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Statement on Teck Frontier Oilsands Mine by Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya; “Teck has made the Right Decision”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Yellowknife, Northwest Territories – February 25, 2020] – Dene National Chief Yakeleya commends Teck for the decision to withdraw its application for the Frontier Oilsands Mine. The project was becoming a lightning rod for all the concerns about the health of the Mackenzie River Basin and the decades of cumulative environmental impact of the oil sands, especially the water, which flows north into the NWT. A demonstration was planned tomorrow against the mine led by Smith’s Landing First Nation with support of National Chief Yakeleya.

However, despite the cancellation - water management and protection are ongoing concerns for Indigenous people. Many other oil sands expansion projects are being considered. There are other pressures like the announced potential release of 1.3 trillion litres of oil sands tailings pond water into the Athabasca River, as well as the massive Site C Dam expansion on the Peace River - with major downstream impacts which would affect the traditional ways of life of Dene people.

The Alberta/NWT Transboundary Water Agreement, signed by Alberta and NWT in 2015, has received a lot of attention as a result. Dene National Chief Yakeleya said, “This agreement is our shield at the Alberta/NWT border, to help protect the water. Northern governments have to work together to keep that shield strong and improve it. That is why the Dene Nation is hosting the First Northern Leaders Water Summit in October 2020. This is no time to get complacent”.

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