NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2026MCM0031-001120
Sept. 22, 2026

Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals

Accelerating mining in B.C. with streamlined permitting

Mineral-exploration permits being approved quicker with new efficient process

VICTORIA –

Summary

- *Since the new fixed permitting timelines framework for mineral exploration took effect in April 2026, every permitting target timeline has been met, with the first permits issued ahead of schedule*
- *Since the Mineral Claims Consultation Framework (MCCF) was introduced in March 2025, approximately 80% of all applications received have been processed, while median approval time has decreased by approximately 8%*
- *It reflects the value of early consultation throughout the MCCF and permitting processes*
- *It is part of the Province's Look West strategy to strengthen B.C.'s and Canada's economy*

Six months after introducing the fixed permitting timelines framework for mineral exploration, every permitting target has been met and the first permits under the framework were issued ahead of schedule.

"Today, we have shown that we are not only the first jurisdiction in Canada to make a framework like this work, but we are exceeding our own targets while doing it," said Jagrup Brar, Minister of Mining and Critical Minerals. "I want to thank ministry staff, industry, First Nations and Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia for their hard work and effective collaboration. This is just the beginning of our ambitious agenda, and it shows what is possible when we work together for the benefit of everyone."

In April 2026, B.C. became the first jurisdiction in Canada to introduce fixed permitting timelines for Mineral Exploration Notices of Work, with targets of 40, 90 or 140 days depending on project complexity. The framework was designed to make the permitting process more clear, predictable and timely for industry, First Nations and provincial staff.

The first two permits issued under the new framework beat their targets by a wide margin. The Ranch East Project by Thesis Gold & Silver had a 90-day target and the Fran Project by MGX Minerals had a 140-day target, and both were permitted in less than 70 days.

Additional examples of mineral-exploration files permitted within the fixed timelines include:

- Southwestern B.C. – North Island exploration program by Northisle Copper and Gold was permitted in less than three months.

- North central B.C. – Aspen exploration project by Korestar Exploration was permitted in less than two months.

All applications submitted under the new framework are being processed within their target timelines. Throughout the new process, permitting decisions continue to be based on strong environmental protections, public safety standards and consultation with First Nations.

Mineral Claims Consultation Framework (MCCF)

In British Columbia, consultation with First Nations remains a cornerstone of mineral-exploration permitting. As part of Budget 2026, the Province allocated $2 million to support the MCCF.

Since the implementation of MCCF in March 2025, the Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals has been improving business processes and decision timelines. Approximately 80% of all applications received since March 2025 have been processed. In addition to the backlog being addressed, median approval time has decreased by approximately 8%.

Consultation at the mineral claim acquisition stage lays the foundation for engagement and consultation throughout permitting. Early engagement helps First Nations, proponents and provincial staff identify issues sooner and supports a more co-ordinated permitting process.

The ministry continues to work with First Nations and proponents to undertake efficient and respectful consultation.

Permitting efficiency and standards

- Improved co-ordination across government and clear application requirements are helping reduce delays in the permitting process.
- Reduced permitting timelines give proponents more certainty to plan their work within the short field-exploration season.
- Permitting decisions continue to be guided by strong environmental protections and public safety requirements.
- Improvements to permitting timelines reflect better co-ordination and process design, not a lowering of standards.

By pairing fixed timelines with strong environmental protections, meaningful consultation and close collaboration between government, industry and First Nations, British Columbia is building a permitting process that works better.

The Province will continue to set the foundation for continued progress under the fixed permitting timelines framework and the MCCF in the coming months.

The work supports the Province's Look West strategy for jobs and industry, which outlines B.C.'s vision to deliver major projects quicker, grow key industries and targeted sectors, diversify markets and create jobs and opportunities by strengthening the workforce to develop a more independent economy.

Learn More:

- To read a news release about fixed permitting timelines, visit:

https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026MCM0003-000071

- To learn more about the mineral- and coal-exploration permit applications, visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=E2389D4562AD4A1DAE773A45370D2B36
- To learn more about the Mineral Claims Consultation Framework in B.C., visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/mineral-exploration-mining/mineral-titles/mineral-claims-consultation-framework

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUNDER

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What to know about mining in B.C.

- The new fixed permitting timelines build on efficiencies achieved to date, including:
  - almost 35% more exploration permits issued in 2025 than in 2024
  - co-ordinated environmental assessment and permitting process, with the potential for ready projects to experience reduced timelines for major-mines applications by 35%
- B.C. is a global mining and critical minerals hub, with approximately 1,000 mining and mineral exploration and development companies headquartered in the region, 40,000 employees, including 4,100 people employed in mineral exploration at 18 operating mines, two smelters and 280 mineral-exploration projects.
- By 2040, new and expanded critical-minerals projects could represent an investment opportunity of $44 billion.
- With a rich geology, B.C. produces or has potential to produce 22 of Canada's 34 critical minerals.

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