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MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES  
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**NEW STRONSAY MINE DEVELOPMENT GETS GOVERNMENT APPROVAL**

Victoria - Energy and Mines Minister Jack Weisgerber and Environment Minister Dave Mercier announced today that they have approved the Mine Development Certificate for the proposed Stronsay lead-zinc mine in northern B.C.

The two ministers will be issuing the certificate at the conclusion of the federal environmental review, expected in the next two weeks.

The \$140-million, 3,500-tonne-per-day mining and milling operation, located 280 kilometres northwest of Mackenzie, will employ 200 during construction and more than 300 for the 15-years-plus of expected mine life.

"Stronsay's Mine Development Certificate will be the first issued under new legislation which mandates the review of all mining proposals," said Weisgerber. "Environmental acceptability is key to sustainable mine development. The company has consulted widely in the region and held public meetings to explain its proposal."

"The company's plans for environmental protection are innovative and will reduce impacts to acceptable levels," said Mercier.

The Mine Development Certificate will require Stronsay to:

-- design an environmentally sound minesite, mill operation and reclamation program in line with explicit conditions;

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- maximize water recycling and minimize the use of fresh water;
- monitor water quality and fisheries impacts associated with the project;
- hire an environmental officer to monitor environmental effects during construction;
- file contingency plans for emergencies and hazards;
- continue to work with the Kaska Dena Nation, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council and their members to ensure that Indian concerns are included and local bands benefit economically during project construction and operation.

Reclamation after mining will focus on restoring wildlife habitat and protecting water quality.

The certificate will be issued under the Mine Development Assessment Act, which has just come into effect. The Act formalizes B.C.'s mine development review process which has considered over 150 mine proposals since 1976.

The process gives a "one-window" contact point for the public, mining companies and government agencies. It integrates environmental, engineering, and socio-economic factors in decision-making on all aspects of mining projects.

Key decisions required under the Act are shared between the Energy and Mines Minister and the Minister of Environment. The process is public at each stage. There is explicit provision for negotiation, mediation and public hearings during reviews, as well as legal sanctions for violating the act's provisions.

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