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## NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Assessment Office

### **Memorandum of Understanding for Blackwater Gold Environmental Assessment signed with Ulkatcho First Nation and Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation**

VANCOUVER – A Memorandum of Understanding, the first tripartite agreement of its kind, has been signed by Ulkatcho First Nation, Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation, the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. This collaborative agreement sets out principles and commitments that will support the parties in taking a collaborative, government-to-government approach for the Environmental Assessment of the proposed Blackwater Gold Project.

"Signing this agreement is historic," Chief Liliane Squinas of Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation said. "Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation feels jointly involved in the Environmental Assessment process, which is a stepping stone to the reconciliation process."

Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation, Ulkatcho First Nation, the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are working together to deliver an effective, transparent, and rigorous Environmental Assessment for the proposed Blackwater Gold Project.

"Our backyard is our livelihood," Ulkatcho First Nation's Chief Betty Cahoose said. "It is so important to our people to take care of our environment. I am pleased Ulkatcho First Nation is involved in a government-to-government process that supports our decision-making related to the Blackwater Project."

The parties will seek consensus on measures to address the potential adverse effects of the Project on the interests of Ulkatcho and Lhoosk'uz Dené. This agreement, should the Project be approved, will help ensure the effective, meaningful and ongoing participation of Ulkatcho and Lhoosk'uz Dene throughout the life of the Project.

"Working in collaboration and seeking consensus will always result in better decisions and better projects," said Coralee Oakes, Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. "Having the Ulkatcho and Lhoosk'uz Dené First Nations involved in this process ensures they will have a strong voice about a proposed development on their traditional lands."

The proposed Blackwater Gold Project is located approximately 110 kilometres south of Vanderhoof, British Columbia, within the traditional territories of the Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation and Ulkatcho First Nation. New Gold Inc. is proposing to develop an open pit gold and silver mine to extract approximately seven million ounces of gold and 30 million ounces of silver over 17 years.

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