



**For Immediate Release**

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## Teck Alaska Statement on EPA Consent Agreement

**Red Dog Mine, Alaska** – Teck Alaska Incorporated (Teck), operator of the Red Dog Mine near Kotzebue Alaska, today announced that it has entered into an administrative Consent Agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to resolve issues resulting from an EPA inspection completed at the mine August 24-30, 2006.

During that inspection, conducted as part of the agency's revolving examination of major operating facilities, seven EPA inspectors spent seven days reviewing site operations and records related to water quality compliance and hazardous waste management at the mine and port facilities. EPA first notified Teck on March 5, 2009 that EPA believed that some of Red Dog's activities were in violation of the Clean Water Act.

At the mine, EPA determined that certain water treatment plant operating procedures were not allowed. Water from the fresh water reservoir was being discharged into Red Dog Creek along with treated water from the water treatment plant. The associated dilution violated the sampling requirements contained in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Since site records showed that Teck had used the procedures in question intermittently over a period of time, EPA determined that violations occurred during 9 days in 2004, 36 days in 2005, and 66 days in 2006. All downstream water quality samples during this period were within compliance.

The complexity of the Red Dog water management system and the NPDES regulatory system were contributing factors to the violation. In 2004, Teck personnel had discussed the operating procedures with the EPA and believed EPA had approved the procedures. However, as a result of the site inspection, this issue has now been clarified and thus provides the guidance to ensure that ongoing operations are both in compliance with the law and continue to be protective of the environment.

At the port, there were two accidental spills of treated water resulting from operational upsets. One occurred during July 2004, and the other during September 2006. The water that was spilled on the tundra instead of being normally discharged into the ocean had been treated in the port's water treatment plant and there was no harm to the environment. Additionally, the port facility experienced very heavy flows from snowmelt runoff during a several day period in May 2005, which overwhelmed the treatment plant and led to exceedances of the port's NPDES permit limits. An elevated sample on May 12 exceeded the daily limit for zinc, lead and total suspended solids (TSS), resulting in 3 violations for that day. EPA regulations treat this single event as having occurred every day of the month and therefore the monthly permit average was exceeded for zinc and TSS, or 31 violations for each parameter. Thus EPA interprets a total of 65 violations for the May 12 event. EPA found that all of the exceedances at the port had been properly self-reported by Red Dog.

The Consent Agreement encompasses all the mine and port incidents. Under the Consent Agreement, Teck has agreed to pay a fine of \$120,000 to resolve the complaint.

Red Dog has produced zinc and lead in northwest Alaska for 20 years and if current permitting efforts for the Aqgaluk deposit are successful, will continue operations for 20 more years. Red Dog strives for continual improvement in all aspects of its environmental stewardship. Red Dog provides a significant contribution to the Alaska economy via jobs to rural Alaskans, support for local communities, royalty payments to Alaska Native Corporations, and taxes to the State of Alaska.

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