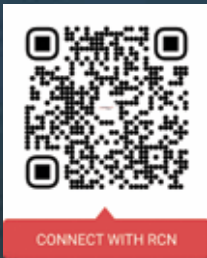




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RESOURCE CONNECTOR NORTH: Driving growth and opportunity in Northern B.C.



*Back row: Maria Sluggett, Sydney Hall, Heidi Booth, Trevor McPherson, Robert Bernat, Khushruz Saidibroimov.
Front: Robbie Middleton, Nolan Nicholson, Fraser Deacon. Missing: Francois Cardin and Sidney Friend.*

At Resource Connector North (RCN), we believe in the power of connection. Our mission is simple yet transformative: to unite businesses, communities, and innovators to unlock the full potential of Northern BC's resource sector.

Hallmarks of RCN in 2025

This year, we're proud to champion projects and people that shape our region's future:

Supporting Vitreo Mineral's Angus Project – a major development 100 kilometres north of Prince George, driving economic growth and opportunity.

Investing in People – because the resource sector thrives on skilled talent. Through bursaries, we support education and training at:

- Northern Lights College
- Coast Mountain College
- College of New Caledonia (Trades programs)
- University of Northern B.C. (School of Engineering)
- Thompson Rivers University (Williams Lake)

Leadership and collaboration

We welcome two newly elected directors to our board: Trevor McPherson and Robert Bernat, bringing fresh perspectives and energy to our vision.

We're also excited to partner again with DEL Communications to produce the 2025–2026 RCN Membership Directory and Magazine, showcasing the strength and diversity of our network. Explore current and past issues at resourceconnector.ca/resources/magazine.

Connecting more than ever

RCN is expanding its reach through social media and digital platforms:

- LinkedIn: Resource Connector North
- Facebook: ResourceConnector
- Twitter: @ResourceNorth

New companies and supporters can register online, and current members can easily update their business information.

Our commitment

Northern B.C. is rich in resources — and even richer in potential. At RCN, we're committed to turning that potential into prosperity by fostering collaboration, supporting education, and creating opportunities for businesses to thrive.

Together, we build the future. Together, we connect.

On behalf of the Board,
Nolan Nicholson, President, Resource Connector North ★

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MISSION STATEMENT:

To promote economic growth in the natural resource sector for the benefit of all British Columbians.

VISION AND POSITIONING STATEMENT:

We serve business and industry related to natural resource development. We are a conduit of connectivity between business and natural resource sectors by:

DELIVERING services and products;

CREATING an environment of exchange of trade; and

SUPPORTING investment in Northern B.C.



RESOURCE CONNECTOR NORTH

Bursaries



The RCN's bursary and scholarship program was established to help encourage future generations who have chosen to pursue careers in the resource sector. RCN provides bursaries to students at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), College of New Caledonia, Coast Mountain College, and Northern Lights College who are enrolled in trades programs with an emphasis on the resource industry. We are proud to support our many recipients and celebrate their success.

The RCN currently offers:

- Two bursaries in the amount of \$1,000 each are given to the College of New Caledonia in Prince George

- One bursary in the amount of \$1,000 is given to Coast Mountain College in Terrace
- One bursary in the amount of \$1,000 is given to Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek
- One bursary in the amount of \$1000 is given to University of Northern B.C.

For more information about RCN bursaries, visit the College of New Caledonia at cnc.bc.ca, Coast Mountain College at coastmountaincollege.ca, Northern Lights College at nlc.bc.ca, or the University of Northern B.C. at unbc.ca. ★



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MESSAGE FROM THE
HONOURABLE DAVID EBY
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**BUILDING A STRONGER, MORE
INDEPENDENT B.C. THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP AND PURPOSE**

It's no question that 2025 was a year of fundamental change in British Columbia, across Canada, and around the world.

In B.C., we started off the year responding to destructive and unjustified tariffs brought on by Donald Trump, and as we enter 2026, we remain under that threat.

The continued trade war is impacting all of B.C.'s major sectors. The cost of everyday goods is rising, supply chains are disrupted, and the global economy is slowing down.

The fact is, there are many aspects of the global economy that are outside of our control. But what we can control is how we respond.

In this environment of rapid and

fundamental change, B.C. has everything we need to thrive. We have the abundant energy and natural resources, including softwood lumber, natural gas, and critical minerals. We have bountiful clean electricity. We have strong and productive partnerships with First Nations throughout the province.

But accessing our abundant natural resources hasn't always been easy. For too long, outdated rules made it too costly for major projects to reach final investment decisions. Permitting was slow. Companies couldn't access the skilled labour they needed to grow. There's no excuse for holding back billions in economic growth due to policy problems that we know we can fix.

Through our Look West strategy, we're focusing on delivering more projects faster, strengthening our workforce, and diversifying and growing targeted sectors.

We're accelerating permitting and expediting new and expanded critical minerals projects, particularly in northwestern B.C. We are creating partnerships with First Nations through the Northwest Critical Mineral and Conservation Corridor initiative. This approach reduces costs, lowers emissions, and speeds up the time it takes to get shovels in the ground — all while ensuring benefits are shared more fairly.

Across B.C., there are \$50 billion worth of new opportunities in critical minerals and metals. In the Northwest alone, \$29 billion in projects are ready to move forward. The Osisko Cariboo Gold Project was approved in 2024, Highland Valley Copper is undergoing a major expansion, and Artemis's Blackwater Mine has come online. Few jurisdictions anywhere can point to this level of new activity and expansion in such a short time.

