



**Dene National Office
Assembly of First Nations (NWT)**

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MEDIA ADVISORY

“FIRST NATIONS DELEGATION TALKS TO WASHINGTON DC”

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, September 22, 2010
Yellowknife, Denendeh

Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus is supportive and grateful to the First Nations leaders who met with officials in Washington to discuss concerns about the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. The Obama administration is considering a proposal to build a massive pipeline from Alberta to Texas, to pump up to 900,000 barrels of tar sands oil per day to the U.S. Gulf Coast. First Nations communities on both sides of the border have passed resolutions opposing the pipeline and have called on governments to hold off on future development out of respect for environmental limits and treaty rights.

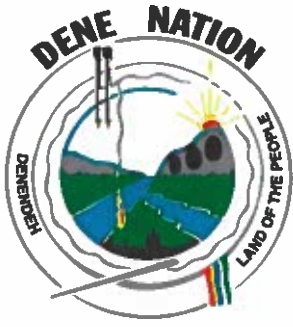
"The Dene are downstream users from the Alberta Tar Sands. Any pollutants and contaminants that are put into the waters upstream will directly impact our quality of life. Dene have always lived close to and in harmony with the lands and water. We hunt, fish and live on the lands that we consider precious and sacred. If a pipeline is built and a leak or spill occurs this will devastate the fish and wildlife and human life will be threatened as well."

"What we wanted to bring is the big picture of how tar sands development is impacting a vast territory in the North — from climate change, to chemicals in our water, to the caribou herds that are becoming endangered," said François Paulette. A lot of our people are really concerned."

"We have heard time after time from governments that the tar sands will have no ill effects on the health of our people, communities and our land. We know that to be untrue because many community members are ill and dying from rare forms of cancer in the area of the Alberta Tar Sands."

"It is sad that the delegation had to go to the USA when we have a government at home that we should be able to rely on and trust. If American decision makers approve the Keystone XL pipeline, they will be locking the U.S. into future reliance on fossil fuels, increasing climate change emissions and allowing toxins from the tar sands to continue harming aboriginal communities."

For more information please contact Terri Brown, Special Advisor at 867-873-4081.



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Media Advisory

“JAMES CAMERON VISITS ALBERTA TARSANDS”

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, October 5, 2010
Yellowknife, Denendeh

Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus is encouraged by James Cameron’s visit to the Alberta tar sands last week. The director of the popular movie *Avatar* was very frank with the Alberta and Canadian governments saying that he was not impressed with the sight of the tar sands describing it as ‘horrific’.

Dene National Chief Erasmus agrees that, “There is not enough scientific information known about the reclamation of tailings ponds and the mining of oil sands and there is a not adequate regulation in place to protect the environment and the people affected.”

“The Dene are downstream users from the Alberta Tar Sands. Any pollutants and contaminates that are put into the waters upstream will directly impact our quality of life. The Dene have always lived close to and in harmony with the lands and water. We hunt, fish and live on the lands that we consider precious and sacred. Anything that impacts the fish, wildlife and waterfowl is ingested by our people who continue to live a traditional way of life. Dene have always protected and respected our land, air and water because we are one with the elements.”

“We have heard time after time from governments that the tar sands will have no ill effects on the health of our people, communities and our land. We know that to be untrue because many community members are ill and dying from rare forms of cancer in the area of the Alberta Tar Sands and further north.”

James Cameron has brought new hope into a frustrating battle that has been ongoing between the First Nations and multi-national companies who disregard the environment and the First Nations.

Finally, Dene National Chief Erasmus reminds us all that, “It is not only a First Nations issue, when the environment is contaminated we will all feel the effects, we need to all work together to turn this devastation around.”

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Media Release

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE PERMIT REJECTED BY OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

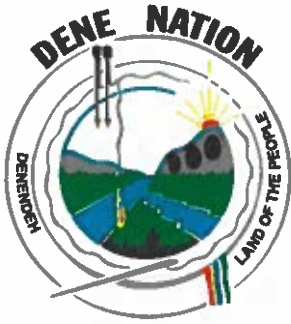
For Immediate Release
January 18, 2012
Yellowknife, NT

The Dene Nation is pleased that the U.S. Department of State has today announced formal rejection of the permit for Keystone XL pipeline. “TransCanada has been denied an application to construct the Keystone XL pipeline to funnel crude oil from Alberta to Texas and out to international markets,” said Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus. “We are very pleased with this decision because it defers the expansion of the Alberta tar sands which impact us”. Erasmus went on to say what is needed now is to have the Canadian and Alberta governments, industry and the people downstream, such as the Dene, getting together to agree on how to address the actual environmental impacts.

