

# Copper Mountain Mine Infuriates Upper and Lower Similkameen; Hudbay Acquisition Raises Serious Concern

21 June 2023

**Sməlqmix Territory (Hedley, B.C.)** – On National Indigenous Peoples Day, some mining companies in BC still don't understand how important it is to build and maintain good relations with First Nations governments where they operate.

This week Upper and Lower Similkameen's frustration has reached a boiling point with the breakdown of talks ahead of the acquisition of Copper Mountain Mining Corporation (TSX: [CMMC](#)) and the Copper Mountain Mine by Hudbay Minerals Inc. (TSX: [HBM](#)).

The mine has operated on the Similkameen River, near Princeton, BC, for generations. Open pit mining began in the 1970's and has had serious impacts on the Similkameen River and its tributaries. In addition to the mine itself, there are serious concerns about the Copper Mountain [tailings management facility](#), which despite being one of the tallest in the world has never undergone a full environmental assessment. The mine has been under CMMC ownership since [2006](#). It was acquired this week by Hudbay after special [shareholder meetings](#) were held.

USIB and LSIB have been frustrated with the mine for years and the relationship has become increasingly strained. Long before the acquisition by Hudbay was announced, both First Nations were already working with CMMC to update existing environmental protections and economic terms. Working together, both USIB and LSIB have pushed for better protection and restoration of land and water, recognition, and mitigation of impacts on culture and rights, and a meaningful share of wealth removed from Similkameen lands—consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

On June 20, 2023 the transition to Hudbay control took place without completion of an updated agreement with USIB or LSIB, despite having reasonable terms on the table. USIB and LSIB see this as showing a familiar disregard for genuine First Nation concerns and inherent rights.

## Quotes:

"A lot of the good faith we had has been burnt. Hudbay needs to show that it has changed its disturbing pattern of behavior towards Indigenous peoples in Guatemala, Peru, Arizona, and Manitoba. Hudbay now owns a mine on our lands, and they need to know how much unfinished

business they have inherited. First Nations governments are joint decision makers, and we expect companies on our land to treat us with fairness and respect as the caretakers of our lands and waters since time immemorial. Our lands have never been ceded, surrendered, or sold.”

Chief Bonnie Jacobsen, USIB.

“Our relationship with CMM is strained and trust has always been an issue. Our focus has always been the impacts to land and water. The Similkameen River is the life blood of our valley and cumulative impacts are detrimental to our way of life. If the relationship does not improve with Hudbay, we are prepared for action.”

Kal?lupaqn, Chief Keith Crow, LSIB.

“We expect all mines in our territory to respect our land, our waters, and our rights as Similkameen peoples.”

Mike Allison, USIB Council member.

### **About the Upper Similkameen Indian Band and Lower Similkameen Indian Band**

The [USIB](#) and [LSIB](#) maintain First Nations title and rights over the lands and waters of the Similkameen watershed and adjacent areas in southern BC. Our First Nations work together to protect, listen to, and care for all our lands, waters, and people, and especially the Similkameen Valley, as we have since time immemorial.

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