



Will the Canadian mining industry make changes to protect the environment?

Cutter Slagle - [Waste Management](#) - Aug 06, 2015

Originally reported by our sister brand [Mining Global](#), the mining industry in Canada has recently been accused of hurting the surrounding environment. Quite huge throughout the country, this sector has been asked to make some improvements. But the real question(s) seem to be: what are these changes and will they really make a difference?

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Specifically, First Nations and community organizations from both Canada and Alaska are asking the Canadian Energy and Mines ministers to act immediately—they're asking for these groups to prevent any further type of damage that has already been caused from the hundreds of mine waste dams and impoundments.

In a recent letter addressed to the groups mentioned above, particular changes are needed following the failure of the Mount Polley tailings site in British Columbia. But what are these changes and can they be incorporated into daily plans?

First off, ministers are being asked to “recognize that there are certain places where the downstream values are too great to expose to the [risks associated with the disposal](#) of tailings sites.”

Furthermore, mining ventures taking place along transboundary rivers that flow into Southeast Alaska have led to environmentalists and

fishery entities being greatly concerned about the potential negative impact of mine wastes on salmon habitat, which is critical to the overall economy and lifestyles of the surrounding residents.

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It would appear that change is possible and could happen, because also addressed in the letter are methods to possibly fixing the issues. These ideas include the creation of independent tailings review boards, as well as an International Joint Commission review for transboundary [mines](#) that are located on the Canada-U.S. border that actually present a risk to either country's waters.

Furthermore, the letter went on to suggest that one of the mining dams failed due to faulty design. Therefore, design issues have been called into play, with a request for more in-depth pre-work to take place.

Even more so, the various types of technology that are used by the mining sector have been called into question. Supposedly, unsafe operational practices need to be fixed, such as changing the way water is stored, as well as the overall regulation and operation of mining [waste facilities](#). But will these changes actually take place?

The requested changes might take place, as the accusations are quite serious and could eventually have dire consequences. But when will they take place? And when they finally do, will it be too late for the Canadian environment?

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[SOURCE: [The Cordova Times](#)]