

Dear Honourable Members:

As you know, residents of the Shawnigan Lake area are deeply concerned about the activities at South Island Aggregate. The quarry has a contract to accept 100,000 tonnes of toxic soil each year for the next 50 years near Shawnigan Lake and its watershed. The site is situated *above* Shawnigan Lake and its watershed, which currently provides drinking water for about 12,000 residents. As well, the South Island Aggregate site is *above* and only about five or six kilometres as the crow flies from Sooke Lake, the reservoir that supplies water to the Greater Victoria Area and half a million people.

I am writing you, members for those constituents not only in Shawnigan Lake but in the Greater Victoria area, because I am deeply concerned for the people of the Shawnigan Lake area and for all of us living in the Greater Victoria area. I live in Sooke and use CRD water. It's my understanding that the process of awarding the contract did not meet proper guidelines and that now that truck after truck is dumping its noxious mixture of dioxins, furans, heavy metals, BTEX, MTBE, VPHs and other toxins, that the system designed to contain and treat water runoff is *not operating to compliance* and may never be able to sufficiently accommodate heavy rain falls. Following a heavy rain on November 13, for example, testing of untreated water discharges by the Cowichan Valley Regional District revealed trace metals exceeding BC Water Quality Guidelines.

Apparently, SIA runoff storm water was bypassing the sediment pond by flowing underneath it and being discharged directly onto Cowichan Valley Regional District property. I appreciate that Island Health lifted its drinking water ban soon after. But how many times will the people of Shawnigan Lake have to go through this? Each time it rains, they feel dread about what toxins are trickling into their watershed. And those of us served by the Greater Victoria watershed should be worried as well.

From what I've read, there appears to be grave concerns about the engineering system, the Environment Ministry's actions in granting the licence, and its lack of response to community concerns. I find it a frightening prospect that an engineering review would not make allowances for heavy rain. Is this not THE most important issue if one is going to do something as risky as put a contaminated soil dump close to two watershed in coastal B.C.?

Apart from the serious concerns about drinking water quality for Shawnigan Lake AND Greater Victoria residents, anycontaminants leaking or leaching from the SIA site pose a risk to coho and other fish in Shawnigan Creek and Lake.

I call upon you to do your best to bring this matter to the attention of the Legislature so steps can be taken to make the Ministry of the Environment accountable. I believe the government should halt all deliveries of toxic soil to the South Island Aggregate site, shut the operation down and find a new location for this toxic soil. This is not a NIMBY situation. It seems insane to me to locate a toxic soil dump beside not one but two watersheds that are responsible for providing drinking water for half a million people.

I believe that if those in power consulted their hearts on matters such as this, they would do what was best for the health of their people. I'll admit that BC Liberals do not seem to consult their hearts on much these days, but in this case it seems they did not even consult their heads! I hope you can appeal to their better natures and support some process for stopping the dumping of toxic soil in the middle of the Shawnigan Lake and Sooke Lake watersheds.

This is a serious matter but this is also a time of holidays and celebrations and so I send warm regards of the season to you and your families.

Carolyn Bateman