Opposition to the project continues to come heavily from First Nations, environmentalists and the public-at-large. Erasmus said “It is very clear that we continue to be concerned and focus on finding new methods to utilize less water for oil sands production and cleaning up the extensive toxic tailings ponds”.

Erasmus noted that although there are accusations being made that President Obama’s administration is “punting” a political decision, the fight to build the Keystone XL pipeline is not over. TransCanada announced today that it will reapply for a Presidential Permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. “We look forward to a new proposal by TransCanada whereby we can present our views at the National Energy Board hearings in Canada,” concluded Erasmus.

For more information please contact Daniel T’Seleie at the Dene National Office (867) 873-4081.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 7, 2013

Dene Nation Supports Trial Against Energy at Beaver Lake Cree Nation

Yellowknife, NT – The Dene Nation is in support of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation, a small First Nations band in northeast Alberta with a population of 800 people, who were victorious in making headway for a trial against the energy industry.

The First Nation wants to know if its treaty rights are being violated namely by the cumulative effects of the oil sands development. They are also taking into consideration other industrial development impacts from the mining and forestry sectors. "It's ironic that industry are allowed to keep expanding through approval of provincial and federal government grant permits," said Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus.

Erasmus added that, "... the Beaver Lake Cree Nation contends that these industrial activities are violating their treaty rights so five years ago they launched a legal battle and that's good! Now, the province of Alberta and the federal government have lost their shot to have it pitched out."

"This is significant, its big news! We are very pleased that the courts recognise the fact that the accumulated effects of the tar sands are having long term economic and environmental impacts on the Beaver Lake First Nations and other peoples. Understandably, the Beaver Lake Cree would seek compensation for having their hunting, trapping and fishing rights being imposed upon by these large projects," said Erasmus.

Erasmus concluded that the Beaver Cree First Nation need to see more limits to the development of the tar sands and more management control over these violations. "We are downstream and we too feel the effects from Alberta's belief that they have legal ownership of the tar sands and therefore are abusing the land and water that becomes toxic through the refining process."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 4, 2013

DENE NATION PLEASED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL COURT RULING

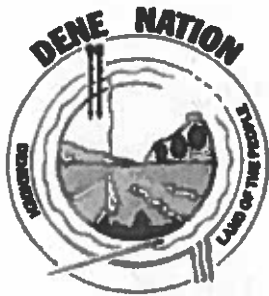
Yellowknife, NT – In an Alberta court proceeding, a Court of Queen's Bench judge ruled this week that the Alberta government was remiss to unfairly bar two environmental groups from participating in an environmental hearing over an application by an oil company to expand its project in the oilsands near Fort McMurray. "We don't have the full details surrounding the court ruling but we definitely feel that it's good news for everyone – Alberta, First Nations and the whole of Canada!" said Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus.

The complaints were launched in 2012 by the Pembina Institute and the Fort McMurray Environmental Association who believed they were unfairly barred from being included in an environmental hearing over an application by the Southern Pacific Resource group to expand its oilsands project near Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Erasmus went on to say that, "The Alberta government didn't offer specifics of rejecting these two organizations' request to give them official status in the review process but instead singled them out on whether they were friendly or unfriendly toward oilsands development." In his view, Erasmus said that although the judge's ruling is a good news, it is bad news for the Alberta government. "We're happy here in the NWT because we're recipients of the lack of Alberta's commitment to environmental stewardship, They continue to add more toxic tar sands extraction to the water while we, who live downstream of the river system, are impacted without due consideration. We end up with differing levels of chemical constituents that concern us immensely."

