

**SWINOMISH INDIAN TRIBAL COMMUNITY
SWINOMISH INDIAN RESERVATION**

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-10- 193

**Resolution Urging the Permanent Protection of the Skagit Headwaters in British Columbia
and Requesting Governor Inslee's Continued Active Opposition to
the Imperial Metals Exploratory Mining Permit**

WHEREAS, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (the "Tribe") is a federally recognized Indian Tribe organized pursuant to Section 16 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (25 U.S.C. § 5123); and

WHEREAS, the Tribe is organized under a constitution and bylaws originally ratified by the Tribe on November 16, 1935, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on January 27, 1936, and as most recently amended and ratified by the Tribe on May 23, 2017 and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on July 7, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Swinomish Indian Senate (the "Senate") is the duly enacted governing body of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and exercises governmental authority over all lands and waters within the Swinomish Indian Reservation; and

WHEREAS, the Swinomish People are known as the People of the Salmon, and lived in, depended upon, and stewarded the Skagit River watershed and its natural resources since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the six wild salmon species that still call the Skagit River home have sustained the Swinomish Tribe's people and ancestors since time immemorial, and are necessary for the Tribe's culture, economy, spiritual and religious ceremonies, and the Swinomish Tribal Community's way of life; and

WHEREAS, the Swinomish Tribe has prioritized environmental protection and restoration efforts in the entire Skagit watershed to protect and recover the water quality, instream flows and all the habitat that salmon and other essential species need to survive, recover, and thrive; and

WHEREAS, the headwaters of the Skagit River originate in British Columbia and flow into Washington State through culturally and ecologically sensitive and important lands; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2014, the tailings pond dam of the Mount Polley Mine, owned and operated by Imperial Metals, failed, thereby releasing into nearby salmon rivers and streams an estimated 25 million cubic meters of toxic wastewater and tailings, including 326 tons of nickel, 400 tons of arsenic, 177 tons of lead and 18,400 tons of copper and its compounds; and

WHEREAS, a similar ecological catastrophe of any scale in the headwaters of the Skagit River would create long-term adverse effects in our homeland to the detriment of many generations to come;

WHEREAS, Imperial Metals submitted an application to the British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources in December 2018 to explore for gold in the ecologically sensitive headwaters of the Skagit River in British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the Swinomish Tribe has been actively engaged since early 2019 to oppose the Imperial Metals' destructive proposal to explore for gold with practices that are risky and antithetical to salmon recovery, including by sending two opposition letters to the British Columbia government, requesting government-to-government consultation, co-authoring an opinion editorial in the Seattle Times, testifying in opposition to the mine proposal to the Washington Legislature in February 2020, engaging with our First Nations partners, and participating in an international coalition of nearly 150 organizations, governments and businesses opposing the proposal; and

WHEREAS, Washington Governor Jay Inslee and the majority of the Washington congressional delegation have previously expressed strong opposition to the Imperial Metals proposal to explore for gold in the Skagit Headwaters in British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the British Columbia Premier John Horgan is the ultimate decision-maker about whether to permit the gold exploration proposal in the Skagit Headwaters; and

WHEREAS, the governments of British Columbia and Washington State have long recognized the interdependent nature of their decisions affecting their shared environment in the basin of the Salish Sea; and


WHEREAS, the Swinomish Senate believes it is prudent and wise to continue efforts to actively oppose Imperial Metals' gold exploration permit in the Skagit Headwaters, based on the direct ecological link between these headwaters and our homeland on the Skagit River and Salish Sea, the catastrophic failures of that company to protect salmon habitat and water quality in important headwaters, and due to the significant risks the gold mining proposal creates to salmon recovery efforts in the Skagit River Basin, which directly affect the exercise of our Treaty Rights and the ability of every citizen of Washington State to enjoy this priceless natural treasure; and

WHEREAS, the Senate is authorized to take this action pursuant to Article VI, Sections 1(a), (f), (l), (q), and Section 5(b) of the Constitution of the Tribe approved January 27, 1936, as amended and pursuant to the inherent authority of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community,
NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SWINOMISH INDIAN SENATE as follows:

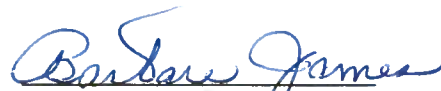
Section 1. Opposition to Imperial Metals Permit. With this resolution, the Swinomish Senate expresses, in the strongest possible terms, its continued opposition to Imperial Metals' permit proposal to explore for gold in the Skagit River Headwaters in British Columbia.

Section 2. Request to Governor Inslee to Engage BC Premier Horgan. The Swinomish Tribe requests and urges Governor Inslee to continue his leadership role and to take action at all levels of state government to protect salmon recovery in the Skagit River basin through strong opposition to the Imperial Metals gold exploration permit and to continue to urge BC Premier Horgan to deny the permit.


Steve Edwards, Chairman
Swinomish Indian Senate

CERTIFICATION

As Secretary of the Swinomish Indian Senate, I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was approved at a Special Meeting of the Swinomish Indian Senate held on October 6, 2020, at which time a quorum was present and the resolution was passed by a vote of 7 FOR, 0 AGAINST, and 0 ABSTENTIONS.


Barbara James, Secretary
Swinomish Indian Senate