



**KTUNAXA
NATION**

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Ktunaxa question extension of Jumbo EA certificate

Kootenays / Ktunaxa Traditional Territory – The Ktunaxa Nation once again is calling upon the Province to adhere to good faith consultation and negotiations, and to have full disclosure on decision making regarding the controversial proposed Jumbo Glacier Resort.

On January 26, 2009, the BC Environmental Assessment Office arbitrarily extended the Environmental Assessment (EA) certificate granted to Glacier Resorts Ltd. for an additional five years. The EA certificate was set to expire in October without significant commencement by the proponent at that location.

The Ktunaxa Nation has been in contact with the Environmental Assessment Office and have outlined their concerns about renewing the extension before a full review of new information regarding the grizzly bear population was done.

“The grizzly is very important to Ktunaxa culture, and is linked to who we are as a people,” said Ktunaxa Nation Chair, Sophie Pierre.

“We believe that the existing EA certificate was awarded based upon inaccurate data on the grizzly. Since that time we have recent reliable scientific data that shows that the grizzly bear population in the area is not as robust as was once believed.”

“The grizzly bear population is currently at 54%, which puts it at near threatened status. When the original EA certificate was issued, it was based on an inaccurate assessment that the grizzly bear population was at 93%.”

“At minimum, this new information regarding grizzly bears should have given the Province pause before arbitrarily extending the EA certificate. Instead, it leaves one to wonder what the purpose of regulatory processes are if decisions are not based upon scientific, objective data.”

The Ktunaxa Nation participated in the EA process for the Jumbo Glacier Resort in good faith starting in 1997, and voiced major concerns that were not being addressed up until the conclusion in 2004.

Since that time, an independent scientific study led by renowned grizzly bear biologist, Michael Proctor, showed that the central Purcell grizzly bear population was significantly less robust than anticipated at the time of the EA decision.

“The grizzly population currently needs support to even get it back to a healthy condition, and the proposed resort would only compound the issue,” continued Pierre. “We want scientific and political assurances that effective measures are available to mitigate potential project effects on grizzly bears and other wildlife and environmental values.”

“Impacts on the grizzly are just one of several outstanding concerns that the Ktunaxa have regarding the proposed resort. The resort will also impact other wildlife species; water quality and flows; and hunting access.”

“Our Creation Story is quite clear that Ktunaxa have a responsibility to be stewards of the land, and we take that role seriously. We seek agreements with the government and the proponent that accommodate the impacts to all of our interests. We cannot reach a financial agreement while major impacts to our interests go unaddressed.”

The arbitrary extension of the EA certificate is just the latest example of the Province circumventing process and ignoring the concerns raised by the Ktunaxa Nation.

The extension of the EA certificate follows an incident in 2008 when a license of occupation was arbitrarily transferred from the previous holder, Calgary Olympic Development Association (CODA), to Glacier Resorts Ltd., and substantially expanded in scope and scale with no consultation with the Ktunaxa Nation, as is required by law.

With so many questionable tactics and manoeuvres by Provincial agencies, it provides Pierre with concern and apprehension in regards to the ongoing negotiations over this proposed resort.

“It should not be our job to be a government watchdog. What upstream political pressures are being placed upon our consultation and negotiation process that they continue to ignore their legal duties to consult with us?”

The Ktunaxa Nation has never extinguished their Aboriginal Title within their Traditional Territory, and government and proponents have a legal obligation to consult about and accommodate impacts upon Ktunaxa interests.

The Ktunaxa Nation has continuously opposed the development of the proposed resort due to its impacts upon Ktunaxa interests. The Ktunaxa Nation wants to ensure that a development of this scale happens in an environmentally, socially, culturally and economically sustainable manner for future generations.

Pursuant to their stewardship responsibility, the Ktunaxa Nation is attempting to address the serious impacts through parallel negotiations with Glacier Resorts Ltd. and the provincial government.

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“Strong, healthy citizens and communities speaking our languages and celebrating who we are and our history in our ancestral homelands, working together, managing our lands and resources, as a self-sufficient, self-governing Nation.”

- Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement

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