

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stk'emlupsemc of the Secwepemc Nation (SSN) file Title Case for Ajax Project

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Stk'emlupsemc of the Secwepemc Nation (SSN) have filed their title case to the BC Supreme Court for the proposed KGHM Ajax Copper-Gold Project near Kamloops, BC. In May, 2015 the Province revised their assessment of SSN Aboriginal Rights and Title citing SSN holds strong *prima facie* claims for both title and rights. SSN subsequently made a Declaration of Title on June 21, 2015 at Pípsell [Jacko Lake] with a landmark document declaring, *Re Stk'emlupsemc w7ec te tsyewminst.ses re Pípsell* The Stk'emlupsemc who are the caretakers of Jacko Lake & area. The filing of the claim moves SSN to the pre-declaration stage identified in the *Tsilhqot'in* decision for Title and Rights. The SSN recently approved its own Project Assessment process whose purpose is to facilitate informed decision making by the SSN Communities in a manner which is consistent with SSN laws, traditions, and customs and assesses project impacts in a way that respects SSN knowledge and perspectives.

"We have never ceded surrendered or given up any of our lands or interests. We have a sacred responsibility to protect and assert jurisdiction over our territory and it is imperative that we stand up and protect our natural resources for the next generations. The status quo process of decision making on natural resource development has not worked and will never work. Our leadership has significant concerns on the health and other risks this project would present to not only our members but our friends in Kamloops and surrounding areas. The current assessment process and KGHM Application does not reflect the impacts and infringements that we have been bringing forward since the very beginning of this process" Kukpi7 Shane Gottfriedson, Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc, Regional Chief (BC) Assembly of First Nations

"We are today asserting our Title and Rights because our hospitality has been violated:- "With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives". (Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier 1910). We have asked when will the Province and KGHM recognize our ownership and jurisdiction on our lands? Both have not legitimized themselves on our land respecting our laws and land tenure instead they continue on a path using unilateral processes. This proposed project is in an area with an epic story, the Trout Children Story, which also tells of our law X7ensq't [the sky and land will turn on you]. Our law tells us that if we do not show respect in passing or using this area the land and sky will turn on us. Secwepemc Law and our title dictates that we are the rightful decision-makers on the use of lands and resources in this area." Kukpi7 Ron Ignace, Skeetchestn

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