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July 10, 2009

Attention: Senior Liaison Committee, and
Peel Watershed Planning Commission

The governments of the First Nations of Na-cho Nyak Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Tetlit Gwich'in are disturbed by the draft Land Use Plan released by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission.

The draft Plan completely fails to reflect the position of affected First Nation governments. Land Use Planning is an integral part of the land management system arising from the Umbrella Final Agreement. We have conveyed our position to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission and we expect to see our views respected in the recommended Plan.

The Peel Watershed forms a part of our traditional territories and settlement lands, and we look at our lands as a whole when we consider the uses and activities we deem suitable and beneficial in different areas. As is evident in vast tracts of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Na-cho Nyak Dun traditional territories, we support most current industrial activities. But not in the Peel watershed!

In the Peel watershed planning area as defined by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, we call for full protection of the entire area through an appropriate protected area designation. We do not support resource extraction in the Peel watershed and are opposed to new all-season or winter roads in this planning region for any purposes. The free entry staking system must be eliminated from the Peel watershed.

First Nations people have always relied on the land and we want to leave the land as it is for future generations. We have a long history of calling for protection in the Peel watershed. The Planning Commission has heard this message repeatedly from our elders and community members to no avail.

The Senior Liaison Committee and the Peel Watershed Planning Commission must ensure that our position, as expressed above, is incorporated in the revision of the Draft Plan.

Eddie Taylor
Chief, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

Simon Mervyn
Chief, First Nation of Na-cho Nyak Dun