

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS  
57<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup> – 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2025  
MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X<sup>W</sup>MƏƏK<sup>W</sup>ƏYƏM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2025-63

## RE: Opposition to Mining in OKIB Watersheds and Protection of Syilx Water, Salmon, and Sacred Sites

**WHEREAS** as First Nations people we continue to exercise our inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights to protect our lands, our waters, and our coasts, and we have the responsibility and jurisdiction to take care of the lands and resources for our future generations;

**WHEREAS** the Brett Mine, now owned by Ximen Mining Corp., has a long history of exploration proposals in the Whiteman Creek watershed, and since the 1990s the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) has consistently opposed these activities due to risks to water quality, watershed stability First Nations title, and Syilx cultural values;

**WHEREAS** the Okanagan Indian Band is part of the syilx nation, which the British Crown encountered upon first contact, therefore, the proposed mining activity is located within unceded syilx territory and doesn't have a treaty with the Crown according to the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, which is embedded in section 25 of the *Constitution Act of Canada* (1982), therefore, the Okanagan Indian Band does not consent to any mining activity in the Browns Creek Watershed, which is located near our sacred Tahaetkun Mountain;

**WHEREAS** OKIB holds legally recognized water licenses that originate in the watersheds proposed for mining activity, and therefore has a legal right and responsibility to protect these critical sources of drinking water and community use;

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Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President

**WHEREAS** the OKIB has raised serious concerns regarding the proposed mining activities within the affected watersheds, which lies within OKIB’s unceded and ancestral territory and provides vital drinking water and habitat for fish, wildlife, and culturally significant resources;

**WHEREAS** mining operations and associated exploration activities in this watershed threaten to irreversibly damage water quality, traditional land use areas, and the health and safety of OKIB members and surrounding communities;

**WHEREAS** watersheds are essential for sustaining life by providing access to clean drinking water and healthy and sustainable fish populations. Healthy watersheds help mitigate the impacts of climate change by reducing the risk of flooding, drought, and erosion while also maintaining biodiversity and ecological resilience;

**WHEREAS** the 2021 White Rock Lake Wildfire caused severe and lasting damage to these watersheds, including slope destabilization, heavy sediment loading, and unpredictable water flows, and mining activities would further escalate these risks through blasting, excavation, road building, and chemical exposure;

**WHEREAS** Tahaetkun Mountain forms part of these watersheds and is an important spiritual and cultural site for the Syilx people, whose responsibilities to protect sacred places and uphold cultural practices are affirmed by our inherent laws and teachings;

**WHEREAS** mining in these watersheds would place community water security, aquatic ecosystems, and the spiritual integrity of Tahaetkun Mountain at unacceptable risk, undermining both OKIB’s legal rights and sacred responsibilities to future generations;

**WHEREAS** the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

**Article 18:** Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

**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.

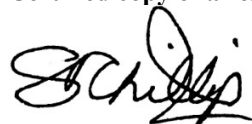
**Article 29(1):** Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without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

**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; and

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**WHEREAS** by UBCIC Resolution 2025-17 “First Nations Watershed Security”, UBCIC recognized First Nations’ rights to continue the exercise and defence of their inherent title and rights to ensure the protection of their self-determined watersheds and seek to mitigate or litigate unjustified infringement measures through the implementation of their laws and section 35 constitutional law advocating for the health of watersheds, called for First Nations jurisdictional water rights and water laws on their unceded traditional lands, and restoring and maintaining ecosystem services and watershed health.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) in its opposition to mining activities in all OKIB watersheds, including Whiteman Creek and Tahaetkun Mountain;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada to immediately stop accepting applications and issuing permits for mineral exploration or mining in the watersheds of the OKIB, including Whiteman Creek and Tahaetkun Mountain;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly urge the federal and provincial governments to recognize and uphold Indigenous water rights and water licenses, ensuring First Nations have decision-making authority over watersheds in their territories;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on the Province to align all mining laws and permitting processes with *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, requiring free, prior, and informed consent before any mining-related approvals are granted.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly support the OKIB in seeking legal and policy reforms that prohibit mineral exploration and development in critical community watersheds and sacred cultural landscapes; and

**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the UBCIC Executive and staff to work with the OKIB and the Okanagan Nation Alliance, as well as other like-minded organizations, to advocate for the permanent protection of the Browns Creek watershed from industrial development.

**Moved:** Chief Dan Wilson, Okanagan Indian Band  
**Seconded:** Chief Samuel Schooner, Nuxalk Nation  
**Disposition:** Carried  
**Date:** October 9, 2025

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