We're also moving faster on the North Coast Transmission Line. Once it's operational and industrial projects connect to it, the economic benefits are estimated to contribute approximately \$9.85 billion per year to the economy and create and sustain approximately 9,700 direct



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We're doubling the investment in trades training to \$214 million annually by 2028/29 and investing up to \$40 million in highly qualified professionals training over the next three years.

jobs annually. Through regulation, we also intend to make it easier for companies to access sustainable, clean power at fair rates without billions in upfront costs.

Here in B.C., partnerships with First Nations goes together with economic growth. That's how we move forward together — as we did with the Haida land title agreement, the Red Chris Mine expansion with the Tahltan Nation, Cedar LNG with the Haisla Nation, and 10 new wind and solar projects led by First Nations. Each of these major projects is being built through partnerships, not courtroom confrontations.

And powering all this opportunity is our most important resource of all: a province full of skilled, diverse, and hardworking people. They are the driving force behind the economic engine we're building.

Investing in our future workforce is one of the most important things we can do right now. Over the next decade, B.C. can expect more than 95,000 job openings in the skilled trades.

To meet this need, we're expanding skilled trades training and accelerating workforce development across key sectors. We're doubling the investment in trades training to \$214 million annually by 2028/29 and investing up to \$40 million in highly qualified professionals training over the next three years. We have nearly 50,000 apprentices throughout B.C. and are ensuring this expansion happens in every region of the province so that more apprentices can earn certification. We're building opportunity for young people to stay and succeed in B.C.

When we add all these things together — regulations that make sense, partnerships with First Nations, and investments in our future workforce — everybody wins. Good jobs, long-term prosperity for communities, and a cleaner, more secure energy future for our province.

As we look ahead to 2026, we will continue this incredible momentum.

We will move forward on major, nation-building projects like the

North Coast Transmission Line, LNG Canada Phase 2, and the Red Chris Mine expansion. We will create more certainty and prosperity through strong partnerships with First Nations. And we will make sure people in B.C. have the skills and education they need to support key economic sectors such as natural resources, creating shared benefits for all.

British Columbians have always stepped up when it mattered most. Now, it's our time to build again — and we don't have a moment to waste. Building is how we protect our future. It's how we create opportunity. It's how we ensure our kids and grandkids have good jobs and strong communities right here at home.

This is about ensuring the next chapter of B.C.'s story is written by us. By workers, First Nations, and communities who believe in what's possible when we work together.

Because when we build in B.C. — we build for everyone. Our future will be cleaner, stronger, and shared by all. ✨



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Cedar LNG

A New Way Forward



Cedar LNG is a partnership between Haisla Nation and Pembina Pipeline Corporation to develop a floating LNG facility in Kitimat, B.C., within the Traditional Territory of Haisla Nation. With the world's first Indigenous majority-owned LNG project, we are ushering in a new era of energy development for British Columbia and Canada.

A Partnership Based on Shared Values

Cedar LNG is being designed and built with our partners' shared values of sustainable development and environmental protection at the forefront. Powered by renewable energy from BC Hydro, Cedar LNG will be one of the lowest-emitting LNG facilities in the world.

Cedar LNG represents economic reconciliation in action. With this project, we are redefining how Indigenous communities and the energy industry can work together to bring Canadian energy to the world.

Progress and Prosperity

From the beginning, Cedar LNG has been committed to creating opportunities for Haisla Nation, neighbouring Nations, and local communities. Since construction began in 2024, more than 90% of all onshore contracts

have been awarded to local and Indigenous businesses and partnerships. Additionally, we are building local skills and implementing several training-to-employment programs to ensure locals can access good, long-term jobs close to home.

During operations, Cedar LNG will create approximately 100 permanent jobs, \$13.5 million annually in tax contributions, and be a long-term revenue source for Haisla Nation.

Follow our Journey

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EXPANDING NORTHEAST B.C.'S WATER MONITORING NETWORK

By the B.C. Energy Regulator



Our focus on collecting data to inform and strengthen our regulatory oversight continues with another successful field season of hydrometric monitoring in northeast B.C. The project was established in 2019 to expand the water monitoring network in partnership with Treaty 8 First Nations and funding from the BC Oil and Gas Research and Innovation Society (BCOGRIS) and Geoscience B.C. A total of six stations were monitored in 2024 with funding from BCOGRIS. The 2024 monitoring locations included Osborn River and Doig River (Doig River First Nation), Aitken Creek and Blueberry River (Blueberry River First Nations), Hulcross Creek (Saulteau First Nations) and Beaver Creek (Prophet River First Nation).

Hydrometric data collected during the 2024 season has been processed and posted to the provincial Aquarius database and the Water Portal. The operation of the hydrometric program over the past five years has fostered relationship and capacity building with First Nation communities as well as increasing our understanding of small watersheds in northeast B.C.

The success of this valuable project is a testament to the benefit of collaboration between government, organizations and First Nation communities.

Thank you to Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, and Saulteau First Nations for their participation in the program. We would also like to extend our

gratitude to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship's Water Authorization Specialists in Fort St. John for continuing to assist with the monitoring of these stations and BCOGRIS for their ongoing commitment to funding this program.

