



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

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Harvard Law Report Finds Mining Reform Urgently Needed in British Columbia

Dakelh Territory (Prince George, BC, Canada) – The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) is calling for legislative reform to mining laws in BC that are contravening international and constitutional laws. Yesterday, the Harvard International Human Rights Clinic released their report *“Bearing the Burden: The Effects of Mining on First Nations in British Columbia”*, which included the participation of Takla Lake First Nation, a member community of the CSTC.

“I’m from Takla Lake First Nation, and I’ve seen firsthand the legacy of mining. Industry and government haven’t cleaned up the legacy of contamination from 50+ years ago,” stated Vice Tribal Chief Terry Teegee. “The online mineral staking system totally bypasses aboriginal consultation and accommodation. This and other regulations must be changed, otherwise mining projects have no chance in hell of getting approved by First Nations,” declared Teegee.

The 200 page report covers the background on Takla Lake First Nation, international and domestic law protecting aboriginal land rights, and outlines the mining process in BC. Several recommendations to government, industry and First Nations are made including the recognition of aboriginal rights in any development decisions, as well as the incorporation of explicit reference to aboriginal rights (including international human rights) into reformed legislation and policies. “The report states BC and Canada have an opportunity to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)”, stated Tribal Chief David Luggi. “Any and all legislative reform in BC and Canada must incorporate the principles of *Free, Prior and Informed Consent* also found in the UNDRIP. The UNDRIP is one of the only international agreements that outlines a minimum standard for the survival, dignity and protection of indigenous peoples worldwide”, affirmed Luggi.

The CSTC will continue to work with its member First Nations in calling for legislative reform of antiquated government policies and regulations in the mining, forestry, environmental assessment and environmental stewardship sectors. “Our people are not going anywhere. However, if there is no change, government and industry can expect more litigation.” Two CSTC communities have filed law suits against mines: Stellat’en First Nation filed against Thompson Creek Metals (Endako Mine); and Nak’azdli First Nation filed last year in regards to approval of Terrane Metals mine project at Mount Milligan north of Fort Saint James, BC.

The Harvard Law report is available at <http://law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp/BearingTheBurden.pdf>.

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