



News Release

14 August 2017, 10.00am EDT

Canadian Energy & Mines Ministers Conference: “No Clean Growth without Clean Mining”

St. Andrews (N.B.) As Energy & Mines Ministers from across Canada meet today under the theme of ‘Clean Growth’ for their annual conference in St-Andrews, New Brunswick, a delegation of regional and national Indigenous and advocacy groups, backed up by a [40,000-strong petition](https://actions.sumofus.org/a/pm-trudeau-don-t-let-imperial-metals-off-the-hook-for-the-mt-polley-mining-disaster) (<https://actions.sumofus.org/a/pm-trudeau-don-t-let-imperial-metals-off-the-hook-for-the-mt-polley-mining-disaster>), are urging the ministers to do much more to protect the environment and communities affected by mining in Canada.

“We’re not against ‘clean growth’ or ‘clean energy,’ but these must not be empty words. We’re here to alert the public and our governments that there are still serious problems with the way mining is done in this country, and that there can’t be any clean growth or clean energy without first having clean mining,” states Jacinda Mack, a community member affected by the Mount Polley Mine disaster in British Columbia in 2014—the biggest mining spill in Canadian history. Mack is now coordinator of the First Nations Women Advocating for Responsible Mining.

“The need to respect Indigenous rights and community consent before mines are approved is also a major concern,” states Grand Chief Ron Tremblay of the Traditional Wolastoq Grand Council, which has been vocally opposed to the massive Sisson Mine project in the Nashwaak’s and St. Johns’ River watersheds in New-Brunswick.

Growing liability of toxic mining spills



[Figure 1 - Increasing Severity & Frequency of Significant Tailings Failures](https://miningwatch.ca/08-emmc-figure1.pdf) (<https://miningwatch.ca/08-emmc-figure1.pdf>)

856.12 KB PDF

[Bowker and Chambers: Root Causes of Tailings Dam Overtopping: The Economics of Risk & Consequence](https://miningwatch.ca/bowkerchamber-miningfailures.pdf) (<https://miningwatch.ca/bowkerchamber-miningfailures.pdf>)

349.65 KB PDF

[CSP2 Study: Sisson Project Consistency with Mount Polley Expert Panel Recommendations](https://miningwatch.ca/08-sissonprojectstudy_1.pdf) (https://miningwatch.ca/08-sissonprojectstudy_1.pdf)

154.72 KB PDF

[Table 1 - Environmental Liability for Contaminated Mine Sites in Canada \(August 2017\)](https://miningwatch.ca/08-environmental-liability-for-contaminated-mine-sites-in-canada-august-2017) (<https://miningwatch.ca/08-environmental-liability-for-contaminated-mine-sites-in-canada-august-2017>)

[08-emmc-table1_0.pdf](#)

268.43 KB PDF

[Table 2 - Known mining waste failures and spills above 1 million litres in Canada over the last decade 2008-2017](#)[\(https://miningwatch.ca/08-emmc-table2_0.pdf\)](#)

416.21 KB PDF

Using recent government data, the delegation estimates the total liability for contaminated mining sites across Canada to be well above **10.0 billion** dollars ([see Table 1 \(https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2017-08-emmc-table1.pdf\)](#)), a figure it estimates can easily triple or quadruple

once the true costs for site clean-up and risks from spills and failures are considered.

The delegation also draws on [recent studies \(https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2016-bowkerchamber-miningfailures.pdf\)](#) to highlight a **60%** increase in rates of catastrophic failures and large mining spills worldwide over the last two decades. Researchers predict this trend will continue to worsen due to ever larger mining waste facilities, poor economics of many mines, decreasing ore quality, and inadequate mining oversight (see [Figure 1 \(https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2017-08-emmc-figure1.pdf\)](#)).

In Canada, the delegation reports over **20** mining spills in the last decade alone (2008-2017), including **6** that released more than 1 million litres of contaminated wastes in nearby rivers, lakes and soils ([see Table 2 \(https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2017-08-emmc-table2.pdf\)](#)). The largest fine reported for one of these spills is **\$7.5 million**. Ugo Lapointe, Canada Program Coordinator for MiningWatch: *"This is a drop in the bucket that cannot seriously dissuade any mining company of doing a better job."*

New study on Sisson project: "not safe"

The delegation is also releasing today a [new study \(https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2017-08-ssisonprojectstudy_1.pdf\)](#) on the Sisson project, which concludes that *"the mining waste facility design is business-as-usual, using the same facility design and water cover approach used at the failed Mt Polley Mine."* The study, conducted by Dr. David Chambers of the Center for Science in Public Participation, identifies several problems with the current design and states that *"none of these concerns have been*

directly addressed in the 40 conditions required by the Province or the recent Federal government authorization."

