



November 14, 2025

The Honourable Julie Dabrusin
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Email: ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca

Dear Minister Dabrusin:

Re: Decades of tourism and community development threatened by open pit mine proposed by West High Yield (WHY) Resources Ltd.

We write in support of designation of the proposed Record Ridge Mine under Section 9 of the *Impact Assessment Act*, highlighting how more than two decades' worth of investment in tourism development transformed Rossland, British Columbia into a thriving and economically viable community, and how the proposed open pit mine development in close proximity to the resort threatens sustainable future development and investment.

BACKGROUND

Tourism development in Rossland took off in the mid-2000s with key milestones, including ownership change at Red Mountain Resort and the establishment of Tourism Rossland as the area's destination marketing organization. Rossland's designation as a resort community under the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) program recognized the vital role of supporting small, tourism-based municipalities across British Columbia. Collaborative efforts between local stakeholders aim to foster a sustainable, year-round tourism sector that respects the community, partners, and environment.

a. Population trends

Between 2001 and 2006, Rossland faced a significant population decline, with a recorded population of 3,280 in 2006. However, investments and developments revitalized the community, making it a desirable location for both visitors and residents.

By 2021, the population had increased by 26% compared to 2006, in contrast to a 1.8% decline in the rural Canadian population during the same timeframe. This growth directly correlates with heightened investments in tourism.

b. Educational attainment

Rossland has attracted a highly skilled and civically engaged population over the years. In 2021, 52% of residents aged 25-65 held a bachelor's degree or higher, significantly exceeding the rural British Columbia average of 19% and the national Canadian average of 33%.

c. Economic impact of tourism

The introduction of the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) in 2006 has been a vital indicator of growth within the tourism sector. Annual accommodation revenues skyrocketed from \$2.1 million in 2006 to \$12.8 million in 2024. Notably, non-peak season revenues (April to November) increased from \$750,000 in 2006 to \$5.4 million in 2024.

d. Economic activity generated by tourism

By 2024, the total economic activity generated by tourism in Rossland reached \$39 million, with around \$19 million generated outside the peak season. This consistent growth highlights the positive impact of tourism on the local economy.

e. Tourism amenity development and employment

Since 2006, Rossland has attracted substantial investments in tourism infrastructure from both private sources and government grants. Significant developments include:

- Red Mountain Resort, now the 12th largest ski area in North America, operating both winter (skiing and snowboarding) and summer (downhill mountain bike park);
- Big Red Cats, one of the largest cat-skiing operations globally;
- Blackjack Ski Club, a renowned cross-country ski area that hosts international competitions;
- Expansion of the Redstone Golf Course to an 18-hole championship facility;
- Over 160 kilometers of meticulously maintained single-track trails for mountain biking, hiking, and trail running, including the world-famous Seven Summits Trail, recognized by the International Mountain Biking Association as one of only three "Epic" designated trails in Canada; and
- The Rossland Range offers more than 10 day-use cabins.

Since 2006, Rossland has also expanded its accommodations, more than doubling its total accommodation inventory to be able to host approximately 2,500 guests, including the award-winning The Josie Hotel, a boutique ski-in/ski-out property.

The vibrant downtown now features over 14 restaurants and numerous locally-owned businesses throughout our heritage downtown. Overall, the tourism industry has generated approximately 800 new jobs since 2006, with the current tourism labor force exceeding 1,000 jobs.

ANALYSIS

The open-pit mine development proposed by West High Yield (WHY) Resources Ltd., located approximately 7.5 kilometers from Rossland, poses a considerable threat to the community's hard-earned gains in tourism.

Despite claims of economic benefits (i.e. approximately 3 dozen seasonal jobs), the project will likely provide minimal advantages, focusing on exporting raw materials out of Canada rather than bolstering local development.

Additionally, even with a processing plant added at an indeterminate point in the future, the mine would create less than 10% of the employment the tourism industry already has brought to the region.

Since the mid-2000s, Rossland has transformed into a thriving tourism destination, exemplified by a 26% population increase from 2006 to 2021. This growth correlates with significant economic activity, generating approximately \$39 million annually from tourism and creating around 800 new jobs. The area's higher educational attainment further supports a skilled workforce tailored for this sector.

However, the proposed project threatens this progress by disrupting the natural landscape that is the source of Rossland's economic strength and causing increased pollution, dust, noise, heavy industrial traffic and other impacts.