In late 2000, in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, a physician dealt with people who had immune diseases, diabetes, renal failure and a high rate of certain types of rare cancer. "These are very serious health concerns and we are not comfortable with any of these statistics," added Erasmus. "These two environmental groups have every right to be heard. We're worried. These pollutants are known to cause reproductive and developmental problems in people and aquatic life. We support these environmental advocacy groups to express their 'Statement of Concern' – they are the ones who watch over these matters and they must not be barred from being voiced. They have every right!"

The Dene Nation's mandate it to retain sovereignty by strengthening the Dene beliefs and cultural values on environment and land issues.



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**43rd DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
July 8-12, 2013
Inuvik, Denendeh**

MOTION #13/14-006

SUBJECT: Dene Nation supports the Hupacasath First Nation against the Canada China FIPPA

MOVED BY: Melba Mitchell – Inuvik Native Band

SECONDED BY: Chief Roy Fabian – Katl'o Dehe First Nation

DECISION: Unanimous

WHEREAS, the Dene Nation has convened the 43rd Dene National Assembly in Inuvik, Denendeh from July 8-12, 2013; and

WHEREAS the federal government has entered into an agreement with China known as the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPPA); and

WHEREAS, FIPPA was negotiated without consultation with First Nations whose rights are guaranteed and entrenched in s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*; and

WHEREAS, the agreement if ratified and implemented, will result in the access to lands by a foreign investor, access to natural resources, and to construct pipelines which would infringe on Aboriginal Title and Treaty Rights; and

WHEREAS, Hupacasath First Nation, with the support of other First Nations and citizens of Canada has launched a court action to stop the ratification of the Canada China FIPPA; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Dene Nation supports the judicial intervention by the Hupacasath First Nation against ratification of the Canada China FIPPA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dene Nation shall add its political support to stop the ratification of FIPPA, assist with the public education program on the effects of FIPPA and provide support as needed in any fund raising campaigns.

"Implementing Treaty & Aboriginal Rights Since 1970"



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, November 18, 2013

DENE NATION CONCERNED ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FROM TOXIC TAILINGS POND **Dene National Chief says no one is prepared**

Yellowknife, NT – In a press conference today, Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus addressed the media over the major concern of a massive toxic tailings spill near Hinton, Alberta that flows into the Athabasca River and northward. “These toxins are from synthetic chemicals and heavy metals that are heading our way and will end up in the watersheds of the Northwest Territories. Yet, there is no clear process in emergency preparedness for this kind of pit failure.”

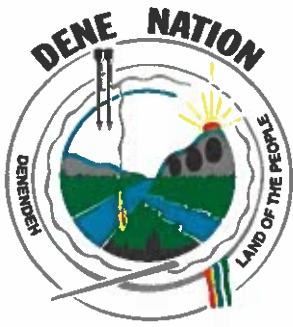
Erasmus said that the Hinton coal mine leak is a major failure with one billion litres of contaminants seeping into the Athabasca River and eventually making its way north. “These contaminants are laced with arsenic, toxic metals and carcinogenic materials and only after learning about it in the media, we were left to our own devices to deal with it.” He noted that it has taken almost three weeks for the Dene Nation to learn, through the media, of the occurrence of the massive Alberta pit failure.

The occurrence at the Obed Mountain Coal Mine, operated by Sherritt International, gave way on October 31, 2013. “We only learned about the unfortunate release of a large volume of contaminated water 19 days later,” said Erasmus. “There is no clear process set up where we are immediately informed. We’re very concerned. It’s an extremely significant event that affects us all in the north, including the circumpolar world,” said Erasmus. He added that the concern is also for long-term effects. “The volume of contaminants in the water will speak for itself through testing but we cannot rely on the environment to dilute the heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury to name a few. None of our governments are prepared to deal with this in a constructive way including the company involved.”

Erasmus said there are countless questions to answer. “We don’t know why the pit gave way or just what contaminants or sediment is leaking into the water. What we do know is that 1 billion litres in volume is a massive amount and we will be affected downstream.” He acknowledged that Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development are involved in the investigation. “We also want to know if the company was in compliance with federal and provincial requirements and regulations.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, November 25, 2013

DENE NATION HOSTS PUBLIC FORUM ON TOXIC TAILINGS POND SPILL: Dene National Chief and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief meet with GNWT

Yellowknife, NT –Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief today met with Government of the Northwest Territories Environment Minister Michael Miltenberger to discuss the October 31, 2013 spill of 670,000 cubic metres of process affected water with suspended sediment into two creeks that drain into the Athabasca River downstream of Hinton, Alberta and eventually arriving at Lake Athabasca and on to Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories.

