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***“Preserving our tribal culture, protecting our lands, and empowering our people.”***

**ANCSA Village Corporation for the Native Village of Tetlin, Alaska since 1973**

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(Media Release by David Flenaugh, General Manager / [dflenaugh@tetlincorp.com](mailto:dflenaugh@tetlincorp.com))

**TETLIN ANCSA VILLAGE CORPORATION SUSPECTS EXTREME WRONGDOING  
BY THE KINROSS GOLD PARTNERSHIP MANH CHOH MINING PROJECT**

January 2021, Tetlin Native Corporation (TNCorp a/k/a village corporation) learned of KINROSS GOLD CORPORATION's (KINROSS) purchase into the Manh Choh mining project. Believing them to be a trustworthy enterprise, TNCorp contacted KINROSS by letter with details of wrongdoing the mining project's 2008 Mineral Lease presents to the village corporation. TNCorp addressed trespassing and other infringements they had already presented to the previous mining operators, including John Juneau of Juneau Mining Company / Juneau Exploration a/k/a JEX, Contango Ore, and Royal Gold.

KINROSS' response to TNCorp about the Manh Choh project's issues on the village corporation's land was:

*“... we have confirmed that the Mineral Lease does not cover any portion of the lands reserved to TNCorp in the 1996 Deed...” and “... that the Mineral Lease remains valid and in full force and effect with respect to the Tetlin leased lands ...”*

The KINROSS partnership fails to acknowledge the mention of the 1996 Deed in their Mineral Lease;

- a) does not validate they were granted 780,000 acres owned by the Tetlin Village Council (TVC or the Council),
- b) does not grant them authority or right to misrepresent the Council as an Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) village corporation,
- c) does not grant the mining partners permission to acquire government permits to access TNCorp's ANCSA land,
- d) violates binding Tetlin tribal laws regarding leasing land, and
- e) interferes in ongoing business between TNCorp and the Council's efforts to correct the 1996 wrongful transfer of the village corporation's ANCSA land to the Council.

*Tetlin Native Corporation and Tetlin's 2008 Mineral Lease History*

TNCorp incorporated in 1973 under the State of Alaska. In 1985 Congress granted 743,147 acres with surface and subsurface rights to TNCorp as the ANCSA Village Corporation for the economically distressed Native Village of Tetlin. In 1996 Tetlin's Council Chief (also serving as the Corporation's President) and his associates transferred 643,147 acres to the Tetlin Council without the approval of TNCorp's shareholders. A lawsuit lasting from 1999 – 2006 found the Chief/President and his associates breached fiduciary duties in the wrongful transfer of the Corporation's land to the Council and other misappropriations that left the Village Corporation insolvent.

Having violated state and federal ANCSA laws the Corporation's President and his associates were removed from TNCorp but the Chief continued serving in leadership of the Council. From 2008 to 2015 Tetlin's Chief conspired with JEX and other non-Alaskan gold mining companies to execute a Mineral Lease that resulted in the Manh Choh mining project held by KINROSS and their partners today. Tetlin's Chief and JEX created and signed the Mineral Lease completely outside the knowledge and consent of the Council and the ANCSA village corporation violating several of Tetlin's governing laws established to protect the tribal members. Portions of the Mineral Lease were even signed in Houston, Texas without the consent, presence, or witnessing of Tetlin's Council. The extensive Mineral Lease is written in complex legal language and is favored greatly to JEX's benefit.

It was also found outside the knowledge of his Council and Tetlin laws, that the Chief contracted to the mining partners, being paid in excess of \$250,000 for him to use his position as Tetlin's Chief to represent the mining partnership in tribal matters relating to their mining efforts. Tetlin's Chief, secretly serving as an agent of the mining partnership and not the tribe, withheld Mineral Lease details and led his Council and tribal members into several meetings with the mining partners and their attorneys that ended in compromising Tetlin's tribal sovereign immunity, land rights, income from the mining project, and more.

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The Mineral Lease was not recorded for public viewing until 2015<sup>1</sup>. It was 2016 when TNCorp discovered the Lease and engaged in research to uncover facts that prove infringement on the part of the Mineral Lease and the mining partnership.

Mineral Lease / Tetlin Mining Operators' False Claims, Misrepresentations, and Infringements

- Tetlin's Chief and JEX wrongfully concealed the Mineral Lease from the Council, TNCorp, and the Tetlin tribe. Even though land owned by TNCorp is included in the Lease, neither the Mineral Lease originators nor the mining partners requested permission to include the Village Corporation's land.
- The Mineral Lease was signed by Tetlin's Chief with no Council authority or adherence to Tetlin laws.
- Tetlin's Chief and JEX interrupted and interfered in the between TNCorp and the Council's dispute over the validity of the 1996 deed that purported to transfer 643,147 acres from TNCorp to the Council.
- The Mineral Lease misappropriated TNCorp's status as Tetlin's only village corporation.
- JEX mining partners falsely acquired government permits for wrongful access onto TNCorp's ANCSA land.
- Federal security filings and other public financial reports show the Mineral Lease has enabled the Manh Choh mining operators to raise millions in public money using several false statements.
- Tetlin's Chief and JEX violated tribal laws although the Mineral Lease states they complied with "*all applicable laws and regulations of any governmental body, federal, state or local.*"
- Council officers/members who attended the 2008 meeting JEX mentioned in the Mineral Lease:
  - a) there was no "*general meeting of Tetlin's members*". It was a Council meeting with only 4 of 7 members present, none of whom voted on, signed, or ever saw the Mineral Lease until it was shown to them in 2016 by TNCorp's General Manager,
  - b) the Council never agreed to granting JEX exploration or mining rights,
  - c) Tetlin has never owned 780,000 acres, JEX was never granted 780,000 acres and Tetlin's land was never discussed or represented to JEX at the Council meeting.

TNCorp has alerted KINROSS and its Manh Choh partners that the 2008 Mineral Lease and the subsequent mining project is in error and constitutes unjust enrichment from trespass on ANCSA village corporation's land and that restitution for loss of income and damages will be legally pursued.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mineral Lease can be found online at [dnr.alaska.gov/ssd/recoff/](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ssd/recoff/) under Search by Document Number 2015-000221-0