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## **Conservation groups welcome federal assessment process for Castle coal mine**

**Traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples/Vancouver, BC** -- This week, Canada's Federal Environment Minister announced that Teck Resources' proposed Castle coal mine will undergo a federal environmental assessment. This assessment is a necessary step to ensure the safety of local wildlife, communities and downstream watersheds, including in the USA.

"The Castle coal mine's potential negative impacts on important grizzly bear and other wildlife populations are particularly concerning," said Bruce Passmore, Executive Director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - British Columbia. "This is an important connectivity zone between BC, Alberta and the US. We applaud the federal government for making the correct decision and ordering an environmental assessment."

Teck Resources coal mines have been under fire for high levels of heavy metals, in particular selenium, being released into waterways in the Elk Valley. Earlier this year, the US Environmental Protection Agency demanded that the BC government hand over selenium data and explain why the company has been allowed to exceed guidelines for toxic heavy metals. Multiple Indigenous nations in Canada and the USA have also expressed concern.

"Given the complexity of values and the history of pollution in the area, combined with the fact that BC still doesn't have its own endangered species legislation, it's critical that this project is looked at carefully," said Passmore. "A federal assessment will consider the mine's effects on Indigenous rights, local communities, and threatened species like westslope cutthroat trout and white sturgeon."

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**Background information:**

- [Minister's response: The Castle Project](#)
- [The Castle Project analysis report from the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry](#)



Photo: Elk River [via Flickr](#)

**About CPAWS-BC:**

*Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - British Columbia (CPAWS-BC) is part of one of Canada's oldest non-profit conservation groups. We protect wilderness in every corner of BC and deep into the ocean. We have been defending BC since 1978, and are dedicated to keeping BC's natural environment thriving forever. Nature is BC's best hope.*

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