



# Nussir Gets Operating License – Environmental Organisations Rage



*This morning, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries announced that it gives a thumb's up for the mining project, despite objections from both environmental organisations and the Sami parliament. (Illustration: Nussir).*

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**The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries has decided to give Nussir ASA an operating license for copper mining in Kvalsund municipality. – This mining project will strengthen the foundations for business and industry in the High North, says Minister of Trade and Industry Torbjørn Røe Isaksen (Conservatives).**

**FROM [HEGE EILERTSEN](#)**

- This will be a positive contribution to development of the local community, with new jobs and competence, the Minister of Trade and Industry comments.

**Young Friends of the Earth and the Liberal Youth Party's leader have, according to Norwegian daily [VG](#), already made it clear that they will chain**

***themselves on-site to prevent the disputed mining on the Nussir field in Kvalsund, Finnmark county.***

- This is one of the most environmentally hostile industrial projects in Norwegian history, says Silje Ask Lundberg, General Manager of Friends of the Earth Norway. She says the battle is far from over.

### **The Green Shift depends on metals**

"Norway has a lot of natural resources that provide a foundation for business development all over the country. Our minerals are one such resource. The Green Shift depends on increased extraction of many kinds of metal that are used in new technologies – such as solar cells, windmills, electronic cars and batteries. The mining industry's providing of raw materials to the industry is thus material to reach the climate goals", the Ministry writes in the press release.

"The government wants the extraction of minerals to take place in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way. The environmental consequences of sea deposits have been carefully weighed against the positive effects of the measure in the emission permission provided by the Climate and Environment Ministry in 2016", the press release says. The government emphasises that the mining operations shall take place in an "environmentally responsible and sustainable way".

***- We are confident that the depositing will not have unacceptable effects for the environment and the seafood industry, says Minister Torbjørn Røe Isaksen.***

### **Sami parliament president: - Will appeal**

The mining project affects two reindeer herding districts.

The reindeer herding stakes and the regard to Sami culture has been important in the Department's consideration of the application. There has therefore been consultations with the sami herding districts in question as well as the Sami parliament.

The Department has not been able to reach agreement with the Sami parliament in these consultations.

***- The Trade and Industry Minister completely overruns the Sea Sami and Reindeer herding Sami interests, which are vulnerable and under considerable pressure, in order to provide this permission to Nussir for exploiting the Nussir deposit, which is a short-term mining project, says Sami Parliament President Aili Keskitalo.***

- We will appeal this decision as soon as possible, says the Sami Parliament President.

### **Mitigating measures**

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries is of the opinion that the mining project will affect reindeer herding, however, that the project can be conducted with adaptations that will minimise its effect thereon. The Ministry has therefore decided that mitigating measures should be taken in consideration of the reindeer herding.

One of these measures is for activities to be shut down on the Ulvenryggen deposit during the calving season (1 May – 15 June).

In the eyes of the Ministry, the mining activities will therefore not prevent or significantly limit the exercise of reindeer herding or Sami culture.

### **Long and winding process**

Nussir ASA holds an approved regulation plan from the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation's decision on 20 March 2014 as well as an emission permission the Ministry of Climate and Environment of 19 December 2016. The emission permission includes permission to deposit tailings in a Repparfjord sea deposit.

On 6 May 2016, Nussir ASA applied to the Directorate for Mineral Management for an Operating License for exploitation of the Repparfjord copper deposit.

***During the hearing for the operating licence application, the Sami parliament had objections based on the activity's influence on Sami interests in the area.***

According to the Mineral Act, the processing of the application is then to take place in the Ministry, and there is the opportunity to appeal its decision to the King's meeting with the Cabinet. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries received the application for decision on 27 September 2017.

On 25 October 2017, the TIF Ministry asked the Directorate to provide the Ministry with professional mining advice to the application. The Directorate submitted its advice on 27 February 2018. Nussir ASA commented on the Directorate's advice in a letter of 5 April 2018.

On 8 May 2018, there was an open input meeting and an inspection in Kvalsund and the Repparfjord areas, with participants from the reindeer herding industry as well as relevant authorities.

On the same day there were also consultations between the affected reindeer herding districts and the Ministry in keeping with the 2005 Consultation Agreement. Representatives from the Sami parliament attended as observers.

Consultations with the Sami parliament, Sametinget, were conducted on 29 January 2019 and 11 February 2019 as part of the finalising of the decision.