



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
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BCAFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 8, 9 & 10, 2024

Hybrid - In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 34/2024

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE INITIATIVE FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING ASSURANCE (IRMA)
MINING STANDARD

MOVED BY: CHIEF BYRON LOUIS, OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND

SECONDED BY: CHIEF LYNDIA PRICE, ULKATCHO FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Indigenous peoples have the right and responsibility to manage, protect and make decisions with respect to their traditional territories and these rights and responsibilities are at the root of Indigenous Nationhood and the highest expression of Indigenous rights;
- B. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UN Declaration"), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement:

Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of (indigenous peoples') economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

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Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

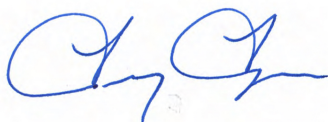
(2): States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.

Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

- C. Premier David Eby's stated goal is for British Columbia to be a leading jurisdiction in the energy transition to a net zero global economy by exploration for and mining of critical minerals. To be a leader requires not just words but demonstrable actions. Those actions include the highest level of standards for achieving, assessing and measuring protection of the environment and equitable sharing of wealth generation in the entire value chain for impacted First Nations communities.
- D. In late 2019, after the passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the Minister Responsible for Mining confirmed the government's support for the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance's ("IRMA") mining standard as a preferred standard. The Minister's support for the IRMA standard was delivered by the deputy minister during an invitation-only meeting that included BMW, ArcelorMittal and HSBC at which the commitment was clear and it was unequivocal. Unfortunately, it appears that the provincial government has since signalled its intention to support less rigorous industry-created mining standards as the *de facto* standard of choice for the government of BC.
- E. IRMA is a global group of those committed to protecting people and the environment directly affected by mining by seeking to provide assessment standards which support the creation of conditions in which the mining industry respects the human rights and aspirations of affected communities, provides safe, healthy and supportive workplaces, minimizes harm to the environment, and leaves positive legacies. IRMA's approach to responsible mining is to independently assess social and environmental performance at mine sites globally using an internationally recognized standard developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

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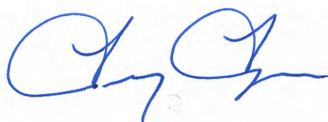
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- F. Such protection means applying the IRMA standard for responsible mining to the dozens of new mines to be constructed in British Columbia to support the global energy transition. See: <https://responsiblemining.net>)
- G. IRMA's Standard for Responsible Mining was developed over more than 10 years with input from First Nations and a multitude of organizations. The standard defines best practices for responsible mining at the industrial scale. It provides the list of expectations that independent auditors will use as the benchmark for responsible mines. The IRMA mining standard is *the* global environment, social and governance ("ESG") high bar. Numerous third-party evaluations confirm the IRMA standard, by a substantial margin, as the leading mining standard. The standard was designed by a diverse suite of upstream and downstream mining and end-user experts - they crafted the first shared definition of what it means to mine responsibly and to do so with the highest degree of transparency.
- H. IRMA mine audits are built on transparency, inclusive governance and thoroughness that speak directly to the fulfilment of ESG requirements. IRMA audits provide unmatched reliability in the assessment of all key components of producing mines. The IRMA mining standard requires proponents of new mines to demonstrate their securing of free, prior and informed consent set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- I. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy, released by the BC Nations Leadership Council on March 4, 2024, contains 50 substantive recommendations. Recommendation #19 of the strategy requires mining activities to be carried out to the highest standards. That means assessment and auditing by the IRMA mining standard.
- J. IRMA's membership includes seven auto manufacturers, some of the world's largest mining companies, jewellers, global trade unions, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and representatives of the investment and finance sectors. They are unified in their vision to develop and use the best mining standard for the energy transition.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly endorse the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance ("IRMA") Mining Standard and call on the government of British Columbia to support and adopt the IRMA mining standard, ensuring that it includes the right of free, prior and informed consent to our traditional and unceded territories, respecting the territorial boundaries that we confirm through working together Nation to Nation;

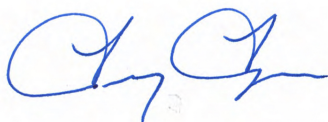
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2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to support and work with the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council to engage in advocacy efforts with the province to seek the province's support and adoption of the IRMA mining standard; and
3. Affirm that such engagement and advocacy must, first and foremost, uphold Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights, including the right of free, prior and informed consent as set out in various articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Canada).

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