

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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UBCIC Commends Marilyn Baptiste on Winning Major Environmental Award and for Leadership in Saving Teztan Biny (Fish Lake) from Development

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – April 21, 2015) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs is deeply honoured to congratulate Xení Gwet'in Councillor Marilyn Baptiste, in winning the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize for her leadership in defeating one of the largest proposed gold and copper mines in British Columbia which would have destroyed Teztan Biny (Fish Lake), a source of spiritual rejuvenation, identity and livelihood for the Xení Gwet'in.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of UBCIC, stated, "We couldn't be more proud of Marilyn Baptiste, whose incredible devotion to the Tsilhqot'in people and territory is demonstrated in every action she takes. In her time as UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, Marilyn contributed her relentless advocacy for Aboriginal Title and Rights. She has always made it clear that she is prepared to do anything she can to defend Teztan Biny from being turned into a tailings pond by Taseko Mine Ltd (TML)." Grand Chief Phillip continued, "TML's proposed Prosperity Mine was clearly rejected by the Tsilhqot'in Nation, time and time again, and Marilyn's tireless advocacy was a critical component in Canada's dismissal of that proposal. We join with Marilyn in her continued fight against TML as they try to push their proposal through again. Taseko Mines, the message is clear- go home, because we will never, ever give up the fight to protect Teztan Biny."

Chief Bob Chamberlin, UBCIC Vice-President, said, "Marilyn Baptiste is an absolute inspiration to Indigenous Peoples around the world who are defending their territory against an onslaught of development that is done in the absence of appropriate consultation and accommodation, and without their free, prior and informed consent." Chief Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer, continued, "Without a doubt, Marilyn Baptiste is one of the strongest voices speaking out for our lands and she has our full support."

Marilyn Baptiste is a former chief of Xení Gwet'in, and co-founded First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining. The Goldman Environmental Prize is the world's largest award recognizing grassroots environmental activists and is awarded to six people from around the world. It is valued at \$175,000 and recognizes individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, often at great personal risk.

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