



April 21, 2026

Honourable Julie Dabrusin  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
c/o Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

*Sent via email to [fording@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:fording@iaac-aeic.gc.ca), [ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca)*

**RE: Fording River Extension Project - Request for referral to Independent Review Panel**

Ki?su?k kyukyit Minister Dabrusin,

We write to you as the leadership of ?aq'am to formally request that you exercise your discretion under Section 36(1) of the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) to refer the Fording River Extension (FRX) Project to an Independent Review Panel. It is our perspective that this project should not have proceeded to an Environmental Assessment (EA) given that the Extraordinary Adverse Effects previously identified in our August 2022 Readiness submission remain. As you are aware, we stated our continued opposition to the advancement of the project to the Environmental Assessment Office on October 6, 2025.

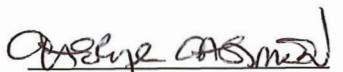
We are deeply concerned that a project is proceeding which will permanently destroy endangered high elevation grasslands, will remove the side of an intact mountain, and will alter river flows and increase already enormous pollution loads. We are aware that there are continued water quality non compliances (including a violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty and the US Clean Water Act), that reclamation continues to be inadequate (exacerbated by the slow pace and poor quality of reclamation done previously), and there are continued impacts to our rights and title. We remain steadfast in the perspective that it is premature to be considering a major mining project and that the province has not entered this EA process in good faith. Whether this major mining project will undermine Canada's domestic commitments under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act (1982)*, the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, and the *Fisheries Act*, as well as international commitments under the Boundary Waters Treaty, would be best evaluated by an Independent Review Panel.


We deserve a rigorous, independent cross-examination of the largest coal mining project proposed

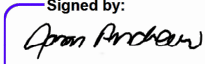



within the most heavily impacted region of our territory. An independent review panel provides the expertise, unbiased evaluation, and transparency which will benefit our shared desire to see the environment protected.

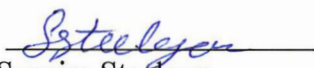
Sincerely,

  
Cheryl Gasimer  
Nasu?kin (Chief), ?aqam

  
Dallas Cardinal-Clement  
Councillor, ?aqam

Signed by:  
  
1FBEEB9572B34AE  
Jason Andrew  
Councillor, ?aqam

  
Julie Birdstone  
Councillor, ?aqam

  
Sancira Steelgun  
Councillor, ?aqam