The 2025 monitoring season is now in full swing, with all six stations having their first visit to collect manual streamflow data and address any needed station maintenance. The full 2024/25 Water Monitoring of Small Watersheds Program Summary Report can be downloaded on BCOGRIS' Water Monitoring of Small Watersheds Program webpage at bcogris.ca/projects/water-monitoring-of-small-watersheds-program/.

The BC Water Tool provides us with accurate, real-time information about water resources and existing water users in B.C. It's also a gateway to the Northeast Water Tool (NEWT), our hydrology support tool that provides us with the flow needs of streams and lakes through Watershed Reporting and Cumulative Diversion Analysis, as well as retrieval and compilation of groundwater-related data with the Groundwater Review Assistant. ★



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BUILDING A MORE COMPETITIVE FUTURE FOR B.C.'S FOREST SECTOR

By Kim Haakstad, President & CEO of the BC Council of Forest Industries (COFI)



Kim Haakstad, President and CEO of COFI.

Predictable and economic access to wood has been one of the most persistent and pressing challenges facing sawmills and pulp mills across British Columbia. But in recent years, this challenge has intensified to a level that is now reshaping communities, investment decisions, and the long-term outlook for the sector. The consequences of B.C.'s deteriorating forestry climate are no longer theoretical. They are unfolding in real time.

Since 2019, B.C.'s actual harvest has fallen from 49 million cubic metres to just 36 million cubic metres in 2024. In 2024, the province harvested roughly 40 per cent below

the allowable annual cut. The gap illustrates significant economic potential being left on the table.

A combination of factors is driving this decline. New land-use decisions and policy changes have added uncertainty for operators, and cumulative delays in cutting permits, road-building approvals, and salvage authorizations are slowing the flow of wood to mills. These delays not only increase costs and limit the recovery of usable wood fibre but also make it harder for companies to plan and invest with confidence.

Those costs are already high. B.C. has become the most expensive forestry jurisdiction in North America. Tenure obligations, administrative burdens, and compliance costs have all increased against a backdrop of global competition and ongoing softwood lumber duties imposed by the United States. Together, these pressures create an operating environment where margins are extremely difficult to sustain — where once globally competitive mills now struggle to remain viable.

Underperformance in getting wood to market remains another major

barrier. While COFI welcomed the provincial government's B.C. Timber Sales (BCTS) Review Task Force, the reality is that BCTS has consistently failed to meet its core mandate. Unless structural issues are addressed, including establishing a meaningful standing inventory, expediting salvage, and ensuring timely and predictable auctions, mills will continue to face log shortages that jeopardize production and competitiveness.

Earlier this year, the provincial government announced support for increasing the harvest level to 45 million cubic metres as a Major Project for the "Path to 45." A sustainable path back to 45 million m³ is essential if B.C. is to keep mills open, protect family-supporting jobs, and maintain the manufacturing capacity that supports communities across the province. But a target on paper does not move a single log. Achieving this level requires urgent action: improving permitting timelines, maintaining a coordinated and transparent land-use planning framework, reducing operating costs, eliminating regional inconsistencies, and supporting meaningful partnerships with First Nations, including the capacity and

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As we look forward, these challenges — and the opportunities they represent — will be central to discussions at the 2026 COFI Convention.

tools needed to expedite referrals, co-develop plans, and increase shared economic benefits.

Both provincial and federal governments also have critical roles to play. Federally, the top priorities include negotiating a fair and durable Softwood Lumber Agreement, accelerating access to softwood-

related funding, and modernizing regulatory systems to eliminate duplication across jurisdictions. Provincially, the focus must be on improving efficiency under forestry’s Major Project designation, reducing tenure-related costs, pausing new processes that add further administrative burden, and matching federal commitments with targeted

support programs. These combined efforts will help stabilize operations now while creating conditions for long-term growth, innovation, and investment.

As we look forward, these challenges — and the opportunities they represent — will be central to discussions at the 2026 COFI Convention, taking place April 8–10 in Vancouver. Under the theme “Forestry is a Solution,” leaders from across industry, government, First Nations, labour, research, and local communities will gather to examine how a more competitive and sustainable forest sector can help address some of the biggest issues facing British Columbia and Canada, such as wildfire resilience and rural economic development.

The Forestry sector can offer solutions but unlocking them will require collective focus on access to wood, competitiveness, and regulatory issues that must be fixed. The COFI Convention will be an important forum for charting that path forward and strengthening the communities that depend on forestry across our province.

To learn more, visit cofi.org. ✨

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A satellite with a large blue solar panel and a silver antenna is shown in space. The background is a dark purple gradient with a faint white grid pattern.

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VITREO MINERAL'S ANGUS PROJECT AND THE NEW NORTHERN ECONOMY



Northern British Columbia is no stranger to resource projects, but few arrive with the clarity of purpose or strategic value of Vitreo Minerals' proposed Angus Project north of Prince George. In a region shaped by forestry, LNG infrastructure, and mining, the Angus Project represents a rare alignment of geology, timing, and local economic opportunity — and could become one of the most consequential industrial developments in northern B.C. over the next decade.

Vitreo chose the Angus site for its abundance of quartz arenite, a naturally occurring type of sandstone ideal for producing high-grade silica proppants. This material is a critical input for hydraulic fracturing, and today most of the proppants used in the region come from established producers in the United States. With demand expected to double in the next five years, Vitreo sees an opportunity to build a reliable, domestic supply chain anchored in northern B.C. rather than reliance on imports and long-distance transport in Wisconsin.

