



Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tla-o-qui-aht renew call for mining ban amid ongoing Mount Polley crisis

Tofino – The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and environmental group Friends of Clayoquot Sound say that Imperial Metal's recent tailings pond spill at the Mount Polley mine strengthens their resolve to oppose Imperial Metal's plans in Clayoquot Sound.

Imperial Metals, the owner-operator of Mount Polley also owns two properties in Clayoquot Sound; the Catface copper deposit on Ahousaht territory and the Fandora gold formation in Tla-o-qui-aht territory. The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations whose traditional territory covers the southern portion of Clayoquot Sound seek a mining ban before mining activities begin on their traditional territories.

The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and their allies have been resisting Imperial Metals plans for exploratory drilling here for years, in the political and legal arena, and so far have held them off. Despite a clear lack of consultation last year Imperial Metals was granted a permit to conduct that drilling, and after that the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations took the fight to the political arena, meeting the Minister and writing letters. The Minister promised to come out to meet with them in Tofino in person, but so far has not been able to.

“Our Hawiih (Hereditary Chiefs) are not just fighting mining for ourselves and our territory, but see ourselves as stewards of the territory for their Muschim (citizens) and all the people who live here – both the First-Nation and non-First Nations people here are working hard to build a sustainable economy, and continue to develop tourism. A mine is not in anyone's best interest,” said Elmer Frank, Tla-o-qui-aht Elected councillor. “ since the recent Tsilhqot'in victory at the Supreme Court of Canada, and the victory of our five Nu-chah-nulth First Nations earlier this year, recognizing the right to a commercial fishery, our Hawiih certainly don't intend to let Imperial Metals, or any company they may sell their rights to, come here and do any mining activity.”

The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations has recently announced the expansion of a new Tribal Park, now encompassing all of their Tla-o-qui-aht Hereditary Chiefs unceded territory. While it was already planned, part of their reason for making the announcement was to make it clear that they do not want any mining activity in their traditional territory.

“We stand by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations in this,” said Emery Hartley, campaigner for the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, “this spill just exhibits how short-sighted our current mining regime is, and how poorly it fits with Clayoquot Sound. Can you imagine Imperial managing a tailings pond in an area that gets over three meters of rain every year? We need a mining ban here and will work until we have one.”

“In light of the recent Imperial Metals Mount Polly environmental catastrophe with the breach of its tailing pond, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations remains steadfast in our Hereditary chief's opposition to such irresponsible resource management by both industry and government. The Tla-o-qui-aht peoples and our supporters are committed to preventing Imperial Metals from doing any mining exploration and activities within Onadsilth-Elseuklis, otherwise known as Fandora, in Tranquil Valley,” said Terry Dorward, Tla-o-qui-aht elected councillor.



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PHOTOS of Onadsilth-Eelseuklis available upon request (emery@focs.ca)