

Metlakatla First Nation statement on the export monopoly impeding the development of the Prince Rupert trade gateway

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prince Rupert, B.C., February 4, 2026 – Chief Robert Nelson has released the following statement on behalf of the Governing Council of Metlakatla First Nation:

“Metlakatla First Nation (“**Metlakatla**”) has notified federal and provincial regulators that we have withdrawn our consent for the Ridley Island Energy Export Facility (“**REEF**”) in the Port of Prince Rupert because our consent was unlawfully obtained. Metlakatla will oppose all future authorizations and permits required for the operation of REEF, including its expansion.

“The REEF project is currently under construction. Once completed, it will store liquefied petroleum gas and other petroleum products for shipment to export markets. REEF is a joint venture between AltaGas Ltd. (“**AltaGas**”) and Vopak Development Canada Inc. (“**Vopak**”).

“Metlakatla holds Aboriginal rights and title on the north coast of British Columbia, including in the Port of Prince Rupert. Metlakatla’s consent for REEF was required because of the project’s impact on those rights.

“We are proud of our track record working with governments and proponents to develop the Port of Prince Rupert as a critical gateway for international trade, strengthening Canada’s economy by connecting Canadian energy producers to global markets.

“We have always found a way to build these partnerships while having our rights respected — until now. In 2015, the Prince Rupert Port Authority (“**PRPA**”), gave Vopak the power to arbitrarily veto any other project proposing to export bulk energy products, such as liquefied petroleum gas (“**LPG**”), through the port. The veto power, which is now shared with AltaGas, creates an export monopoly over petroleum products such as LPG.

“We only discovered the existence of this export monopoly in 2023, when PRPA said its agreement with Vopak was the reason it was turning down an application by Trigon Pacific Terminals Limited (“**Trigon**”) to ship LPG through the port. Metlakatla is an equity owner in Trigon.

“Had Metlakatla known in 2015 that PRPA was prepared to grant Vopak exclusive export rights, we would have strongly opposed it. If we had learned about the export monopoly during the REEF consultation process, we would not have consented to the REEF project.

“PRPA’s failure to disclose that it had given an exclusivity monopoly with veto rights to Vopak in 2015, and its subsequent failure to disclose those arrangements during the consultation process for the REEF project, violates our constitutionally protected rights.

“This export monopoly is harming the Canadian economy at a moment when “Building Canada” is an urgent national priority. It is impeding competition and blocking Canadian

investment in the energy sector, thereby limiting Canada's ability to diversify trade to overseas markets, and in the process, taking away jobs from Canadians.

"Canadian energy producers want to ship more Canadian propane to Asia-Pacific customers, but the export monopoly is limiting their access to this premium market, and some producers are now forced to sell their products at a discount in the U.S. market, increasing their vulnerability to U.S. trade action. This, in turn, is blocking critical investments in energy production and export capacity in western Canada.

"These investments are shovel-ready projects. Trigon has commenced an action in the Supreme Court of British Columbia to advance its claim that PRPA unlawfully denied permission to build a new LPG export terminal in Prince Rupert.

"Removing the roadblock to Trigon's project would immediately unlock over \$2 billion in new private-sector investment, both in the project itself and new gas processing facilities upstream in British Columbia and Alberta. At least two upstream energy projects are stalled because Trigon's LPG proposal is being blocked.

"For more than two years, we engaged PRPA and the REEF partners to address the violation of our rights. We appreciate the recent efforts by the Government of Canada to facilitate a negotiated solution but talks with AltaGas and Vopak have broken down. Even now, they refuse to disclose the extent of their rights or discuss the modification of them.

"Metlakatla isn't prepared to stand by. We regret being forced into a position of confrontation with proponents and regulators instead of working collaboratively to build projects. In defending our rights, we are also advocating for Canadian jobs and investment. Moreover, the export monopoly violates acceptable standards for transparent business practices in one of Canada's most important trade gateways.

"This is why Metlakatla has notified federal and provincial regulators that we have withdrawn our consent for REEF. Unless this matter is resolved and our rights are upheld, we will use all means necessary to rectify the situation, including opposing any further authorizations and permits that AltaGas and Vopak may require to operate and expand the REEF facility.

"In 2024, Metlakatla commenced an action in the Supreme Court of British Columbia against PRPA for loss and damage on account of the violation of Metlakatla's Aboriginal rights. PRPA responded by seeking to have the action stayed or struck out on jurisdictional grounds. In a recent decision, however, the Court dismissed PRPA's application, ruling that Metlakatla has pleaded a reasonable cause of action and should be allowed to get on with it.

"As a small First Nation, it is a daunting task to take on multi-billion-dollar corporations, but we will fight as long as it takes to have our rights respected.

"At the same time as we undertake this regrettable but necessary step, we are eager to talk with proponents about developing projects to expand the Port of Prince Rupert. Despite this export monopoly, we see opportunities to build new business partnerships and seize this

historic opportunity to develop this strategic trade gateway in an open and transparent manner to Build Canada.”

Chief Robert Nelson
Metlakatla First Nation

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