



NAK'AZDLI WHUT'EN
PO Box 1329 | 120 Highway 27
Fort St. James, BC V0J 1P0
Tel: 250.996.7171

**Nak'azdli Whut'en
News Release
For Immediate Release
January 12 2026**

Nak'azdli Strengthens Oversight of Mount Milligan Mine and Warns Environmental Assessment Process Is at Risk

NAK'AZDLI WHUT'EN, BC — Nak'azdli Whut'en is strengthening its oversight of the Mount Milligan Mine through expanded Indigenous-led monitoring while warning that British Columbia's Environmental Assessment process risks losing credibility after the Province retroactively approved unpermitted water discharges. While Nak'azdli recognizes the mine's importance to the local economy and remains committed to working toward a stronger relationship with the proponent, the community says clean water, regulatory integrity, and respect for Indigenous authority must remain non-negotiable.

"We participated in good faith throughout the consultation on the Environmental Assessment extension and we understand the mine's importance to our people and this region," said Chief Colleen Erickson. "But we also understand the importance of clean water to the people, animals, and lands that sustain us. That is why we are committed to ensuring the mine fully abides by its Environmental Assessment Certificate."

Nak'azdli will continue to assert its authority over its lands and waters by expanding monitoring of Mount Milligan's impacts through its Guardians program, working in partnership with Keyoh holders. This work will protect the Nation River Watershed, the last pristine watershed within Nak'azdli territory, for future generations. While Mount Milligan conducts its own monitoring, Nak'azdli emphasizes that industrial oversight cannot replace generations of land-based knowledge.

"When mine water use dries up a spring, as it has in the past, company monitors may not notice," said Chief Erickson. "Our knowledge holders do."

Financial benefits associated with the mine's impacts on Nak'azdli territory are reinvested into this monitoring, safeguarding Nak'azdli members, neighbouring communities, and the plants and animals that depend on healthy watersheds.

Nak'azdli recognizes the importance of the Mount Milligan Mine to the local economy, including for Nak'azdli members who work at the mine to support their families. The community views the approval of the Environmental Assessment extension as an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the proponent, Centerra Gold.



NAK'AZDLI WHUT'EN
PO Box 1329 | 120 Highway 27
Fort St. James, BC V0J 1P0
Tel: 250.996.7171

Nak'azdli has worked in good faith with Mount Milligan since operations began. While that effort has not always been reciprocated, the community remains committed to building a true partnership grounded in accountability and mutual respect.

Nak'azdli's primary concern lies with the Province's handling of the Environmental Assessment process. The mine was originally approved as a closed-loop system with no effluent discharge permit. It is now releasing approximately two million cubic metres of water annually through "diffuse non-point source discharge" — water laden with sulphate that was never permitted under the original certificate. This amount is highly variable and has been somewhat mitigated in 2025 by the construction of an additional interception trench.

This sulphate has spread into a neighbouring lake, with sulphate levels well in exceedance (around 400 mg/l total sulphate) of BC Water Quality Guidelines (218 mg/l total sulphate is the guideline based upon the water hardness). While sulphate levels in Rainbow, Alpine and Meadows creek are still below BC Water Quality Guidelines, the trend is consistently upward.

Sulphate concentrations above BC Water Quality Guidelines can disrupt aquatic invertebrate communities by causing osmotic stress, reducing species diversity, and favouring more tolerant species, which in turn degrades food availability for fish. At higher levels, sulphate can impair fish growth and reproduction and contribute to sulphide formation that is directly toxic to aquatic organisms.

"By retroactively approving activities that violated the original Environmental Assessment Certificate, the Province is signalling that these conditions are legally meaningless," said Chief Erickson. "That undermines the integrity of the Environmental Assessment process and public confidence in environmental protection."

Nak'azdli cautions the people of British Columbia that environmental oversight must be based on enforcement, not retroactive approvals. The community will continue to protect its territory while engaging constructively with industry and government.

"Our goal is clean water, healthy lands, and a regulatory system that works — now and for future generations," said Chief Erickson.

###



NAK'AZDLI WHUT'EN
PO Box 1329 | 120 Highway 27
Fort St. James, BC V0J 1P0
Tel: 250.996.7171

For more information or to book an interview with Chief Erickson, please contact:

Andreas Krebs
akrebs@resonantstrategic.ca
416.669.3459