The project is in its final stretch of environmental assessment, with the company expecting to begin permitting early in 2026. These upcoming regulatory milestones will shape the next phase of development — including the construction of a state-of-the-art processing operation at the mine site and a separate finishing plant near the highway 97 corridor to streamline transportation by truck and/or train. Existing roads will be upgraded rather than rebuilt, and all identified water sources will operate within a system designed to recycle approximately 80 per cent of the project's water use, reducing its environmental footprint.

When approved, the Angus Project would become the largest producer of high-quality silica sand mine in Canada, making roughly two million metric tonnes of finished product every year. Initial permitting has focused on a 20-year mine plan, though Vitreo notes that both claim size and market demand could make a larger and longer-lived operation possible.

Perhaps the most consequential economic impact,

however, is local. The company states that aside from construction and some equipment installation, Angus will be an all-local operating company. Mining, hauling, processing, maintenance, and day-to-day operations are intended to be staffed and serviced from Prince George and surrounding northern communities — a deliberate model that keeps wages, procurement, and expertise in the region.

Based on its current production estimates, Vitreo projects around 300 positions across mining, crushing, processing, transportation, and distribution. For a corridor that has weathered sawmill closures, market volatility, and the ongoing transition of the forestry sector, these are meaningful numbers — not temporary jobs, but long-term industrial employment linked to a new and long-term LNG industry.

The Angus Project will not define the future of northern B.C. on its own, but it represents something the region has been seeking: a next-generation resource project built around local labour, existing infrastructure, and a market with clear, sustained demand. In a moment when the province is re-evaluating how major projects can contribute to both economic resilience and community prosperity, Angus is a project that could genuinely shift the narrative.

As the permitting process unfolds in 2026, the question about whether the project can proceed will turn to whether northern B.C. is ready to seize the opportunity it represents. The geology is there, demand is growing, and for communities around Prince George, the potential economic upside is significant.

If Vitreo delivers on its vision, the Angus Project could become a cornerstone of the region's new economic era built on local capacity, strategic advantage, and a resource the world increasingly needs. ★

ANGUS PROJECT

- Located 60 Km north of Prince George
- Many new job, training and contracting opportunities with emphasis on local and indigenous hiring
- Will help diversify the local economy and offset current imports from the US



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DRONES DON'T JUST MAP: THEY ALSO CARRY THE LOAD



Anyone who's worked in remote terrain knows the grind: long walks, steep slopes, awkward loads, and the sense that something could go wrong. Heavy-lift drones are starting to reduce that reality, not through hype, but through small, practical wins on real projects.

Across Canada's resource sector, crews in mining, forestry, energy, and environmental work are under pressure to plan smarter and limit ground disturbance. Before anyone steps into a block or potential drill site, teams want a clear picture of terrain, vegetation, water movement, and risk. That's where Stinson Aerial Services' operations usually begin.

A typical project starts with LiDAR at first light — clean air, stable conditions, and a dataset that forms the backbone of early planning. Slopes, ridges, soft ground, and safe approach routes become visible before a crew leaves the truck. High-resolution imagery fills in the rest: cutlines, wetlands, rock outcrops, water crossings. Thermal or multispectral data can reveal stressed vegetation or subtle environmental changes that might otherwise go unnoticed. The key is simple: early mapping shortens time in the field, reduces unnecessary travel, and turns environmental uncertainty into clear information.

In many regions, SAS doesn't collect this data alone. Flights are often carried out with Indigenous guardians and land technicians who know the territory better than any outside operator. Over the years, SAS has supported these community teams with training, equipment, and consistent workflows. Guardians now run their own monitoring flights, document storm impacts, and track seasonal changes. Their knowledge shapes what gets captured and ensures the data reflects community priorities as much as project needs.

Once the terrain picture is clear, the next phase begins: moving real equipment. Heavy-lift drones don't replace helicopters or traditional logistics, but they can improve the "micro-logistics" layer — the short, repetitive, low-payload tasks that drain time and increase exposure. Flying a spool of

yarding cable up a steep slope eliminates an hour of climbing. Delivering a box of tree-planting gear saves a long ATV run and cuts fuel use. Fire pumps, oxygen bottles, gas detectors — none of it glamorous, all of it essential. Each avoided climb or transport run reduces risk, lowers environmental impact, and frees crews to focus on work rather than hauling gear.

More opportunities are emerging. SAS is evaluating whether drones can move core samples: short, repeatable flights carrying dense but stable loads. It's not headline-grabbing, but it could reduce risk and time for exploration teams spread across rugged terrain.

What ties everything together is a layered workflow. The same LiDAR dataset used to plan an access route can identify safe pickup and drop-off zones for a drone. The same orthomosaic that outlines stand boundaries can highlight hazards along a delivery path. When mapping and logistics stem from the same data foundation, fieldwork becomes smoother, safer, and easier to repeat.

This approach aligns with what companies and communities increasingly expect: stronger environmental planning, meaningful Indigenous involvement, and operational decisions driven by current information. Drones — whether mapping or carrying equipment — are simply tools that support those expectations.

For SAS, the story isn't about replacing helicopters or transforming fieldwork overnight. It's about steady, practical improvements that support crews doing demanding work. A shorter walk. A safer path. A more accurate map. A delivery that keeps the day moving. As drone technology evolves, SAS is focused on weaving sensors, logistics, and community partnerships into a workflow that genuinely improves field operations across Canada.

