



Reference: 389201

*April 19, 2022*

His Worship Mayor Bruce Harrell  
and Councillors  
City of Seattle  
600 Fourth Avenue, 7th Floor  
Seattle WA 98104

Sent via email: [bruce.harrell@seattle.gov](mailto:bruce.harrell@seattle.gov)

Dear Mayor Harrell and Councillors:

I am writing to express the Government of British Columbia's appreciation for the City of Seattle's generous commitment to assist with funding for the surrender of the mineral tenures in the area known as the Skagit "donut hole" and to provide some information about the next steps the Government of B.C. intends to take to advance the protection of that area.

Your commitment to provide financial support for the Skagit Valley Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC), combined with SEEC's own funds and those of the Government of B.C., Washington State and the Nature Conservancy of Canada is essential in enabling the surrender of Imperial Metals' mining and related rights in the "donut hole". The removal of those rights was the last step in eliminating the possibility of industrial uses occurring on those lands since the Government of B.C. announced, in 2019, that there would be no further timber harvesting in that area.

Now that the mineral rights surrender agreement has been completed, the Government of B.C. will begin engagement with the Indigenous Nations in B.C. who have interests in the "donut hole" area to determine their views on the permanent protection of the area under provincial legislation. While that process unfolds, the Government of B.C. has implemented regulatory measures to ensure that the lands in the "donut hole" are reserved from development. This includes a no registration reserve under the *Mineral Tenure Act*, which ensures that no additional mineral claims can be staked in that area, as well as a reserve under Section 16 of the *Land Act*, which reserves the area from disposition. In addition, Imperial Metals will be required to carry out their reclamation obligations in relation to past work in the area by December 2023.

...2

-2-

In combination with the provincial government's commitment that no further timber harvesting will be permitted in the area, these measures ensure the protection of the natural and cultural resources—as well as recreational opportunities within the headwaters of the Skagit River—while engagement with Indigenous Nations occurs. Our government will keep your office and that of the Governor of Washington informed of the status and the outcome of those discussions as we move forward.

I would like to extend, once again, my thanks for your part in this historic example of cooperation between our respective governments.

Regards,



George Heyman  
Minister

cc: Governor Jay Inslee, State of Washington