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June 1, 2005

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**SHELVING OF TULSEQUAH CHIEF PROJECT THREATENS SITE CLEAN-UP
Over 200 Tons of Heavy Metals Discharged Into River So Far With No End in Sight**

(JUNEAU) Heavy metal pollution from the Tulsequah Chief mine is likely to continue without adequate cleanup due to an announcement from the mining company that it is placing the project on hold due to economic problems. A key issue is whether Environment Canada will enforce the cleanup order and its June 30 deadline to stop the ongoing heavy metal pollution. The Tulsequah Chief mine annually pollutes the Tulsequah River with nearly 15 tons of heavy metals and has dumped more than 200 tons of these toxins into the river since 1990, according to BC government documents.

“Redfern has allowed toxic pollution to leach into the Tulsequah River upstream of vital salmon spawning and rearing areas and Canadian regulators have allowed this to continue for over ten years,” said Chris Zimmer of the Transboundary Watershed Alliance. “Now that Redfern has admitted that the project is uneconomic, we are worried that the site won’t ever be cleaned up.”

The information on heavy metals pollution comes two weeks after Redcorp Ventures Ltd., Redfern’s parent company, announced that the project is now on hold due to “increased capital and operating expenditure estimates and a reduced resource estimate” and that more work will be needed to make the project “financeable.”

“The project is in financial trouble and this raises serious questions about whether Redfern will clean up the ‘acutely lethal’ heavy metal pollution.” said Zimmer. “Redfern’s financial ills also call into question whether the company can pay for the expensive water treatment plan and other mitigation measures they committed to during the approval process. We hope Canadian officials see the danger in approving a project that can’t pay for itself.”

Redfern has been in violation of Canada’s Fisheries Act for more than a decade at the Tulsequah site and is now in danger of missing a June 30 cleanup deadline. The Tulsequah River is a major tributary of the Taku River. There are important spawning and rearing areas near the mine site in the Tulsequah and downstream in the Flannigan Slough area of the Taku. Heavy metals can be very harmful to invertebrates young salmon feed on, salmon eggs and juvenile salmon—they are persistent and they bioaccumulate.

Redfern’s decision to shelve the project has not changed its desire to get final project approval from the Canadian federal government and apparently has not raised any concerns with DFO, who continue to prepare for a final federal decision.

“Instead of expediting a final decision for this mine and road, Canadian agencies should be focusing on cleaning up this mess,” said Chris Zimmer. “Why would DFO consider approving a project when even the company says it isn’t economical and when they apparently can’t clean up the existing mess? This delay is a prime opportunity to take a step back and develop a long term watershed plan.”

Background and Heavy Metals Data:

Pollution from the Tulsequah Chief has been a problem since the mine was closed in 1957. Harry Carlick of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation was a federal government employee working downriver blasting snags and debris piles out of the river in the 1950s and said the following about Cominco, the owners and operators of the Tulsequah Chief at that time: "They were polluting the river. There were no fish on the Tulsequah and the side creeks when the mine was operating. There was nothing there. The trees were even dead, right down to the airport." Alaska Department of Fish and Game sampling in recent years found significant numbers of juvenile salmon in the Tulsequah, but not in the downstream plume of pollution coming from the mine.

Despite consistently finding "considerable acid generation" and "acutely toxic" contamination draining from Tulsequah site since 1992, the Canadian government has not enforced a clean-up order at the Tulsequah Chief or the Big Bull site, both now owned by Redfern. Federal inspections confirm that "none of the measures undertaken by the company had significantly reduced the acutely lethal toxicity" of the discharges. Instead of finally ordering Redcorp to clean up the both sites, Environment Canada on May 21, 2004 granted Redfern's request to extend the cleanup deadline at the Tulsequah Chief from September 2003 until June 2005. Sources indicate that Redcorp has done little to date to address this pollution and will likely miss the June 30 deadline for a full clean-up.

TULSEQUAH CHIEF MINE POLLUTION INTO THE TULSEQUAH RIVER

Heavy Metal	Annual pollution (pounds)	Since 1990 (pounds)
Zinc	23,861 (12 tons)	357, 915 (179 tons)
Copper	5,099 (2 tons)	76, 485 (38 tons)
Lead	122	1830
Cadmium	97	1455
Arsenic	49	735
Totals	29,228 (15 tons)	438, 420 (219 tons)

The amounts above were calculated by Dave Chambers of the Center for Science and Public Participation based on data in Tulsequah and Taku Rivers Mass Balance Water Quality Report, J. Lough and I. Sharpe, British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection, Environmental Protection Division, Data Report # 2003-1, November, 2003, Appendix C. The loading estimates/calculations are based on sampling done in two months - July 2002 and August 2003. There was also data available from 3 monthly readings in 2001, but this data was not used because (1) all metal loadings for those months were identical, and (2) because the flow rates for the mine discharge for the 2001 data was "estimated" rather than "measured," as was the case for the 2002-2003 data. If the 2001 data were to be included, the loading figures would all be at least twice those above, so the figures quoted are conservative.

The Canadian federal government has denied requests for copies of monthly monitoring and status reports, the cleanup order itself and other information related to the ongoing pollution and failed cleanup.