

I am writing this as it is stormy and pouring rain outside. This is usually a fun time of year, a time when all our aquifers are filling up again but not this year. It is a time of fear and dread as we watch contaminated water leech into the creek that feeds Shawnigan Lake. This lake is the only drinking water supply for a community of 12,000.

I have serious concerns with the permit that was issued to South Island Aggregate (SIA) or Cobble Hill Holdings (CHH) only 8 months ago. There are long lasting risks to our community and issues of non-compliance with the permit. The system was to contain and treat all water but it is not. Following a heavy rain on November 13th, testing of the untreated water discharged by the CVRD revealed trace metals exceeding BC Water Quality Guidelines. We were also told during this time to not drink, bath or use the water for any purposes. It was very troubling.

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) then published that there are three areas of non-compliance. They also stated a need to identify a qualified independent professional engineer to oversee the compliance activity. Up until now the citizens of the community who are there every day protesting are the ones reporting non-compliance. The Ministry indicated that there is no record of CHH reporting to the Ministry the occurrences of non-compliance.

The MoE letter questions the settling pond that was designed by a qualified professional engineer in accordance with the MoE guideline as it is not meeting water retention requirements. MoE water testing on Nov. 17th shows water exceeding guidelines for protection of aquatic life. Residents were also told that the water they drink will taste bad and stain their clothing when washed but it was fine to drink (for now). SIA runoff storm water is bypassing the sediment pond by flowing underneath it and is being discharged directly onto CVRD property.

There is demonstrated incompetency of all CHH engineering professionals, the MoE and it's Environmental Appeals Board who developed, proposed reviewed and approved the design for the on-site water management. How can so much engineering review overlook the consequences of heavy rain? Is this not the most important management area for a contaminated soil dump uphill from a watershed?

Further concerning to me is that there is no Ministry response to the evidence filed in the Shawnigan Residence Association (SRA) legal case that alleges the applicant and it's engineering firm have an agreement for profit sharing and that the permit was obtained by fraud and perjury in the Ministry processes. In any other context, the evidence alone would be cause for cancellation of an agreement. The MoE feels no accountability and waits for the courts to decide what it cannot. Meanwhile 40 or more trucks a day unload more contaminated soil.

The Ministry correspondence, as evidenced of its approach to permit issuance and compliance management makes it very clear how a Mt. Polley disaster can occur. I do not want our lake to be the next disaster. The statutory processes and compliance management are not serving the public interest to protect the environment. We should not be monitoring SIA. We should not be worried each time it rains. The people of Shawnigan Lake and the MoE are very lucky that much higher levels of contaminants were not found in the water discharging from the site. As a citizen of this country I feel I need more than just good luck. I need a MoE that is here for the environment and it's citizens not for the profit of one company. Who will pay to clean up this

mess? The water is still leeching into the stream that feeds our lake. It threatens our only source of water and at the same time poses a risk to the Coho salmon and other fish in Shawnigan Creek and Lake. The MoE has the responsibility to for the administration and enforcement of pollution prevention in the provisions of the Fisheries Act.

I ask that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard take the time to look into this issue and help the citizens of Shawnigan Lake save their water. As Andrew Weaver MLA for Oak Bay and Gordon head stated "Ministry abdicates its responsibility to Shawnigan Lake residents".
<http://www.andrewweavermla.ca/2015/12/10/shawingan-lake/>

For more information please

visit www.thesra.ca www.shawniganfocus.ca and www.soniafurstenu.ca

Thank you for taking the time to look out for a community whose water supply is threatened. It is time that the residents are heard and that they do not have to be the people who have to daily protect what is a human right.... Clean drinking water!

Respectfully,

Marnie Hare
Shawnigan Lake