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Fish Lake mine turned down again—but still not finally

On February 26, Sierra Club BC, and many other groups, welcomed the unequivocal rejection by the federal cabinet of the proposed New Prosperity Mine at Fish Lake, upholding the findings of the federal environmental review panel. The panel found that the proposed mine would cause significant adverse effects on fish and fish habitat, water quality, Aboriginal use and the South Chilcotin grizzly bear population.

‘This is the only decision that the federal cabinet could credibly make given the overwhelming scientific evidence presented to the review panel and the proven, court-declared First Nations rights to the area,’ said Sierra Club Executive Director Bob Peart. ‘We are delighted to see this threat removed from the pristine waters and fish populations of Teztan Biny, and congratulate the Tsilhqot’in Nation on an important step toward protecting this culturally and spiritually significant place.

‘Even as we are celebrating this important moment, we are

mindful of how long and onerous the process has been for all players—government, First Nations and concerned citizens,’ Peart continued. ‘For such an obviously destructive project to be considered again and again through three separate processes over nearly a decade, is not a good use of resources that could be devoted to projects that bring community and environmental

‘This is an important decision for British Columbians, critical for the integrity of the environmental assessment process and a victory for the Tsilhqot’in and Secwepemc people who have opposed the mining proposals for more than two decades,’ commented Interim Leader of BC Green Party Adam Olsen.

However joy was short-lived. Taseko has announced that the company will seek a judicial review of this most recent rejection of the New Prosperity Mine application. Provincial Mines Minister, Bill Bennett, has promised that the government will help Taseko in any way it can to appeal the decision. ✍

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