



Aroland First Nation
P.O. Box 10
Aroland
ON P0T 1B0

Premier Gold Proposes Mine with Significant Environmental Damage, Minimal Environmental or First Nations Scrutiny

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 30, 2014 - Aroland First Nation, Ontario – Aroland First Nation is rejecting Premier Gold's Hardrock Mine plans for an open pit mine near Geraldton, Ontario. The proposed mine will cause significant adverse environmental effects, including the destruction of a lake and major alterations to the TransCanada Highway for open pit mines.

Like the controversial Taskeo Mines Prosperity Mine proposed in British Columbia – a project that was twice rejected by the federal Ministry of the Environment - Premier Gold proposes to drain a 16 acre lake that supports important fisheries and fish spawning ground. Premier Gold also proposes a massive waste rock facility next to Kenogamisis Lake, one of Ontario's most popular fishing lakes.

"My First Nation is generally supportive of sustainable mining development," says Aroland First Nation Chief Sonny Gagnon. "Premier Gold wants to destroy Begooch Zaagaigan (pronounced "Be-gosh Zag-A-gan"), a lake that supports our Aboriginal fishery. They just put a number on this lake – A-322 – and tell us they're going to fill it in with mine waste. This is one of the worst project proposals I've ever seen. They're going to seriously impact our lands and resources. Such a large and destructive project should receive the maximum examination possible – but instead, very little is being done under provincial or federal environment assessment laws. And virtually nothing has been done to consult with and accommodate the many serious concerns of Aroland First Nation."

Premier Gold has not subjected its project to an individual environmental assessment under Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*, which is the norm for big mining projects in this province. Aroland First Nation is thus demanding that Ontario's Minister of the Environment designate Premier Gold's Hardrock Mine proposal for a full Individual Environmental Assessment. Aroland First Nation is also demanding that the federal Minister of the Environment subject the project to a Panel Study Environmental Assessment, and use a regional approach that includes many other impacted First Nations and their Aboriginal fisheries within the Kenogami and Albany River watersheds. Right now only a low level of assessment and scrutiny under both provincial and federal regimes is planned, and consultation with only three of the many First Nations in the watershed. The region is already impacted by historic mines and contamination.

"It is shocking to me how much damage Premier Gold intends to cause and what it seems to want to get away with by avoiding scrutiny from environmental laws and aboriginal consultation. It is unclear whether Ontario will require more. We urge the Ontario government to use its laws to protect the environment, the water and our rights," says Chief Gagnon. "Aroland will not let this mine get approved based on the poor consultation and assessment record to date. We have the right to meaningful consultation and accommodation – and we will stand up for it."

-30-

For more information:

Chief Sonny Gagnon - Cell: (807) 620-7195 / Office (807) 329-5333
Don Richardson, Environmental Consultant - 226-706-8888 x 101