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Mount Polley Investigation Still On, Federal Charges 'In Play,' Says B.C. Environment Minister

[Carol Linnitt \(/user/carol-linnitt\)](#) | August 2, 2017

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[mine-spill](#)) on August 4, 2014.

"I have spoken with the Parliamentary Secretary to the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We are in agreement that British Columbians deserve a rigorous and independent investigation to determine exactly what went wrong and to ensure any person or company that broke the law is [held responsible](#) (<http://www.desmog.ca/2017/01/13/federal-government-seeks-quash-lawsuit-against-mount-polley-and-b-c-government-evidence-heard>)," Heyman said in a press statement released Wednesday, two days before the provincial statute of limitations for Mount Polley expires.

As B.C. approaches the [three-year anniversary](https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwjC55GV4LnVAhVL7mMKHcrZDxMQFggrMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.desmog.ca%2F2017%2F07%2F23%2Fno-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches&usq=AFQjCNHLXkoAu11PXnuk84wxzBNjx-mT7A) (<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwjC55GV4LnVAhVL7mMKHcrZDxMQFggrMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.desmog.ca%2F2017%2F07%2F23%2Fno-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches&usq=AFQjCNHLXkoAu11PXnuk84wxzBNjx-mT7A>) of the incident, British Columbians, including local residents directly impacted by the spill, have [expressed disappointment](#) (<http://www.desmog.ca/2017/07/23/no-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches>) that Imperial Metals, owner and operator of Mount Polley, has received no charges and no fines for the disaster, considered one of the worst environmental incidents in Canadian history.

"A disaster like this should never have happened in B.C., and it must never happen again," Heyman said.

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Mount Polley Investigation Still On, Federal Charges 'In Play,' ...

B.C.'s new Minister of Environment, George Heyman, says he identifies with the many British Columbians eager for the outcome of desmog.ca

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As DeSmog Canada recently reported, while B.C. has reached the expiration date for provincial charges, the statute of limitations [has not run out](http://www.desmog.ca/2017/07/23/no-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches) ([//www.desmog.ca/2017/07/23/no-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches](http://www.desmog.ca/2017/07/23/no-charges-no-fines-mount-polley-mine-disaster-three-year-legal-deadline-approaches)) for federal charges under the Fisheries Act.

While two provincial investigations in the Mount Polley spill have been conducted, [neither recommended charges or fines be levied](http://www.desmog.ca/2015/12/18/no-fines-no-charges-laid-mount-polley-mine-disaster) ([//www.desmog.ca/2015/12/18/no-fines-no-charges-laid-mount-polley-mine-disaster](http://www.desmog.ca/2015/12/18/no-fines-no-charges-laid-mount-polley-mine-disaster)) against the company.

Yet one investigation is currently ongoing by the B.C. Conservation Service Office alongside the Department of Fisheries and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Heyman said the current investigation is “complex and thorough.”

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substances without a permit into fish bearing waters.

“While the three-year anniversary of the disaster also brings us to the statute of limitations on provincial charges, British Columbians should know the overall objective continues to be ensuring a complete investigation,” he said.

“I have full confidence in the work of these law enforcement officials and I know that many concerned British Columbians join me in looking forward to the outcome of this important investigation.”

Image: B.C. Environment Minister George Heyman. Photo: Stephen Hui via the Pembina Institute. Used with permission.

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