



Province of
British Columbia

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NEWS RELEASE

MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND
PETROLEUM RESOURCES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1989:5

February 2, 1989

AFTON EXPANSION GETS CABINET GO-AHEAD

Victoria, B.C. - Afton Mines' application to develop its 27-million-ton Ajax copper/gold ore body has been given approval in principle by the B.C. government's Environment and Land Use Committee, Mines Minister Jack Davis announced today.

The move follows extensive consultation under the Mine Development Review Process with local water-users, federal and provincial government agencies and the company over fishing access to Jacko Lake, impacts on water supply and ways of maintaining the 180 existing jobs at the mine without lay-offs.

"The company resolved a key public concern when it signed a formal agreement with the Kamloops and District Fish & Game Association guaranteeing access to Jacko Lake," said Davis.

With the approval, Afton can now apply for detailed permits for its \$12-million development. Ore will be trucked from two new open pits at the Ajax site along a new 10-kilometre haul road to the company's existing Afton millsite. Only minor modifications will be needed at Afton to handle the new ore and associated tailings.

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"Local water-users have also had their concerns addressed by the bond the company is posting and by their plans to improve the dam at Jacko Lake," noted Environment Minister Bruce Strachan.

The copper concentrates will be trucked to Ashcroft after milling, loaded on railway cars bound for Vancouver, where they will be shipped to smelting facilities in Japan. Gold will be recovered and sent to refining.

The Ajax project is planned to extend Afton's life for at least another seven years. Afton has been mining and milling in the Kamloops area for the past 12 years. The operation is owned by Teck Corporation, a British Columbia company, and will be implemented through its subsidiary Afton Operating Corporation.

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