



Watching Out for BC's Wild Salmon

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July 13, 2011

Honorable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
P.O. Box 9041, Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1

Dear Madam Premier:

RE: Taseko Mines Limited's Proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper Project

You have been quoted in the past in Vancouver newspapers as being in favour of allowing Taseko Mines Limited's proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper project to proceed. This is contrary to the opinion expressed by the Government of Canada, whose final response, after extensive study by many groups, was that this development in this location is unacceptable.

The fact that the federal government has decided to not approve this project must be a difficult decision for you to accept, considering the importance of providing jobs and stimulating the economy, but there are times when the protection of the environment should be given priority.

The Federal Government has rejected the Taseko Mine proposal based on a litany of environmental concerns including land and water pollution, land animal habitat disturbance, and destruction of native trout habitat. The First Nations rejected the proposal and protested the misuse of their traditional land and water. Sports fishing organizations protested removal of this productive native trout sports fishery. It is our understanding that the original opinions of the BC Government's own environmental advisors was that they too were against this development.

Recently a new and compelling aspect to this dispute was revealed in a study by UBC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. This study warns that the gradual warming of fresh water bodies in BC, as a consequence of climate change, is endangering the survival of our salmon. Salmon do not tolerate high temperatures. However, the authors also conclude that those salmon that return to the most distant and higher interior lakes have specific physical and cardiac adaptations that enable them to survive warmer waters. In particular, the report states that the Chilko salmon run is the sub-species that can survive the climate change, while most others will fail.ⁱ This opinion is reiterated in an article in the Canadian Geographic magazine.ⁱⁱ

We wish to make the point that the ground and surface waters from the site of the proposed Taseko mine flow into the Chilko River system. Hence, if the mine were to go ahead, those waters draining from the mine environs into the Chilko River would be contaminated with mine effluents. While allowing the Taseko mine plan to proceed may provide employment for some, the elimination of the Chilko run, which comprises 25% of the total Fraser River volume, will negatively impact the sustainability of salmon fishing in BC's coastal waters.

To summarize our opinions:

1. The subspecies, Chilko run salmon, which are judged to be the most likely to survive the inevitably warming water, as noted in the two attached addenda, would be subject to a threat of extinction due to toxicity created by the mining.
2. It does not seem to be good economic policy to sacrifice the livelihoods of the West Coast fishing fleet operators and employees in order to provide jobs for potential mine employees.

We respectfully provide the aforementioned information for your consideration as you further contemplate the future of this proposed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Orr". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Craig Orr, Ph.D.
Executive Director

ⁱ Attachment: Vancouver Sun column, April 1, 2011 *Salmon Survival Depends On Spawning Spot*. Lead author: E. Eliason, UBC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Published in the world class journal *Science*, international weekly of the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS)

ⁱⁱ Attachment: Canadian Geographic Magazine article published December 2009