Telkwa Coal Mine Public Comment Period
How To Participate & What You Can Say
November 2026

At A Glance

The BC government may be on the brink of approving Bathurst Resources' plan for an open pit coal mine just seven kilometres from Telkwa. The mine will disturb a 1,000 hectare area (10 square kilometres, or twice the size of Tyhee Lake) and pose risks to water, fish and caribou habitat.

Coal mines elsewhere in Canada have caused devastating damage to wild fish populations, yet Bathurst Resources hasn't even included water treatment in its plans. The mine is proposed within the recovery area for the at risk Telkwa Caribou herd, it will create noise and air pollution, and a tailings dam failure would release toxic water and put lives at risk.

Submit Your Comment

The proposed open pit Telkwa coal mine is currently undergoing a provincial environmental assessment. **The FINAL public comment period opens November 17th! Submit your comment by December 16th through the BC government project website.**

It is crucial that residents and everyone throughout the Skeena watershed and beyond share their concerns, and their love for this place.

This is the last opportunity to have your concerns included in the B.C. government's review of the mine proposal. A decision will likely be made this winter on whether the mine is granted environmental approval.

Key Points You Can Include in Your Comment

To support your comments, we have put together the following points as a guide. We recommend expressing them in your own words.

The information below is based on third party expert reviews of the mine proposal that were conducted by a mining engineer, geologist, economist, and biologist.

In addition to the below points, a more detailed executive summary is available here, alongside the full reports.

1. Introduce Yourself

It is good to start with a little info about who you are and how the project would personally impact you. Something like: “I live in XX community and I am concerned about this proposed Tenas coal mine because ....”

2. Dumping Untreated Mine Water into Local Creeks

- Unlike other coal mines in BC, the company has chosen not to treat contaminated water from the mine. Instead, it plans to release the untreated contaminated water into fish-bearing Goathorn Creek and rely on dilution alone. This approach goes against BC government’s guidelines, which require treatment technology before relying on dilution.
- Seepage into groundwater will continue for decades after closure.
- Contaminated water from the mine waste will seep into the groundwater aquifer, and from there into Tenas Creek, Goathorn Creek and Four Creeks. This seepage will increase over time and continue for decades after the mine closes.
- In the best-case scenario modelled by the company, the proposed mine will exceed water quality guidelines for selenium, nitrite, and cobalt. The company has stated that capturing contaminated seepage is not feasible. Mine seepage proses a long-term environmental risk with no clear mitigation plan.

Read the detailed report on Water Quality

3. Coal Mine Pollution Harms Fish

- The mine will create acid generating rock, which leeches selenium, heavy metals and other toxins into the water. Serious impacts will threaten important steelhead, salmon and other fish stocks.
- Contaminants such as selenium, nitrite and cobalt, are known to cause harm to fish.
- There are records of bull trout, a species of conservation concern, in streams around the proposed mine site. Bull trout are sensitive to habitat fragmentation and water pollution, yet the company has not specifically assessed the mine’s impacts on bull trout.

Read the detailed report on Fish Habitat & Health

4. Managing Toxins after the Mine Closes

- The quality of water discharged by the mine is predicted to worsen after mine closure.
- Because the project's current economics are marginal, the company may not be able to afford necessary fixes in the future.
- Longer term, the release of contaminated water into groundwater and creeks will continue for many decades.
- Acid Rock Drainage needs to be managed and monitored in perpetuity. With only 25 years of active monitoring promised by the company after the mine closes, this puts our watershed and future generations at risk.

5. Dam Failure Risks

- The Telkwa Coal Mine proposal includes plans for 3 containment (tailings) dams, each at or just short of 40m (130 feet) high, and arranged in cascading fashion. If one fails, it risks taking the others with it. This type of design goes against international safety guidelines for tailings dam design.
- Many other details of dam design are absent from the proposal, and the company's risk assessment relies on inaccurate claims and does not model for a cascading failure or a resulting debris flow.
- The company has stated in their own documents that a catastrophic dam failure could put up to 200 lives at risk.
- The Mt. Polley disaster was of a tailings dam of a similar height. If that happens here, a significant release of acid-generating waste would get to the Telkwa River.

Read the detailed report on Dam Safety

6. Caribou

- Telkwa Caribou are endangered under the Species at Risk Act and are considered to be at imminent risk of extirpation (herd extinction).
- The proposed mine site is within the recovery area for the herd. Forest removal and noise and activity from the mine and haul road would disturb this critical habitat.
- The Telkwa coal mining project has failed to address potential impacts to the success of restoring the herd to a healthy population.

Read the report on Telkwa Caribou

7. Air Pollution and Noise

- There is little transparency from the company on the extent of impacts to air quality, and of coal dust, and noise from frequent blasting.

- The company has not shared what toxins will be released into the air, or how far air pollution will travel – will coal dust and toxins affect our health? Land on the ski hill? Our gardens? These issues are common in coal mining towns.

- Noise from blasting would be significant but the company has not fully reported how frequently or how far the noise will travel. They state that noise will not violate Provincial guidelines beyond 3-4 kms from the mine, but the standards relied on were designed to prevent severe impacts, not to preserve the quiet way of life we enjoy.

Read What Matters In Our Valley's detailed comments on Air Pollution & Noise

Watch a short clip of coal mine blasting (this video was shared by the prior company Allegiance to demonstrate how 'benign' blasting would be.)

8. Coal for steelmaking, or to burn?

- The company has said coal from its proposed mine in Telkwa will be used for steelmaking, likely because thermal coal is one of the dirtiest fuels on the planet.

- When a prior company, Manalta proposed building a coal mine in Telkwa in the late 90s, its geological assessment stated: "…the primary value of Telkwa coal is as a thermal product."

- There is nothing to prevent the company from selling coal to be burned for power.

- Even if the coal is used for steelmaking, it still releases nearly as much CO2 as burning it for power. With the steel industry transitioning from coal to green technologies, why build a new coal mine in a climate crisis?

WANT MORE DETAILS?

- Find the full reports on our website here

- Watch the public Town Hall recording - The Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board hosted public town halls in Telkwa and Smithers in October 2026. Third party experts shared their review of the mine proposal (the mine company declined to participate). The video (w/ audio) starts at 16 min 28 sec.

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENT HERE – DEADLINE DECEMBER 16, 2026