

# FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYAK DUN

## OPEN LETTER TO YG AND ALL YUKONERS

### RE: EAGLE GOLD MINE CRISIS

The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun ("FNNND") is grieving the impacts of the June 24 collapse of the heap leach pad at Victoria Gold's Eagle Gold Mine in our Traditional Territory. The mine site is an area our Nation has relied on for generations for harvesting and traditional pursuits. It is now filled with toxins. This area may never recover from the millions of litres of cyanide solution poisoning our lands.

The Eagle Gold Mine disaster did not occur in a vacuum. It was preceded by years of warning signs, including a landslide in January and chronic water storage and management issues. It is unclear what, if any, steps Yukon Government ("YG") took in response to these red flags.

FNNND understands YG struck an independent review board ("IRB"), pursuant to the Guidelines for Mine Waste Management Facilities ("Guidelines"), to investigate the technical causes of the Eagle Gold Mine failure. FNNND offered to co-govern such a review in a revised terms of reference FNNND sent to YG on August 27. YG ignored us. They did not even respond to FNNND's offer, instead announcing the IRB on August 30.

The IRB is insufficient. The Guidelines contemplate a technical process to help mining companies avoid disasters like this one—not a holistic process to look back on the many direct and indirect causes of a disaster that has already occurred. FNNND urged YG to ensure the IRB undertake a "review of prior compliance issues at the Eagle Gold mine and an assessment of any shortcomings in YG's compliance, monitoring, and enforcement activity with respect to Eagle Gold Mine in the lead up to this failure." YG flatly rejected this. **FNNND again urges YG to initiate a public inquiry into the Eagle Gold Mine disaster that includes an investigation of how YG's oversight—or lack thereof—may have contributed to the incident.** This requires an independent public inquiry with robust investigative powers beconstituted pursuant to the *Public Inquiries Act*.

The Eagle Gold Mine disaster is a symptom of a larger, systemic, issue plaguing mining regulation in Yukon. The Eagle Gold Mine is only the latest in a long string of toxic mine liabilities that burden the Yukon, including Minto, Faro, Mount Nansen, and Wolverine. The consequence of regulatory negligence and a business-as-usual approach at an unsafe and unsound site now hangs over taxpayers' heads. This disaster will continue to impact the lands, waters, wildlife, and community of FNNND for the foreseeable future. YG's oversight of all existing and future mining activity in the Yukon must be scrutinized.

**FNNND repeats our demand for the establishment of a public inquiry into the Eagle Mine Disaster and calls for an immediate halt to all mining activity on our Traditional Territory. This includes all existing and proposed mineral staking, exploration, and development.**

**FNNND urges all Yukoners to join FNNND in these calls.**

