

# BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



Ministry of  
Energy and Mines



Photo credit: Forging Coal

## The History

British Columbia has a rich history of mining and mineral exploration. The Hudson's Bay Company first started producing coal on Vancouver Island in the 1840s. In the 1850s, gold was discovered along the Fraser River in the interior of British Columbia, which sparked a major gold rush that was ultimately responsible for the settlement of many parts of the area. As the province grew, road networks expanded and technology improved, and miners began to explore other mineral deposits.

Mining in British Columbia was underground through the 1950s, but in the early 1960s open-pit production became feasible. As a result, several huge copper mines opened, including Highland Valley Copper — the largest open-pit operation in North America.

Today, British Columbia's mining industry is recognized as a world leader with revenues of about \$4 billion a year. Mining is among the province's largest resource industries. Government aims to build on this legacy to revitalize the mining and mineral exploration sector in British Columbia.

