



LETTERS: Long-term solution needed over quick fix

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Editor:

I was sorely disappointed after reading comments made by Imperial Metals Vice-President Steve Robertson and Mayor Walt Cobb in The Weekend Advisor, Friday, Nov. 20, regarding the delayed application to dispose of “treated mine effluent” from Mount Polley Mine.

Cobb stated ominously that “there will be another breach” and if such a disaster occurs he let it be known that it will be “solely” on the Ministry of Environment for taking too long to approve a request to “temporarily” dispose of tailings by pouring it into Quesnel Lake.

The title “City council demands immediate issuance of permit” alone is infuriating, less than a year and a half after one of the worst environmental disasters this province has ever seen and city council has the gall to make demands of the Ministry of Environment. I am astounded.

Are we seriously going down this road again?

Placing the blame for another breach on the Ministry of Environment for failing to put a stamp of approval on this ridiculous idea fast enough is preposterous — it’s akin to going down the same destructive path over and over again. Unbelievable.

When are we going to realize that quick fixes and short term solutions do not work? Why was this mine reopened without some kind of plan in place in the event that the new storage ponds fill up too soon?

Here’s an option: Shut or slow things down long enough to generate and implement long-term solutions for this great community and its people and proactively develop and follow through with a plan that is going to work over the long-term.

These quick-fix ideas are not about getting people back to work — and it's not about people's livelihoods. If that were the case a lot more thought would be going into protecting precious bodies of water like Quesnel Lake and spending some money on more innovative and progressive methods for storing mine waste and tailings.

This is about corporate greed on the part of Imperial Metals and our fearless leader Christy Clark, who appears to have the foresight and social and environmental conscience of a cockroach. Locally, it is also about ignorance and short-sightedness on the part of Mayor Cobb.

There is no economy without our natural resources; there is no human race without clean water, clean air and a liveable climate.

I care about the people working at Mount Polley Mine; I understand that this employer is a huge part of the community in which we live.

But there is a balance and we really need to find it. Further polluting Quesnel Lake is not the answer.

If the new pit is filling up, instead of crying about it and throwing a tantrum (as demonstrated by both Robertson and Mayor Cobb) about another impending disaster and assigning blame while watching it happen, how about slowing production down, going back to the drawing board, spending some of that profit and coming up with a decent plan that creates local employment and also fits the environmental reality of the world we are living in?

Quesnel Lake is not lost; Imperial Metals is acting as though the lake is now expendable but it is not. As it stands right now Quesnel Lake is not a dumping ground, but if we don't pull our heads out of the sand pretty darn quick it's going to be too late.

This situation is one small example of a worldwide crisis and how much of a role corporate greed and small-time ignorance has in it. Why are we not standing up and saying enough is enough?

Cherrie Carr

Williams Lake