

## **TŁICHQ RATIONALE FOR NOT ATTENDING FORTUNE AGREEMENT SIGNING.**

**The Tłichq Government did not attend the signing of the Socioeconomic Agreement (“Agreement”) for the NICO project due to concerns regarding the details of the Agreement and the lack of time given to review it.**

Behchokò, NT (January 30, 2019) The Government of Northwest Territories (“GNWT”) and Fortune Minerals Limited (“Fortune”) signed an agreement in Vancouver with respect to the NICO project. The Tłichq leadership were scheduled to act as witnesses to the signing, however, due to serious concerns with the substance and the process to develop the agreement the Tłichq leadership deliberately chose not to attend the signing ceremony as an expression of their disapproval. The Tłichq Government is actively engaged in other aspects of the Roundup event, advancing Tłichq rights and exploring potential economic opportunities that will benefit Tłichq citizens and communities.

The NICO project is a mining and milling project located near Whatì and surrounded by Tłichq lands. Access to the NICO project will require crossing Tłichq lands. The project has already received key regulatory approvals. The Tłichq Government is deeply concerned by what has transpired. The GNWT has entered into an agreement with Fortune Minerals that is inconsistent with the Tłichq Agreement and is inconsistent with the forthcoming NWT Mineral Resources Act.

Despite continued requests—over the course of a month—to review and understand the agreement they were being asked to witness, a copy was not provided to the Tłichq Government until the afternoon of January 28, 2019, only hours before the signing. GNWT’s conduct, and the substance of this problematic agreement, made it unreasonable for them to do so. The Tłichq Government is disappointed with the Agreement itself and with the fact that Tłichq Government was not given adequate time or notice to review the agreement. No leadership from the Tłichq Government had their costs to go to Roundup paid for by the GNWT.

“The Tłichq should be primary. We hear this information at the last hour, we are very disappointed with the GNWT and Fortune Minerals and how they

conducted their business on this particular issue,” said Grand Chief George Mackenzie.

The Tłıchq Government has fundamental concerns with the agreement itself, particularly as relates to the employment and hiring targets and the interaction of the agreement with Tłıchq rights.

CBC, in reporting yesterday, made numerous factually incorrect statements. Access Agreement negotiations are ongoing, and there are no complaints in front of the courts. The GNWT filed a request with the courts to act as a Dispute Resolution Administrator last year, but GNWT subsequently withdrew that case. There is no dispute related to access with Fortune Minerals that has been brought forward. The Tłıchq Government remains committed to negotiating an Access Agreement and an IBA with Fortune Minerals.

The Tłıchq Government will be at Roundup for the rest of the week and is very interested to hold dialogues with exploration companies in the region.

Requests for media comment can be directed to Grace Mackenzie at 1-867-447-2226.