Whether we're capturing the shape of the land or delivering a payload across it, the goal is the same: increase efficiency, prioritize safety, and strengthen connections with communities. ★



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NORTHERN ROCKIES: A REGION REDEFINING POSSIBILITY IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

In a time when Canadians are reassessing what makes a place truly livable — and what makes a region worth investing in — the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM) stands out for reasons both timeless and timely. Stretching across an impressive 85,000 square kilometres of northeast British Columbia, the NRRM is a landscape where people still look to the horizon with ambition, and where communities continue to evolve with a blend of practicality, innovation, and northern grit.

A region shaped by ingenuity

Remote northern regions are often celebrated for their resilience, but the

Northern Rockies adds something else to the narrative: a steady stream of creativity including everything from clay deposits, worm composting, essential oils to geothermal. The municipality's entrepreneurial spirit has long shaped its character, and today it's fueling a range of projects that reflect both the region's heritage and its forward-looking mindset.

Across Fort Nelson and its surrounding rural communities, small businesses, innovators, and homegrown enterprises are developing ideas that suit northern realities. Investments in connectivity, circular economy and environmental opportunities, experience

development and community infrastructure are quietly reshaping what it means to live and work in the North.

This momentum will be captured and sharpened through the NRRM's new Economic Diversification Strategy; an initiative aimed at identifying industries — both historic and emerging — that are best positioned to succeed in the region's unique environment. In a municipality where forestry, natural gas, tourism, agriculture, and transportation have long played defining roles, the strategy aims to build a clearer path forward for these and additional sectors such as clean energy, value-

Photos: Artography by Tracy.





Looking for a place to grow your business or embrace a better work-life balance? The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM) in northeastern British Columbia is the answer. Here, breathtaking natural beauty pairs with a forward-thinking community to create unparalleled opportunities for entrepreneurs, remote workers, and innovators.



Whether you dream of running a small business, working remotely surrounded by wilderness, or diving into industries like tourism, forestry, or distributed LNG, the NRRM offers affordable living, a supportive community, and the chance to thrive.

Contact us today and discover a place not just to live, but a community that inspires you to grow.



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Photo: Northern B.C. Tourism – Grant Harder.



Photo: Destination B.C. – Andrew Strain.

added wood manufacturing, and cold-climate innovation. It will be a reflection of the regions strengths and a resource to support sustainable, diverse economic growth deliberately for the long-term.

Agriculture, land, and northern potential

Agricultural producers in the Northern Rockies have always embraced experimentation, and that continues today. The region’s long summer daylight hours, fertile pockets of soil, and ample land base lend themselves to creativity: northern vegetables, greenhouse innovations, cattle and bison operations, beekeeping, and niche specialty products all find a

home here. While the growing season may be short in months, the appetite for opportunity is anything but.

The spaciousness of the region remains one of its greatest assets. For producers, hobby farmers, or value-added processors seeking room to expand, the Northern Rockies offers something increasingly rare: the freedom to build without constraint.

Where entrepreneurs and remote workers find balance

Part of the modern appeal of the NRRM lies in its livability. Fort Nelson provides a kind of everyday ease that larger urban centres struggle to offer — short commutes, accessible

recreation, attainable housing, and a genuine sense of community. Remote workers increasingly recognize the advantage of working from a place where the day can end with a trail walk, a coffee with a neighbour, or a quick drive into the backcountry.

Local businesses, meanwhile, are supported by a community that values collaboration and straight talk. Whether in tourism, trades, forestry, professional services, or emerging industries, entrepreneurs often remark on the region’s practicality: if something needs to get done, people come together to do it.

A landscape of opportunity

The Northern Rockies’ economic potential continues to be defined by its land, natural resources, and strategic location. Tourism operators see opportunities along the Alaska Highway and throughout the region’s wilderness corridors. Forestry remains a major asset, with one of the largest timber supply areas in British Columbia and a Community Forest poised for long-term stewardship and value-added possibilities. Beneath the surface, three major shale basins offer



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future energy potential as markets shift and technologies evolve.

These established strengths — paired with new growth areas to be identified through the Economic Diversification Strategy — paint a picture of a region ready for its next chapter.

For those who choose to make the Northern Rockies home, the appeal goes beyond economics. It's found in the mountain passes of the Muskwa-Kechika, the quiet of the boreal forest, and the rhythm of a community that looks out for one another. Year-round recreation, abundant wildlife, and wide-open spaces shape a lifestyle rooted in nature and grounded in practicality.

Looking ahead

The story of the Northern Rockies has always been one of adaptation, partnership, and possibility. Collaboration with Indigenous communities, long-standing relationships within the resource sector, and the emerging direction provided by the Economic Diversification Strategy all point to a region preparing thoughtfully for the future.

For individuals, families, and businesses who value space, opportunity, and a community that embraces both tradition and innovation, the Northern Rockies remains one of Canada's most compelling places to plant new roots.

Learn more about life, business opportunities, and the future direction of the region at www.investnorthernrockies.ca. ★



Photo: Northern B.C. Tourism – Gabriel Munhoz.

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FROM SMITHERS TO THE GLOBAL FIELD

HY-TECH DRILLING

Hy-Tech Drilling’s story begins in 1991, not in a boardroom but in a small northern B.C. workshop, where founder Harvey Tremblay re-engineered an off-the-shelf JKS-300 rig to better handle the rugged terrain around Smithers. It was an early indicator of the company’s approach: if the equipment didn’t quite meet the needs of the work, they would rethink it until it did.