“We are extremely concerned over that massive toxic tailings spill over three weeks ago because it flows down the Athabasca River and northward and we are the end-users of the watershed system,” said Erasmus adding that there is still no clear process in emergency preparedness for this kind of environmental catastrophe.

Erasmus said the meeting with Minister Michael Miltenberger this morning was a first on the subject. “We had questions that needed answering and it was good to get the territorial government’s perspective on this serious coal mine spill which is laced with major contaminants and we needed to let Minister Miltenberger know just where we stand on the matter.”

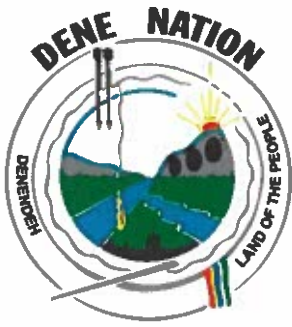
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam, who will be attending the public forum that is scheduled to take place tonight in Yellowknife, was also in the meeting with the Environment Minister. “The contaminants will arrive in our community of Fort Chipewyan before it continues on downstream to Great Slave Lake and communities along the Mackenzie River corridor, yet it is so important for us to be up front with each other on this ruinous event.” Chief Adam said that the water treatment plant in Fort Chipewyan is still in operation. “If a First Nation citizen, farmer, harvester spilled any contaminants into a river system they would be immediately fined and or jailed. We have not heard of any such step taken in this instance,” said Chief Adam.

Erasmus said it is acknowledged that the contaminants associated with the Obed Mountain Coal Mine spill is has arsenic, toxic metals and carcinogenic materials. “We definitely are in need of a clear process where everyone is immediately informed. It’s a significant event that will eventually affect all of us in the north.” He said that it will drift downriver to the circumpolar world and this is a very serious global issue.

The public forum begins at 7:00 p.m. tonight at the Explorer Hotel, Katimavik Room ‘C’ with presentations provided by representatives from Obed Mountain Coal Mine and GNWT.

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**For Immediate Release
Thursday, August 7, 2014**

DENE NATION RESPONDS TO MOUNT POLLEY MINE TAILINGS BREACH NWT residents uneasy with potential environmental impact of contamination

Yellowknife – “The fate of the once pristine and primeval landscape of British Columbia has been seriously ruined by the spill of waste at the Mount Polley mine tailings. In the aftermath of that spill the Dene Nation is responding strongly because the mine-waste will ultimately reach the Athabasca River which runs into the Mackenzie water basin posing a health risk to the communities downstream,” said Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus.

The release of a toxicity report today will reveal just what chemicals were in the mine tailings pond before it collapsed. Erasmus added that the estimated 10 million cubic metres of water and metal-laden fine sand that was released into Polley Lake is an environmental crisis. “It certainly caused a massive ruin to the environment and affecting waterways. The tailings breach will also impact the much-anticipated salmon run for the people in that region.”

Erasmus, as Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), said the national office has today called on the provincial and federal governments and the Imperial Metals Corp. to take all necessary action to mitigate the impacts. “We are especially concerned over this spill; we see it as a deeply ‘troubling environmental crisis’. First Nations citizens in their traditional territories who use the river system as a fishery are affected,” said Erasmus.

The Dene Nation is overly concerned with the affects the waste spill will have on the Mackenzie water basin. “It’s upsetting to think just what risks there will be as contaminants reach the NWT river system where Dene communities continue to consume the fish within the waterway; we need to know what the long-term effects will be,” added Erasmus. He said First Nations must be included in early planning and mitigation of long-term effects to the environment and protection of traditional lands, especially where it concerns water.

Imperial Metals' Mount Polley open pit copper and gold mine is near Quesnel, B.C. in the Cariboo Regional District.

At 1.8 million square kilometres, the Mackenzie River Basin gathers water from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon, and Northwest Territories and is one of continental and global importance because it provides ocean circulation in the circumpolar world.

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