

May 26<sup>nd</sup>, 2022



Honourable John Horgan, Premier  
Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests  
Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship  
Honourable Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport  
Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

**Subject: Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition response to Zinton All-Seasons Resort**

We are writing to express our concern and opposition to the Zinton All-Seasons Resort proposed north of Hwy 31A in the Central Selkirk Mountains, near New Denver, B.C.

The Zinton resort proposal is located within a critically important wildlife corridor. Zinton will attract significant numbers of people to ski, hike, and bike in the tenure area and at the adjacent proposed mountain village development, directly impacting core wildlife habitat and essential foraging and denning areas. In an already highly tenured part of the province, this resort would seriously jeopardise essential wildlife connectivity between existing protected areas. This wildlife corridor is essential for the long-term persistence of grizzly bears to the south, which are currently too small to persevere over time without connectivity to the populations in the north. This is also high-quality wolverine habitat. Wolverines are known to be displaced by intensive recreation use, particularly females who den in the deep snow of mid-winter. Zinton anticipates 100,000 skier days per year, which will likely permanently displace wolverine from this region. Recent research indicates that wolverine numbers may be dropping quickly in the Rocky Mountains and associated ranges. Mountain goats and western toads are two other indicator species found in this area that are expected to be impacted by direct mortality, disturbance, habitat loss, and fragmentation. There is also concern regarding fish populations with significant disturbance and development, impacting stream flow and water quality, particularly given the history of mining and soil contamination in this area.

The B.C. government has committed to DRIPA which upholds the rights of Indigenous Peoples to “determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development and use of their lands or territories and other resources.” We understand that the Ktunaxa, Okanagan Nation Alliance, and Sinixt have expressed opposition to this resort proposal. B.C.’s recent Declaration Act Action Plan is intended to “drive transformative change.” The approval of long-term commercial

tenures in the absence of First Nations' approval and through the antiquated Mountain Resorts Branch process contravenes B.C.'s promises and responsibilities to Indigenous people and reconciliation.

The Province has also made commitments to modernized land use planning. We urge the B.C. government to not entertain any new resort development or adventure tourism applications until modernized land-use planning is completed. The affected local governments, including the Regional District of Central Kootenay and Village of Silverton, have submitted opposition and serious concerns regarding the cumulative, environmental, and socio-economic impacts of this proposed resort development. Further, the Village of New Denver has expressed the need for planning. The creation of an exclusive, fully serviced village at Zincton contradicts regional community plans and is not aligned with the recommendations of several community and economic development studies for the region.

The Zincton resort proposal plans to restrict access to an area that people have been using for decades. The proposed tenure covers a large area which is currently popular for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, and various forms of wilderness recreation. Local people and public land users are increasingly being squeezed out by commercial interests. There is strong opposition to this proposal from a wide variety of stakeholders..

The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition requests that the Zincton application for a tenure end now. We support the disapproval of this proposal by the Indigenous communities, as well as the opposition from a wide range of stakeholders, and the concerns expressed by the local governments. We further urge B.C. to prioritize this area for modernized land use planning as more and more commercial interest and pressure comes to this unique part of the province.

Thank you.

Sent on behalf of the Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Coalition