By 1994, Tremblay and his wife Corry had taken full ownership of the fledgling company and set about building a business that could keep pace with the demands of mineral exploration in western Canada. What followed was steady, quietly ambitious growth. From a handful of regional contracts, Hy-Tech has expanded into a drilling contractor with a footprint that now reaches across Canada, the United States, Europe, and South America.

A major part of that evolution has been technical. Hy-Tech’s proprietary TECH 5000 drill — designed, built, and maintained in-house — has

become something of a calling card. Lightweight and highly mobile, it can be flown, skidded, barged, or deployed underground, giving crews flexibility in some of the sector’s most challenging environments. The company’s fleet has grown alongside its capabilities, and today Hy-Tech can field dozens of rigs adapted to a variety of terrains and project scales.

The organization around those drills has matured as well. Hy-Tech maintains ISO-certified environmental and safety systems and participates in the Canadian Diamond Drilling Association’s DEC program. While these credentials are increasingly common across the industry, Hy-Tech’s scale and consistency stand out: the company reports a 99 per cent hole-completion rate and keeps downtime minimal — metrics that matter to exploration teams under tight timelines and budgets.

Technology has also shaped the company’s interface with clients. Hy-Tech’s FieldView™ platform offers real-time access to timesheets,



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drilling progress, and costing, giving project leads a window into performance that mirrors what their crews see on the ground. For an industry where logistics, scheduling, and data capture can make or break a season, that transparency has become a competitive differentiator.

Still, the company's growth has not been purely mechanical. Recent years have seen Hy-Tech expanding its partnerships, most notably through a 2022 collaboration with the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation

(TNDC). The initiative brings drilling services to Tahltan Territory in northwest B.C. while supporting skills training, employment, and contracting opportunities for Tahltan members. It reflects a broader shift in resource development with operators increasingly expected to engage with Indigenous partners in ways that build long-term local capacity, not just project-by-project benefits.

Today, Hy-Tech operates out of hubs in Smithers, Saskatoon, and Red Lake (Ontario), positioning

the company to respond quickly to projects across the country. Its reputation is shaped as much by its roots — the northern practicality that guided its early innovations — as by the global reach it has since achieved.

The resulting profile is a company that sits comfortably between its past and its future: technically capable, operationally disciplined, and attuned to the shifting expectations of the industry it serves. ✨

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ESKAY CREEK 2.0: REVIVING A LEGEND IN NORTHWEST B.C.



Eskay Creek Site. Photo courtesy of Skeena Resources Ltd.

For nearly a decade during the 1990s and early 2000s, the Eskay Creek mine was one of the most remarkable gold and silver deposits on the planet. Its grades were legendary, its production unmatched, and its remote northwest B.C. setting became synonymous with the kind of geological fortune that comes along only a handful of times in a generation. Now, after 15 years of dormancy, Skeena Gold + Silver is working to bring the mine back online — this time as a modern, open-pit operation designed under a new era of environmental regulation, Indigenous partnership, and community expectations.

The result is Eskay Creek 2.0: an ambitious revival project carrying the weight of history while also reflecting how mining itself is changing.

A historic deposit, reimagined

The original Eskay Creek mine

closed in 2008 after producing more than 3.3 million ounces of gold and 160 million ounces of silver. For years, it was widely regarded as one of the highest-grade deposits ever discovered. When Skeena Gold + Silver acquired the asset, many questioned whether the mine could be economically redeveloped. Exploration drilling and modern modeling eventually answered that question with a yes.

In 2023, Skeena released a Definitive Feasibility Study outlining plans for a large-scale open-pit operation with a projected 1.2-year payback period — an unusually rapid return in today's mining environment. With production potentially beginning in early 2027 (subject to permitting and construction timelines), Eskay Creek 2.0 is positioned as one of the most advanced and economically compelling gold projects in Canada.

But feasibility studies and financial

models tell only part of the story. The real test lies in permitting, consultation, and community partnerships.

A new era of Indigenous partnership

Unlike the mine's first chapter, the future of Eskay Creek is being shaped in full collaboration with the Tahltan Nation, on whose territory the project is located. The Tahltan Central Government (TCG) has become one of the most influential Indigenous governance bodies in the resource sector, with rigorous environmental review processes and a firm expectation of shared benefits and decision-making power.

Skeena and the TCG have been engaged in a multi-year process that includes an Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) under negotiation, extensive technical review committees, and joint communications materials aimed

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at giving Tahltan members a clear understanding of the project.

This partnership reflects a broader shift across B.C. and Canada: no major project advances without Indigenous leadership, transparency, and long-term benefits built into the foundation of the work. For Eskay Creek, this collaborative approach will influence everything from hiring and procurement to environmental monitoring and closure planning.

Environmental expectations higher than ever

Eskay Creek's redevelopment is being reviewed under one of the most rigorous environmental assessment frameworks ever applied to a major mine in British Columbia. Particular attention is being paid to water management, tailings design, and long-term closure planning — all standard focal points for large projects in sensitive, remote environments.

Skeena has undertaken multiple rounds of technical submissions, public engagement, and design refinement as part of the provincial and federal environmental assessment process. These reviews are examining water treatment approaches, long-term discharge quality, and post-closure remediation to ensure the project meets current regulatory standards.

