

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Government of Yukon extends staking prohibition for Kaska asserted traditional territory**

The Government of Yukon has extended the prohibition of mineral staking in the Kaska asserted traditional territory outside the Ross River Area until April 30, 2018.

Extending the mineral staking prohibition will provide the Government of Yukon and Kaska governments more time to adequately address the mineral declarations stemming from the Kaska Dena Council mining case.

### **Quotes**

"Our government is committed to identifying solutions that respect both Kaska's and the Yukon government's interests in land and resource management. By continuing to work closely with First Nations, I believe we can build a strong mineral sector in Yukon that protects the environment and provides tangible benefits to our communities while respecting First Nations' rights and interests."

*–Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Ranj Pillai*

### **Quick facts**

- Mineral staking in the Kaska asserted traditional territory outside the Ross River Area is now prohibited until April 30, 2018, under an Order in Council signed on April 27, 2017.
- Mineral staking is already prohibited in the Ross River Area until January 31, 2018, under an Order-in-Council signed on January 23, 2017.
- The Government of Yukon continues to consult with the Ross River Dena Council, Kaska Dena Council and Liard First Nation on the mineral declarations.
- The mineral staking prohibition only applies to new claims. It does not impact existing mineral claims or activities in that area.

### **Background**

In the 2012, Ross River Dena Council v Yukon case, the Yukon Court of Appeal made two declarations:

- The first declaration states that the Government of Yukon has a duty to consult with Ross River Dena Council in determining whether mineral rights are to be made available to third parties.
- The second declaration states that the Government of Yukon has a duty to notify and, where appropriate, consult with and accommodate Ross River Dena Council before allowing any mining exploration activities to take place within the Ross River Area, to the extent that those activities may negatively affect Aboriginal rights claimed by Ross River Dena Council.

In December 2013, the Government of Yukon put a staking prohibition in place for the Ross River Area and entered into consultations with Ross River Dena Council on how to implement the declarations. In 2013, the Government of Yukon also made amendments to the *Placer Mining Act* and *Quartz Mining Act* to implement a Class 1 notification regime to address the second declaration.

In March 2014, the Kaska Dena Council filed a statement of claim requesting the same declarations be made with respect to the southern part of Kaska asserted traditional territory.

In July 2015, the Government of Yukon and Kaska Dena Council reached an out of court settlement and began discussions of how those declarations would be implemented in the remaining Kaska asserted traditional territory in Yukon. Kaska Dena Council and the Yukon government also agreed that those declarations would be suspended from coming into effect until January 31, 2017.

In January 2016, the Government of Yukon and Kaska announced the signing of three mineral agreements (one each with Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation and Kaska Dena Council) that outlined a process of consultation and discussions on the implementation of the declarations; those agreements expired on January 31, 2017.

On February 1, 2017, the Government of Yukon put a 90-day prohibition on mineral staking in the Kaska asserted traditional territory outside the Ross River Area to allow the Government of Yukon and Kaska Dena Council further time to reach an agreement to further suspend the two declarations. In the absence of an agreement with Kaska Dena Council and Liard First Nation, the Government of Yukon is extending the prohibition in that area and continuing consultations with Kaska on the mineral declarations.

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