Governments urged to act

In 2015, the [Expert Panel report](http://www.mountpolleyreviewpanel.ca/final-report) (<http://www.mountpolleyreviewpanel.ca/final-report>) on the Mount Polley disaster concluded that *"business as usual cannot continue"* and called for broad regulatory reforms. In 2015, in response to [a letter](https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2015-07-20_mines_ministers_letter.pdf) (https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/2015-07-20_mines_ministers_letter.pdf) signed by over **70** organizations from across Canada, the Canadian Mines Ministers [committed](http://www.scics.ca/en/product-produit/news-release-federal-provincial-and-territorial-ministers-responsible-for-energy-and-mines-highlight-priorities-for-upcoming-year) (<http://www.scics.ca/en/product-produit/news-release-federal-provincial-and-territorial-ministers-responsible-for-energy-and-mines-highlight-priorities-for-upcoming-year>) *"to review the recommendations made subsequent to the Mont Polley spill"* and *"to ensure that standards for industry reflect the highest level of environmental protection."*

Tara Scurr, Amnesty International Canada: *"Now is the time for governments to act and work with Indigenous communities, public interest groups, academics and independent experts to reform our laws and to do what is necessary before another disaster strikes."* MiningWatch lists [urgent actions](https://miningwatch.ca/blog/2017/8/11/are-catastrophic-failures-mining-spills-preventable#sthash.sdv6MzjC.dpbs) (<https://miningwatch.ca/blog/2017/8/11/are-catastrophic-failures-mining-spills-preventable#sthash.sdv6MzjC.dpbs>) that can be taken by governments.

August 14: Public information meeting in Fredericton

The delegation invites members of the public and the media to attend a [public information meeting](http://www.conservationcouncil.ca/en/free-presentation-on-what-mount-polley-can-teach-us-about-protecting-the-nashwaak-from-a-mines-tailings-aug-14-at-7pm/) (<http://www.conservationcouncil.ca/en/free-presentation-on-what-mount-polley-can-teach-us-about-protecting-the-nashwaak-from-a-mines-tailings-aug-14-at-7pm/>) on Monday night, August 14, 7:00 p.m., at St-Mary's First Nation Cultural Centre in Fredericton (25 Dedham St.). Tracy Glynn of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick says *"This will be an*

Conservation Council of New Brunswick says, "This will be an occasion to learn more about the Sisson project and to hear first-hand accounts of people that have witnessed or been impacted by catastrophic mining waste spills. We all want to protect the Nashwaak's and St Johns' rivers from such disasters."

For more details about the delegation's agenda over the next few days, see [here \(http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/media-advisory---indigenous-communities-advocacy-groups-at-canadian-energy--mines-ministers-conference-no-clean-growth-without-clean-mining-639881863.html\)](http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/media-advisory---indigenous-communities-advocacy-groups-at-canadian-energy--mines-ministers-conference-no-clean-growth-without-clean-mining-639881863.html).

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[Imperial Metals \(/categories/company-co...](/categories/company-co...)

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Source:

Traditional Wolastoq Grand Council – First Nation Women Advocating for Responsible Mining – MiningWatch Canada – Amnesty International Canada – Conservation Council of New Brunswick – Center for Science in Public Participation – United for Mining Justice

Related

NEWS [Canada Has Second-Worst Mining Record in World: UN \(/news/2017/10/27/canada-has-second-worst-mining-record-world-un\)](/news/2017/10/27/canada-has-second-worst-mining-record-world-un) 27.10.2017

NEWS [New Report - UN Body Urges Mining Companies To Put Safety First \(/news/2017/10/23/new-report-un-body-urges-mining-companies-put-safety-first\)](/news/2017/10/23/new-report-un-body-urges-mining-companies-put-safety-first) 23.10.2017

NEWS [Indigenous Advocate Seeks Justice - Files Charges against Imperial Metals Over Biggest Mining Spill in Canada \(/news/2017/8/4/indigenous-advocate-seeks-justice-files-charges-against-imperial-metals-over-biggest\)](/news/2017/8/4/indigenous-advocate-seeks-justice-files-charges-against-imperial-metals-over-biggest) 04.08.2017

NEWS [New Film Being Made About Mount Polley Mine Disaster \(/news/2017/8/1/new-film-being-made-about-mount-polley-mine-disaster\)](/news/2017/8/1/new-film-being-made-about-mount-polley-mine-disaster) 01.08.2017

NEWS [3 Years After The Mount Polley Disaster, Our Waters Are Still In Danger \(/news/2017/7/31/3-years-after-mount-polley-disaster-our-waters-are-still-danger\)](/news/2017/7/31/3-years-after-mount-polley-disaster-our-waters-are-still-danger) 31.07.2017