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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Nations Leaders Fully Support Federal Rejection of Proposed Prosperity Mine

(Coast Salish Territory / Vancouver – November 3, 2010) The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs are satisfied with yesterday's decision by the Government of Canada to not grant permits for the proposed Prosperity Mine in central B.C.

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould stated "I am pleased the federal government decided to protect the land and the water of the territory of the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Northern Secwepemc. I am happy the federal government took the necessary time to review the conclusions of the report of the Federal Review Panel and accepted its findings. Today, we must remember that First Nations are not, on principle, opposed to mining or economic development but not when the negative impacts far outweigh the potential gain. As everyone knows, many Elders, youth and community members attended the public meetings of the Panel and many of them formally presented to the Panel their deep concerns about the proposed mine. Their voices were heard and their way of life protected.

"First Nations leadership across British Columbia and Canada were waiting for this decision to see if there was any value or integrity to the federal environmental assessment process for major projects," said Grand Chief Ed John, speaking on behalf of the First Nations Summit Task Group. "Chief after chief, resolution after resolution, letter after letter, the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Northern Secwepemc were never alone in their fight to protect the profound cultural and spiritual value of their respective territories. The Government of British Columbia should take the time to learn the lessons of Prosperity Mine and focus their efforts on immediate reform to their mining legislation and policies."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated "This decision provides a measure of hope for Indigenous communities who support independent, full and rigorous environmental assessments to adequately assess the impacts on both the environment and our communities. Large-scale proposals like Prosperity Mine, Enbridge's Northern Gateway and Terrane Metals' Mt. Milligan Project are projects opposed by Indigenous communities who rightly fear their way of life is at risk. For now, the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Northern Secwepemc are successful in protecting their lake and lands. The frenzied, high-powered sales pitch of short-term economic gains must be weighed against the significant and long-lasting socio-environmental impacts such large-scale proposals will have on our grandchildren."

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For more information and further comment:

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