent regulations, where fish-bearing lakes and rivers would be taken away from future generations in order to satisfy short-term interests, are clearly unacceptable”, said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) proposed amendments would set a dangerous precedent", concurred Dave Porter, also a member of the Summit's political executive. "once the regulatory door is open industry will inevitably attempt to stampede the gate to be given the same opportunity."

"We are the caretakers of our lands," said Chief Judith Sayers, newly elected member of the FNS political executive. "We must remain vigilant over the land, and we must raise our voices to protect it, this includes all fish, fish habitats, and freshwater sources, wherever they are found. These proposed regulatory changes pose a direct threat to these vital lands and resources".

Over 100 Chiefs from all across British Columbia attended the First Nations Summit meetings to address issues related to the BC treaty process and other issues of common concern.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For Further Information:

Colin Braker, First Nations Summit

Office: 604.926.9903/Cell: 604.328-4094