

Water (T'oh) is a critical element in all our lives. And it is a sacred element to the first nations that have sovereign title and rights within and adjacent to the proposed project area. Ground water and surface water is threatened throughout every stage of this proposed coal mine. Regardless of the local employment being offered by the proponent, there is no benefit that could outweigh either the short or long term risks to t'oh and all the ecosystems it supports.

As our local first nations have always said, "We are the land, and the land is us". The Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en First Nations have lived and utilized this land since time lost in memory. Anything and everything afforded from the land and waters was treated as sacred and never to be disrespected or wasted. Resources were carefully managed to ensure their continued health and abundance and used or traded within a circular economy based on generosity and reciprocity. Utilization and decisions regarding resource use and access were made locally for the benefit of the local population. And the notion of wealth was opposite to our current societies reverence for the accumulation of riches. The 'wealthiest' in our nations and clans were those who were highly respected for how much wealth they would share and distribute within their respective house and clan system. The Canadian government has never managed local resources from our territory in this way. The majority of wealth generated from resource exploitation has been transferred away from our lands to corporate interests, shareholders and government built infrastructure in the southern population centers of the country.

Our ancestors would never agree to a small, young company with no experience or proven safety record, from a foreign nation creating an open pit coal mine that would create so much toxic waste that will forever be a risk to our waterways and salmon. All to dig up and ship away something so toxic to our shared atmosphere as metallurgical coal. A substance that will very likely be out-dated and replaced by hydrogen in the steel manufacturing process making this an even more risky investment that also negates the environmental risks.

If any of this is too difficult for you to process, it may just be that you have not ever had the fortune of having a connection with your own ancestral 'homelands'. Can you instead at least contemplate your connection to your own ancestors and then consider what their relationship to the land and water would have meant to them. Now drop a big open pit coal mine in their backyard, from a company on the other side of the planet, so they can ship coal to the other side of the ocean. And then ask them to live with the long term impacts and risks to their home...!

No open pit coal mines on Wet'suwet'en yintah!!

Signed:

Your Ancestors