



CONSERVATION GROUPS SAY POLL INDICATES SUPPORT FOR BC MINING REFORM

Posted by: Bill Fee October 8, 2015 in News Leave a comment

A recent poll conducted on behalf of two conservation groups indicates strong support for changing BC mining laws.

SkeenaWild Conservation Trust and Salmon Beyond Borders say results from a BC survey indicate 75 percent of people are concerned about a tailings pond breach and 54 percent felt BC mining threatens health, environment, and local tourism and fishing industries.

SkeenaWild Executive Director Greg Knox says 39 percent of those surveyed said jobs and economic benefits of mining outweigh those risks, but he says the majority of poll respondents in Northwest BC said they supported the protection of the environment over the mining industry.

Knox says BC respondents, regardless of whether they were more sympathetic to conservation or development, endorsed six reform measures:

- Ensuring mines have full plans – and funding – for cleanup, closure and long-term tailings maintenance and water treatment prior to getting operating approval (95%);
- Establishing a mandatory clean-up fund paid into by the industry before a mining project in watersheds shared by Alaska and British Columbia is granted (90%);
- Increasing the authority and usage of independent review boards to inspect and regulate mining waste facilities (89%);

- Increasing Ministry of Environment staff dedicated to mining waste facility inspections;
- Establishing mining no-go zones in sensitive areas such as key salmon watersheds;
- Requiring consultation with First Nations, and consent from them, before mining permits are granted on land that they hold the title and rights to.

Knox says 40 percent approve of the job the BC government is doing when it comes to regulating and monitoring mines.

The Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research live-interview survey involved 805 BC adults eligible to vote, including an oversample of 200 residents of Northern British Columbia, and was conducted between August 19 and 30, 2015. The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is higher among subgroups.