

Joint Summary of Issues and Engagement

YELLOWHEAD COPPER PROJECT

Pursuant to Section 13.5 of the Environmental Assessment Act, S.B.C. 2018, c.51

Pursuant to Section 14(1) of the Impact Assessment Act, S.C. 2019, c.28, s.1

OCTOBER 2, 2025



EAO | Environmental
Assessment Office



Impact Assessment
Agency of Canada

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Introduction

Taseko Mines Limited (Taseko) is proposing the construction, operation, and closure of a new open-pit copper mine located about 150 kilometres northeast of Kamloops, British Columbia. The Yellowhead Copper Project has been designed with a production capacity of 90,000 tonnes of ore per day (up to 32 million tonnes per year) over a 25-year mine life. The project, which would also produce gold and silver, includes a new mill, an approximately 110 kilometre transmission line that would connect to an existing BC Hydro substation near 100 Mile House, and a rail load-out facility at an existing site at Vavenby. The production capacity of the project means that it is subject to consideration under the BC *Environmental Assessment Act* (BC Act) and federal *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA).

On July 7, 2025, the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) approved the Initial Project Description (IPD) and Engagement Plan for the project. On July 7, 2025, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) determined that the project meets the definition of a designated project under the IAA and that the IPD meets federal requirements. These actions by the EAO and IAAC marked the beginning of the Early Engagement phase and the Planning phase of the project, respectively.

The Early Engagement and Planning phases are important preparatory stages during which meaningful conversations can begin about the project prior to the EAO determining the requirements for a provincial environmental assessment, and IAAC determining whether further federal impact assessment is required.

To support the Early Engagement and Planning phases, the EAO and IAAC shared the IPD with, and sought to collect questions and understand views about the project from, potentially affected First Nations, surrounding communities, provincial and federal subject matter experts, and the public.

This Joint Summary of Issues and Engagement (the Joint Summary) has been prepared and issued by the EAO and IAAC. The Joint Summary includes:

- A summary of early engagement with First Nations;
- A summary of comments received from the public comment period and from provincial and federal authorities;
- Direction from the EAO to Taseko to consider and respond to comments received during Early Engagement; and,
- Direction from IAAC to Taseko to consider and respond to a list of key issues identified during the Planning phase.

First Nations' early engagement

As part of initiating early discussions on the project and scope of assessment, the EAO and IAAC sent letters at the beginning of the Early Engagement and Planning phases to identify First Nations' interest in the project, how potentially affected First Nations may want to be

involved in the assessment, and any views on the EAO's request to substitute its provincial environmental assessment process under the BC Act in place of the federal impact assessment, should one be required.

The project is located in the territory of the Secwepemc Nation, primarily the Simpcw First Nation (Simpchw). Other divisions within the Secwepemc Nation have also indicated interests in the area.

Simpchw has identified that the project is subject to the *Simpchw Assessment Process* (Simpchw Process) that exercises Simpcw's inherent jurisdiction and self-government right to protect, manage and control Simpcw Territory (Simpchwúlecw) by ensuring prior and informed consent is granted before any development activities proceed. The Simpcw Process is a consent-based process Simpcw uses to make decisions regarding proposed activities and ensures that project assessments appropriately consider and respect Simpcw Rights, interests, laws, values, priorities, and culture.

Through collaboration on the IPD with Taseko, Simpcw has provided initial interests and concerns with the project that have been summarized within Section 6.2.3 and Table 6-7 of the Engagement Plan. Step 3 of the Simpcw Process will further refine the interests and concerns of Simpcw and determine how they will be addressed through the assessment.

The EAO and IAAC will work closely with Simpcw to confirm how their interests and concerns will be considered and assessed and how the provincial and federal assessments will align with the Simpcw Process.

The EAO and IAAC also reached out to the following First Nations, whose consultation areas overlap with the project:

- Adams Lake Indian Band;
- Neskonlith Indian Band;
- Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw (formerly Little Shuswap);
- Stswecem'c Xget'tem (formerly Canoe Creek/Dog Creek);
- Tsqéscen First Nation (formerly Canim Lake); and,
- Whispering Pines / Clinton Indian Band.

