

## **BACKGROUND**

### **First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy**

### **BC First Nations Leadership Council**

March 4, 2024

## **INTRODUCTION**

The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy contains 50 recommendations for First Nations evaluating critical minerals development on their unceded lands in BC. Recommendations encompass the entire critical mineral lifecycle from access and registration (staking) of minerals claims on Indigenous lands, mining, restoration of mine sites and processing of minerals.

## **CONTEXT**

The global emergence of critical minerals extraction, processing and use will have unprecedented impacts on First Nations communities and their lands. The governments of Canada and British Columbia have also prepared and are implementing critical minerals strategies.

The unprecedented push to reduce the rate of global warming and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 is now dominating the Canadian economy. The oil and gas sector will soon be a shadow of its former self whereas mining activities are increasing significantly to supply critical

minerals for the manufacture of electric vehicles and electronic devices, and the build out of renewable electricity generation and transmission infrastructure.

## **CROWN**

The government of Canada released a federal critical minerals strategy in December 2022. The government of British Columbia released “phase 1” of its critical minerals strategy in January 2024. Commencing in December 2022 the governments of Canada and British Columbia began engagement with the BC First Nations Leadership Council, BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council and the BC First Nations Forestry Council on a process to develop shared priorities under the BC regional table of the Regional Energy and Resource Table initiative (RERT).

The governments of Canada and British Columbia established the RERT BC regional table to develop an action plan to align resources, timelines and regulatory approaches to realize regional growth economic opportunities. The action plan includes (1) critical minerals, (2) clean fuels and hydrogen, (3) carbon management, and (4) electrification required for mineral extraction and processing and for infrastructure projects. Commencing September 2023, the government of British Columbia began a limited engagement with the FNEMC on

developing a process to align Crown and First Nations critical minerals strategies.

## **FIRST NATIONS CRITICAL MINERALS STRATEGY**

Four province-wide webinars on critical minerals were recently organized by the FNEMC exclusively for First Nations leadership and technicians. The webinars included participation by the Natural Resources Canada and the BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation. The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), the global leading voluntary mining standard requiring proponents adhere to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and critical minerals and subject matter experts from academia, industry and the financial sector contributed to the webinars. Recommendations developed in webinars form the foundation of the First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy.

The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy provides a foundation for engagement with the governments of Canada and British Columbia to align, where possible, the Crown critical minerals strategies. Establishment of a tripartite process with the governments of Canada and British Columbia and First Nations is required for an effective alignment of critical minerals strategies consistent

with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty rights of First Nations.

The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy is a living document and will be updated regulatory with feedback from First Nations communities' experiences and lessons learned from the exploration, mining and processing of critical minerals on First Nations lands.