The company states that modern engineering, access to hydroelectric power, and improved geological understanding will support an operation with a significantly smaller environmental footprint than was possible during the mine's first iteration.

If approved, Eskay Creek would be among the first major mining projects in B.C. to advance under the province's post-UNDRIP regulatory framework, making it a closely watched case for how legacy assets can be redeveloped in alignment with evolving policy and regulatory practice.

Economic momentum and regional opportunity

Beyond its technical and environmental profile, Eskay Creek represents a potential economic engine for northwest B.C. Skeena estimates the project could support more than 800 direct jobs at peak construction and operation, with additional opportunities for contractors, suppliers, and service providers throughout the region.

The company has already secured a significant portion of its construction financing, including a major package from Orion Resource Partners. Early-works permits — allowing bulk sampling, road preparation, and infrastructure pad development — are already in place. Full-scale construction could begin as early as 2026, pending receipt of final permits.

In many ways, Eskay Creek sits at the intersection of two narratives: the revival of one of Canada's most storied mining assets, and the evolution of what it means to develop a resource project responsibly today.

The story to watch

Whether Eskay Creek becomes a blueprint for modern mine redevelopment will depend on the next two years. The permitting path is complex, the expectations high, and the scrutiny intense. But if Skeena succeeds, the project may set a new standard for how legacy assets can be transformed for a new generation.

Eskay Creek once shocked the mining world with its grades. Its second act may do the same, but for very different reasons. ★

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CANADA'S FUTURE PROSPERITY RUNS THROUGH THE NORTHWEST COAST: A STRATEGIC GATEWAY TO THE WORLD

By Deborah Jaremko for the Canadian Energy Centre

Photos courtesy Prince Rupert Port Authority

Tucked into the north coast of B.C. is the deepest natural harbour in North America and the port with the shortest travel times to Asia.

With growing capacity for exports including agricultural products, lumber, plastic pellets, propane and butane, it's no wonder the Port of Prince Rupert often comes up as a potential new global gateway for oil from Alberta, said CEO Shaun Stevenson.

Thanks to its location and natural advantages, the port can efficiently move a wide range of commodities, he said.

That could include oil, if not for the federal tanker ban in northern B.C.'s coastal waters.

"Notwithstanding the moratorium that was put in place, when you look at the attributes of the Port of Prince Rupert, there's arguably no safer place in Canada to do it," Stevenson said. "I think that speaks to the need to build trust and confidence that it can be done safely, with protection of environmental risks. You can't talk about

the economic opportunity before you address safety and environmental protection."

Safe transit at Prince Rupert

About a 16-hour drive from Vancouver, the Port of Prince Rupert's terminals are one to two sailing days closer to Asia than other West Coast ports.

The entrance to the inner harbour is wider than the length of three Canadian football fields.

The water is 35 metres deep — about the height of a 10-storey building — compared to 22 metres at Los Angeles and 16 metres at Seattle.

Shipmasters spend two hours navigating into the port with local pilot guides, compared to four hours at Vancouver and eight at Seattle.

"We've got wide open, very simple shipping lanes. It's not moving through complex navigational channels into the site," Stevenson said.



The Prince Rupert Grain Terminal.



The Ridley Island Propane Export Terminal.

A port on the rise

The Prince Rupert Port Authority says it has entered a new era of expansion, strengthening Canada’s economic security.

The port estimates it anchors about \$60 billion of Canada’s annual global trade today. Even without adding oil exports, Stevenson said that figure could grow to \$100 billion.

“We need better access to the huge and growing Asian market,” said Heather Exner-Pirot, director of energy, natural resources and environment at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. “Prince Rupert seems purpose-built for that.”

Roughly \$3 billion in new infrastructure is already taking shape, including the \$750 million rail-to-container CANXPORT transloading complex for bulk commodities like specialty agricultural products, lumber and plastic pellets.

Canadian propane goes global

A centrepiece of new development is the \$1.35-billion Ridley Energy Export Facility — the port’s third propane terminal since 2019.

“Prince Rupert is already emerging as a globally significant gateway for propane exports to Asia,” Exner-Pirot said.

Thanks to shipments from Prince Rupert, Canadian propane – primarily from Alberta – has gone global, no longer confined to U.S. markets.

More than 45 per cent of Canada’s propane exports now reach destinations outside the United States, according to the Canada Energy Regulator.

“Twenty-five per cent of Japan’s propane imports come through Prince Rupert, and just shy of 15 per cent of Korea’s imports. It’s created a lift on every barrel produced in Western Canada,” Stevenson said.

“When we look at natural gas liquids, propane and butane, we think there’s an opportunity for Canada via Prince Rupert becoming the trading benchmark for the Asia-Pacific region.”

That would give Canadian production an enduring competitive advantage when serving key markets in Asia, he said.

Deep connection to Alberta

The Port of Prince Rupert has been a key export hub for Alberta commodities for more than four decades.

Through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the province invested \$134 million — roughly half the total cost — to build the Prince Rupert Grain Terminal, which opened in 1985.

The largest grain terminal on the West Coast, it primarily handles wheat, barley, and canola from the prairies.

Today, the connection to Alberta remains strong.

In 2022, \$3.8 billion worth of Alberta exports — mainly propane, agricultural products and wood pulp — were shipped through the Port of Prince Rupert, according to the province’s Ministry of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

In 2024, Alberta awarded a \$250,000 grant to the Prince Rupert Port Authority to lead discussions on expanding

transportation links with the province's Industrial Heartland region near Edmonton.