Adams Lake Indian Band and Neskonlith Indian Band indicated their interest in being involved in the assessment as it progresses. Adams Lake raised concerns about the sufficiency of the information in the IPD, including information about potential adverse impacts to Adams Lake's Aboriginal Title, Rights and Interests, and to water quality, fisheries, cumulative effects, cultural heritage, and the Douglas Colonial Reserve. Adams Lake also stressed that meaningful participation requires proper resourcing, technical support, and the integration of Secwepemc laws, knowledge and governance. The EAO and IAAC will continue to work with each Nation's representatives to understand how they wish to be engaged and/or consulted.

Provincial, federal and local government comments

The EAO and IAAC received comments on the IPD from the following provincial, federal, and regional government agencies:

- BC Ministry of Environment and Parks;
- BC Ministry of Forests;
- BC Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals;
- BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit;
- BC Ministry of Water, Lands, and Resource Stewardship;
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada;
- Environment and Climate Change Canada;
- Employment and Social Development Canada;
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
- Health Canada;
- Indigenous Services Canada;
- Interior Health Authority;
- Natural Resources Canada;
- Thompson Nicola Regional District;
- Transport Canada; and,
- Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Provincial and federal agencies submitted comments related to considerations and requirements for impact assessments, provincial and federal permits and authorizations. Provincial and federal technical advisors directed the proponent to information databases to support the analysis of potential effects and mitigation measures. Technical advisors also raised questions about baseline studies, project components, mitigation plans, and requested that Taseko add additional details in some areas of the Detailed Project Description (DPD).

With respect to potential effects of the project, technical advisors' comments focused on the potential effects on water quantity and quality in downstream water bodies and associated effects to fish, potential effects to wildlife and species at risk near the mine site and along the transmission line, effects to air quality and health impacts from dust, effects to local infrastructure, potential access overlap with recreation groups, economic effects, and disproportionate effects on Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women and girls.

To read the comments received from provincial and federal technical advisors, see the issues tracking table available on the EAO's [Yellowhead Copper project site](https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/68683619301939002361e24a/documents)¹.

¹ Access all project documents here <https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/68683619301939002361e24a/documents>

Public comments and concerns

As part of the Early Engagement and Planning phase, the EAO and IAAC held a joint public comment period from August 5 to September 15, 2025. During the public comment period, the EAO and IAAC hosted an in-person open house in Clearwater, British Columbia and a virtual information session. Table 1 summarizes the comments received from the public comment period on the [EAO's EPIC.engage website](#) and [IAAC's Canadian Impact Assessment Registry](#).

Table 1 – Summary of Public Comments

Topic Area	Description of Comments
Water quality and water use	Concerns about the potential for tailings pond leakage and acid rock drainage, impacts on salmon-bearing rivers (Harper Creek, North Thompson River, Barriere Lake), water quality affecting nearby farms, homes, and ecosystems, and long-term water availability.
Wildlife and habitat	Concerns about the mine and transmission line contributing to habitat fragmentation affecting caribou, bears, moose, and salmon, disrupting traplines, and the loss of biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems.
Air quality	Concerns about dust and particulate matter from mining and haul trucks, respiratory health risks, especially in wildfire-prone areas, and cumulative effects with existing air pollution sources.
Noise	Concerns about 24-hour truck traffic and blasting, loss of peace and quiet in rural communities, and how noise can affect mental health and quality of life.
Uranium concerns	Questions and concerns about the presence of scattered uranium deposits in the area and risks of radon gas release, long-term health risks, and historical uranium exploration in the region.
Community and health impacts	Concerns about the project's potential strain on infrastructure (e.g. hospitals, schools, housing), traffic safety and congestion, mental health and social disruption, and health risks from transmission lines and industrial activity.
Visual quality impacts	Concerns about the aesthetic degradation from open pit mine and transmission line, impacts on recreational areas and scenic views, and the loss of rural character and natural beauty.
Economic impacts	Support for job creation and infrastructure improvements, and concerns about long-term sustainability, impacts on tourism, and lack of economic benefit for communities along the transmission line.
Accidents and malfunctions	Some fear about the potential for tailings dam failure (like Mount Polley), tailings release, and wildfire risk.
Greenhouse gases and climate change	Concerns about the loss of green cover reducing carbon sequestration, the project's additional greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change effects on the region.
Impacts from the transmission line	Approximately 40% of the submissions received opposed the proposed transmission line route from Vavenby to 100 Mile House. Concerns included the impacts on private property, farms, traplines, wildlife, recreation, and human health.