Such impacts undermine local efforts to foster a sustainable, year-round tourism sector, jeopardizing both the environment and the community's economic vitality.

We therefore ask that the Minister exercise her discretion under Section 9 of the *Impact Assessment Act* and designate the Record Ridge project for assessment.

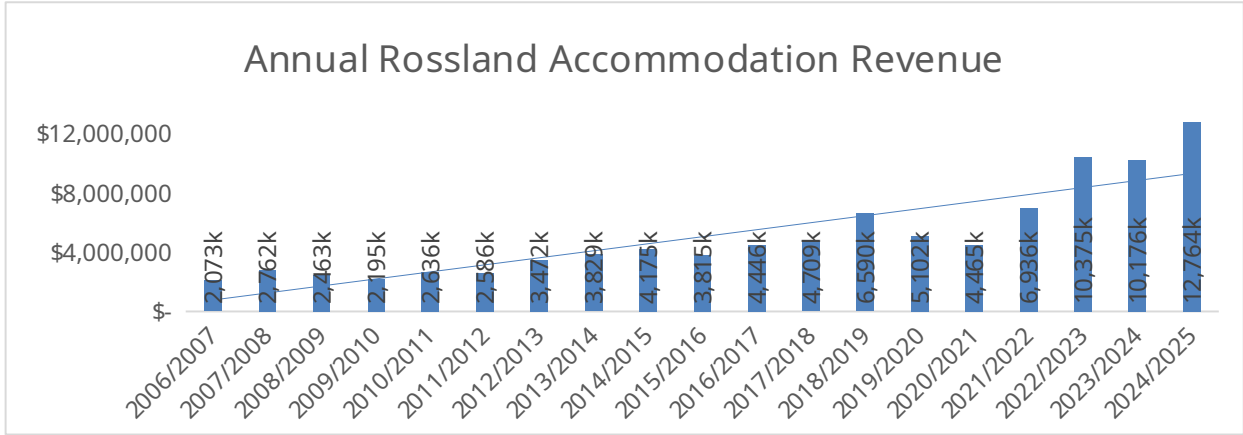
Sincerely,

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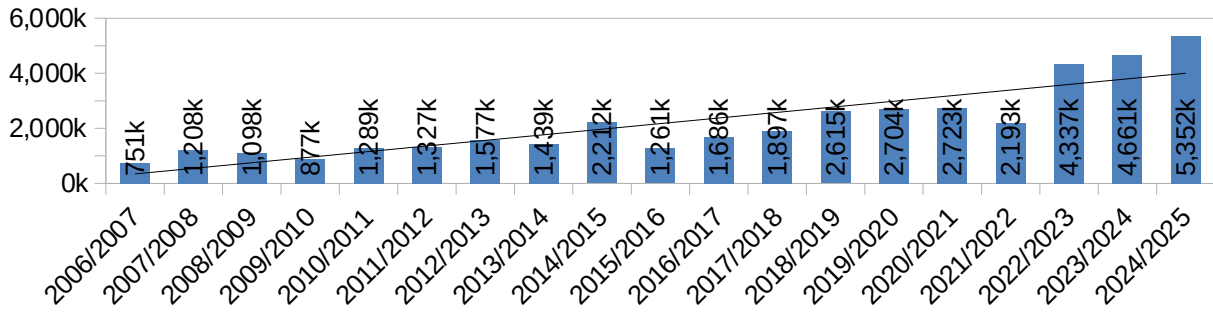
Dr. Andras Lukacs
Executive Director

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SCHEDULE "A" GROWTH OF ACCOMMODATION REVENUE IN ROSSLAND



Non-Winter Annual Rossland Hotel Accommodation Revenue (Apr - Nov)



SCHEDULE "B"
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Tourism Rossland Strategic Plan:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/0k0msmva8ahfl63/Strategic%20Plan%202020%20Adopted%20Version.pdf?dl=0>

City of Rossland Resort Municipality Initiative Resort Development Strategy 2025-2027:

<https://rossland.civicweb.net/document/51865/>

City of Rossland Official Community Plan:

<https://rossland.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/5303/?preview=24841>

City of Rossland Recreation, Parks, and Culture Master Plan:

<https://rossland.civicweb.net/document/25468/>