Handling some of the world's biggest vessels

The Port of Prince Rupert could safely handle oil tankers, including Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), Stevenson said.

"We would have the capacity both in water depth and access and egress to the port that could handle Aframax, Suezmax and even VLCCs," he said.

"We don't have terminal capacity to handle oil at this point, but there's certainly terminal capacities within the port complex that could be either expanded or diversified in their capability."

Market access lessons from TMX

Like propane, Canada's oil exports have gained traction in Asia, thanks to the expanded Trans Mountain pipeline and the Westridge Marine Terminal near Vancouver — about 1,600 kilometres south of Prince Rupert, where there is no oil tanker ban.

The Trans Mountain expansion project included the largest expansion of ocean oil spill response in Canadian history, doubling capacity of the West Coast Marine Response Corporation.

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) reports that

Canadian oil exports to Asia more than tripled after the expanded pipeline and terminal went into service in May 2024.

As a result, the price for Canadian oil has gone up.

The gap between Western Canadian Select (WCS) and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) has narrowed to about \$12 per barrel this year, compared to \$19 per barrel in 2023, according to GLJ Petroleum Consultants.

Each additional dollar earned per barrel adds about \$280 million in annual government royalties and tax revenues, according to economist Peter Tertzakian.

The road ahead

There are likely several potential sites for a new West Coast oil terminal, Stevenson said. "A pipeline is going to find its way to tidewater based upon the safest and most efficient route," he said. "The terminal part is relatively straightforward, whether it's in Prince Rupert or somewhere else."

Under Canada's Marine Act, the Port of Prince Rupert's mandate is to enable trade, Stevenson said. "If Canada's trade objectives include moving oil off the West Coast, we're here to enable it, presuming that the project has a mandate," he said. "If we see the basis of a project like this, we would ensure that it's done to the best possible standard." ★



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BUILT TO MOVE

The infrastructure behind the Port of Prince Rupert

At a glance, Prince Rupert's port looks defined by geography: deep water, a naturally sheltered harbour, and the shortest sailing distance between North America and Asia. But its real advantage lies in how its infrastructure is organized and how efficiently cargo moves from ship to rail and into the continental supply chain.

Unlike many legacy ports that grew organically over decades, Prince Rupert has been able to develop around purpose-built terminals with clear separation between cargo types. Containers, liquid bulk, coal, and other dry bulk commodities each move through dedicated facilities, reducing operational conflicts and congestion.

Containers: speed over scale

Container traffic flows through DP World's Fairview Container Terminal, where capacity was expanded in 2022 to approximately 1.6 million TEUs annually. While that figure is modest compared to mega-ports farther south, Prince Rupert's value proposition is speed.

Vessels face minimal anchorage delays, terminal turn times are shorter, and containers can be transferred directly to rail without competing with dense urban road networks. The result is faster end-to-end transit for time-sensitive goods moving between Asia and inland North America.

A proposed second container terminal — currently under feasibility study by the Prince Rupert Port Authority (PRPA) and DP World Canada —

would significantly increase capacity, but the underlying model would remain the same: fewer bottlenecks, longer trains, and predictable flow rather than sheer volume.

Liquid bulk: Dedicated infrastructure

Liquid bulk cargoes operate on a separate track entirely. The Ridley Energy Export Facility (REEF), now under construction, is designed for propane, butane, and related products. From a logistics perspective, this matters less for what is shipped than for how it is handled.

Dedicated berths, storage and loading systems mean liquid bulk exports do not compete with container or dry bulk operations for dock space or rail access. That separation improves reliability across the port and allows each terminal to optimize for its specific cargo requirements.

Rail: The port's backbone

If Prince Rupert has a single point of leverage, it is rail. Nearly all cargo leaving the port moves inland via CN's mainline, which connects the coast directly to the Prairies and central Canada.

Because the rail corridor was designed for heavy freight rather than commuter traffic, trains can be longer and schedules more predictable. Planned capacity upgrades are focused on supporting higher volumes while maintaining velocity — a critical factor as port throughput increases.

In practice, this means the port functions less like a coastal endpoint

and more like the first node in a continental logistics chain.

Land, layout, and future capacity

One of Prince Rupert's less visible advantages is land. The PRPA controls approximately 1,000 hectares earmarked for long-term terminal development. That land bank allows planners to think in terms of systems rather than stopgap solutions — reserving space for rail yards, buffer zones and future terminals before congestion becomes a constraint.

As cargo volumes grow, this layout flexibility becomes increasingly valuable. Ports rarely fail because ships cannot reach them; they fail because inland logistics cannot keep up.

A performance-driven gateway

In 2024, 23.1 million tonnes of cargo moved through the Port of Prince Rupert, a figure that underscores how quickly the system is scaling. The next phase of growth will not be defined by announcements alone, but by metrics that rarely make headlines: train velocity, berth productivity, and schedule reliability.

The Port is being built around resilience: separated cargo streams, dedicated terminals, and rail-first design. As global trade becomes less predictable, ports that function as integrated systems — rather than congested chokepoints — gain an advantage. Prince Rupert's infrastructure is designed to absorb growth without breaking, a trait that may ultimately matter more than raw throughput numbers. ★

A satellite with a large blue solar panel and a silver antenna is shown in space. The background is a dark purple gradient with a faint white grid pattern.

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