Response to the Joint Summary to meet provincial requirements

As part of preparing the DPD and to support the EAO's Readiness Decision, the EAO requires Taseko to respond to all comments submitted to the EAO and IAAC, including comments from First Nations, provincial and federal agencies, and members of the public. Responses should indicate how issues have been addressed or will be in a future phase of the assessment.

Response to the Joint Summary to meet federal requirements

Based on the comments received from First Nations, technical advisors, and the public on the IPD, IAAC has identified key issues for the project. Key issues are listed in Table 2, and are those that are factors in federal decision-making, have a pathway to an effect within federal jurisdiction, and are a major concern that is raised by a First Nation, federal authorities, provincial ministries, or the public.

IAAC requires that Taseko consider these key issues and provide a response. A high-level response is sufficient. Where relevant, Taseko is encouraged to identify if the key issues will be addressed through existing legislative and regulatory frameworks (i.e. legislation or regulation), by Taseko's commitments to best practices, policies or standards, or both.

Table 2 – Key Issues within Federal Jurisdiction

Key Issue	Description
Fish and fish habitat	Concerns were raised about the project having the potential to cause flow reductions in Harper Creek, its tributaries, and Baker Creek, and potential effects to bull trout summer migration, fall spawning, and overwintering periods. Concerns were also raised about the potential impacts of effluent discharge into any fish-bearing waters, including downstream waters with potential salmon habitat in North Barriere Lake. Provide details on the potential impacts to fish and fish habitat, including potential changes as a result of accidents and malfunctions, and measures that could be implemented to mitigate any potential impacts.
Migratory birds and species at risk	Concerns were raised about the potential for the project to impact migratory birds, many of which are also listed on Schedule 1 of the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> , through individual mortality and the destruction of their habitat, nests, and eggs. For those migratory birds that are also species at risk, the conventions under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> apply on all lands (not just federal lands). Provide details on the potential impacts on migratory birds, information on measures that would be in place to manage potential adverse effects to migratory birds, and clarify how the project would comply with the <i>Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994</i> and the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> .

Indigenous engagement and consultation	Concerns were raised about impacts to Adams Lake Indian Band's Aboriginal Title, Rights and Interests, including in relation to water quality, fisheries, cumulative effects, and cultural heritage. Neskonlith Indian Band has indicated more engagement is needed to ensure that management of the land is aligned with its traditions, customs and laws. Clarify the process for meaningful engagement with Adams Lake Indian Band and Neskonlith Indian Band regarding the assessment of the project's impact on their rights, and the identification of means to address impacts on these rights.
Navigation	The mandate of Transport Canada's (TC) Navigation Protection Program is to protect the public right of navigation on Canadian navigable waters. Under the <i>Canadian Navigable Waters Act</i> (CNWA), TC issues approvals for works that may interfere with navigation, and that are located on a navigable water that is not listed on the Schedule, when a proponent has applied to TC for an approval. Describe how the proponent will determine whether it needs to apply to TC under the CNWA, including what information will be considered and the anticipated timing for that determination.

Conclusion

Taseko is now required to carry out the direction of the EAO and respond to IAAC's key issues found in the Joint Summary. If you anticipate requiring more than 20 days to respond to the key issues, please notify IAAC in writing as soon as possible to discuss time limit implications. This Joint Summary, along with the additional required materials provided by Taseko, will be used to inform the EAO and IAAC's upcoming assessment decisions.