

## NMG: SAC issues a positive ruling in the judicial review regarding the granting of exploitation concessions to NMG

The exploitation concessions granted to Nickel Mountain Group ("NMG") by the Swedish Chief Mine Inspector have been a heavily debated issue over time. Vapsten reindeer husbandry co-operative ("Vapsten") conducts its reindeer husbandry in the area of the Rönnbäcken nickel project. Vapsten has tried to stop or delay the project with reference to its concerns that the project will negatively influence the reindeer husbandry around the area of the future nickel mine. NMG respects Vapsten's position, although NMG considers that the mining activities and the reindeer herding can co-exist.

Vapsten appealed the Chief Mine Inspector's decisions to grant three exploitation concessions for the Rönnbäcken nickel project. In 2013 Vapsten applied to the SAC (*Sw. Högsta Förvaltningsdomstolen*) for a judicial review of the Swedish Government's decision to dismiss the appeals. A hearing took place in Stockholm in June this year.

The SAC (Swedish Supreme Administrative Court) has now published its ruling dated October 29, according to which the Government's decision is upheld. The SAC finds that Government's decision is not in conflict with any rule of law.

The ruling by the SAC is not a decision that assesses the detailed environmental issues relating to the possible future mining activities. These issues will be assessed by the Land and Environment Court in the coming process for a permit under the Environmental Code.

For NMG this SAC ruling is important since the pending process has created a lot of uncertainty for the project. NMG can now move forward with the initiated pre-feasibility study (PFS) and later on submit its application for an environmental permit.

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