

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2024

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Affirms Support for First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) affirms its support for the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun (FNNND) and their demand for the suspension of all mining activity, other than care and maintenance or remediation, within FNNND traditional territory until such time as the Eagle Gold mine heap leach failure is remediated and root causes of the disaster are addressed. We also want to thank Chief Dawna Hope and FNNND for their immediate and honourable response to this tragedy and acknowledge their dedication to ongoing collaboration and communication with our government and Citizens. We will continue to work with FNNND to help determine and make public the full extent of this environmental disaster and its true impacts to our water, lands, and inherent Aboriginal rights.

We have also noted the Yukon Government's recent actions that resulted in Victoria Gold being placed into receivership and express our concerns that this decision may leave Yukon taxpayers to foot the bill for remediation both within the disaster site and downstream. We understand from YG officials that the cost of cleaning up the damage left behind by the Eagle Gold Mine disaster could be as high as \$150 million. It is currently unclear on how these funds will be provided. Yukoners should not have to pay for a mess created by inadequate mine management; Victoria Gold must be held accountable in full for all clean-up costs associated with the disaster.

We are gravely concerned for FNNND citizens and the impact of this ongoing incident to their inherent Aboriginal subsistence harvest rights, and we have many questions about who will compensate FNNND for the loss of rights enshrined in both the Canadian Constitution and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Final Agreement. Throughout Yukon's history, it is the First Nations who have paid the ultimate price in mining disasters, and we are saddened at the prospect of yet another broken promise to Yukon First Nations people.

The future of mining in the Yukon must respect and uphold First Nation authority over our lands and Traditional Territory, and it must ensure any mining operations with the territory meet the highest standard of environmental and cultural stewardship, as defined by First Nations. For TH, we wish to affirm that moving forward, no major mine in our traditional territory will have our support without a comprehensive and meaningful benefit agreement to the satisfaction of our government, along with guarantees that mining activities will be undertaken in a sustainable way that respects the environment, TH rights, and TH

priorities. We will no longer tolerate a mine plan that does not consider our rights and interests at its forefront.

TH confirms that it has worked closely with Newmont Gold over many years and, more recently in light of this disaster, with renewed conviction on the proposed Coffee Gold mine. We will continue to be steadfast in our efforts to ensure that the Coffee Gold heap leach facility is designed and permitted in a manner that achieves industry best practices in safety and environmental responsibility. As part of this work, we understand Newmont Gold is conducting a third-party review of the proposed heap leach facility at Coffee Gold, and we commit to fully evaluating and promoting any necessary changes that come out of that review. We look forward to continuing our collaboration through the coming regulatory processes and incorporating, as appropriate, what we have learned from the Eagle Gold Mine failure into the mine plans at Coffee Gold. For this reason and more, it is critical that Yukon Government and Victoria Gold commit to full transparency and an independent investigation.

On August 5, 2024, Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai stated, “more needs to be done to protect public health and the environment”. We agree, and further, we call on the Yukon Government to continue working with TH and other First Nations to develop and adopt modernized mining legislation that is transformational to the way mining is managed in the Yukon. We must build a system of accountability and forward planning that upholds the rights and interests of First Nation Final Agreements and their authority over their lands and waters, respecting the reality that mining is not always the best use of land. We must have a system that allows for the equitable sharing of economic benefits, and most importantly, we must ensure our laws guarantee adequate and effective systems for monitoring and enforcement, with just penalties for infractions.

We are eager to meet with Yukon Government in the very near future to expedite the process of protecting the future of all Yukoners. It is of the utmost importance that we work together to make sure a disaster like this can never happen here again.

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