

---

## Slowdown signs - Mining exploration in British Columbia dips

*Saturday, 17 Jan, 2009*

Canadian Press reported that mineral exploration spending fell nearly 12% in British Columbia, Canada, in 2008 after the industry was hit by a slump in commodity prices as a result of the global economic downturn.

The government said mineral exploration activity in the province came in at USD 367 million in 2008, down from USD 416 million in 2007, but still the second highest level on record. BC had 54 mines in production last year with 10 metal, nine coal and 35 mining industrial minerals. The province said there were just over 20 projects under environmental review on 2008, with one new mine starting production. The announcement comes as many miners are cutting back.

While the current outlook for the mining industry is bleak, the province says it is preparing for a turnaround beginning in the latter half of 2009.

Mr Gordon Hogg minister of mining of British Columbia said that we remain cautiously optimistic as we move forward. He added that the province has lost about 1,000 mining jobs in the past four months as companies are being forced to scrap planned mine expansions, cut operations and lay off workers due to the drop in metals and mineral prices.

Mr Hogg further said that the province is responding with a special economic task force to look at what they can do to weather the downturn. That committee is expected to release its report later this month. He also noted that the goal is to keep workers living in the small towns supported by the mining industry, so that they will be around when the economy recovers

Overall, Mr Hogg said that the province wants the mining and other industries in British Columbia to be given the same level of acknowledgment that the auto industry is seeing in Ontario.

The industry in BC, including the government and mining firms is also lobbying Ottawa for recognition in the upcoming federal budget.

(Sourced from: The Canadian Press)

For more news visit at [www.steelguru.com](http://www.steelguru.com)