
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Tahltan Central Government

Province of B.C. and the Tahltan Nation begin talks on shared decision-making

TAHLTAN TERRITORY – The Tahltan Central Government and the Province of British Columbia are starting negotiations on the first consent-based decision-making agreement ever to be negotiated under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

It is intended to support ongoing work to collaboratively achieve long-term comprehensive reconciliation and land-use predictability in Tahltan Territory.

“The Declaration Act is historic legislation that recognizes in law the human rights of Indigenous peoples and contains new measures to work with Indigenous peoples on decisions that affect them,” said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “Through the strength of our government-to-government relationship with Tahltan Nation, we are embarking on the first negotiation under Section 7 of the Act. If we are successful, the agreement would bring greater clarity in decision-making and forge a partnership with the Tahltan Nation on two projects. It would also support Tahltan self-government and promote significant economic development in the region.”

Section 7 of the Declaration Act sets out provisions for negotiating consent-based decision-making agreements for the purposes of reconciliation.

“When others began visiting Tahltan Territory, it did not change our rightful and ancestral claims to ownership over our homelands, which we have consistently asserted for thousands of years. The Tahltan Nation has never surrendered its rights and title to anyone, and we have always occupied, utilized and protected our lands. To this day, Tahltans remain the majority of people that live throughout our Territory. The 1910 Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe affirms our asserted claims. The ongoing evolution and growth of the Tahltan Nation shows outside governments, industry and the world how working alongside the Tahltan Nation as true partners can help secure certainty, economic benefits and pride for everyone involved. This agreement provides an opportunity to meaningfully advance reconciliation grounded in the principles of respect and recognition of Tahltan rights and title.” said Chad Norman Day, President of the Tahltan Central Government.

The Province and Tahltan Central Government are beginning talks to reach an agreement related to environmental assessment approvals for two mining projects in Tahltan Territory – the restart of the past-producing Eskay Creek Mine and an expansion of the Red Chris Mine in the northwest of the Province.

“This agreement builds on the successes of the revitalized environmental assessment process to explore joint decision and consent agreements with First Nations on major projects such as

these. Clarifying interests and opportunities through this agreement will deepen the strong spirit of collaboration with the Tahltan Nation,” said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

Section 7 of the Declaration Act ensures provisions for engagement with local governments and potentially affected stakeholders as part of the negotiation of decision-making agreements. The Province has identified an initial list of partners and stakeholders to consult during negotiations, which includes:

- Skeena Resources Limited
- Newcrest Red Chris Mining Ltd.
- Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
- Mining Association of British Columbia
- Association for Mineral Exploration
- Business Council of British Columbia

A final list will be confirmed and made public within 15 days.

The Section 7 Agreement negotiation builds upon ongoing collaborative work between the Province and Tahltan Central Government to advance reconciliation together. This also includes a Shared Prosperity Agreement signed last week to achieve long-term land-use predictability; the announcement in March 2021 with Tahltan to create the Mount Edziza conservancy; the 2019 Klappan Plan on resource-management activities in the area of the Sacred Headwaters of the Skeena, Nass and Stikine Rivers; and upgrades to Dease Lake Airport announced in April.

Quotes:

Bruce Ralston, Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation –

“Government-to-government shared decision-making between the Tahltan Nation and the Province will help create land-use certainty. Working together to ensure mineral development is done right, we can foster shared prosperity – for the Tahltan Nation and for all British Columbians.”

Michael Goehring, president and CEO, Mining Association of BC –

“We support talks towards an agreement on shared decision-making between the Tahltan Nation and the Province regarding the environmental assessment approvals of the Red Chris and Eskay Creek Revitalization projects in Tahltan Territory. We’re hopeful this agreement will lead to clear and timely environmental assessments and permit authorizations that will advance economic reconciliation and shared prosperity through responsible mining.”

Kendra Johnston, president and CEO, Association for Mineral Exploration –

“Today’s announcement is setting the framework for a new path forward, one that is inclusive of all stakeholders. Working together to advance these projects, will bring certainty, clarity and prosperity to all British Columbians. Mineral explorers and developers in BC are leading the

way, building projects that place the environment, social and governance of projects as a top priority. Agreements like the one announced today, attract global attention and continue to highlight B.C. as a Tier 1 mining jurisdiction.”

Quick Facts:

- The Red Chris JV (Newcrest Red Chris Mining Ltd.) and Eskay Creek Revitalization Project (Skeena Resources) mining projects in the core Territory of the Tahltan Nation represent up to \$3.3 billion in potential investment.
- Red Chris is about 80 kilometres south of Dease Lake and Eskay Creek is about 80 kilometres northwest of Stewart, B.C.
- Tahltan is an investor in Skeena Resources, owners of Eskay Creek, and has developed a strong relationship with Newcrest Red Chris Mining Ltd.
- The Tahltan Central Government is the administrative governing body of the Tahltan Nation. The Iskut Band and the Tahltan Band continue to govern Tahltan interests with respect to the Indian Act in the communities of Dease Lake, Iskut, and Telegraph Creek.
- The Tahltan Central Government is the representative government of the Tahltan Nation with respect to the inherent and collective Aboriginal Title and Rights shared by all Tahltan people.
- The Tahltan Nation's Territory spans 95,933 square kilometres of northwestern British Columbia, or the equivalent of 11% of the province. Tahltan Territory includes 70% of B.C.'s Golden Triangle.

Learn More:

Tahltan Central Government: <https://tahltn.org/>

Shared Prosperity Agreement: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/24660>

Klappan Plan: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations/klappan_plan.pdf

Dease Lake Airport improvement: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/24242>

Contacts:

Cale Cowan

Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

250 356-7324

Gordon Infanti

Communications and External Relations Director

Tahltan Central Government

604 351-0726