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## Wolbers meets with Barry Penner

By BY JEREMY DEUTSCH Tribune Staff Writer

With the days counting down before pens down for **Taseko** Mines and its Prosperity Project, the City and Cariboo Regional District are pulling out all the stops to get the environmental assessment process back on track.

City councillor and CRD chair Jon Wolbers met with Environment Minister Barry Penner in Victoria on Wednesday to push a sense of urgency for the province to set the parameters of the EA for the project.

Wolbers was encouraged to hear the ministry was aware of the timeline for the Prosperity, but it was his sense that the Dec. 15 deadline might not be met. "The best [Penner] could say is he is very aware of the situation and the importance to our area," Wolbers says of his 45-minute meeting.

**Taseko** has asked the provincial and federal governments to define the environmental assessment guidelines by Dec. 15 so that **Taseko** can begin the next step of the process.

**Taseko** has indicated that it has done all it can do and a further delay in the process could create substantial issues for the project to continue to be viable. The Prosperity Project is a copper and gold mine at Fish Lake, 125 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake.

Wolbers says the province doesn't want to rush the process because they want it to succeed.

"That's why there is a little bit more caution with this to make sure it get the best chance to succeed, which is good," he says.

Wolbers adds that the process would likely be in the hands of a panel and the province is trying to get a good mix on that panel.

But the lobbying may not be done for Wolbers.

He's still hoping to get the ear of Premier Gordon Campbell and Richard Neufeld Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources to keep pushing the issue.

"If we have to wait to the new year so be it," he says.

Wolbers was also not given a timeline for when the EA parameters would be released, but was told it will be sooner than later.