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NEWS

Kamloops Council Urges BC, Ottawa to Re-Think Ajax Mine Environmental Assessment

Province expected to decide on project this fall.



By **Carol Linnitt**, Yesterday | **Desmog Canada**

Carol Linnitt is managing editor of [DeSmog Canada](#), where this [story](#) first appeared.



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A group of Kamloops city councillors are asking the provincial and federal governments to consider concerns about the Ajax Mine they say were unaddressed by B.C.'s environmental assessment.

The proposal for the gold and copper mine by the Polish firm KGHM Polska Miedz has been controversial, with concerns including mining dust, air quality impacts, tailings pond management, slope stability and watershed safety.

"We feel our concerns as a city, as councillors and staff, have been completely ignored and it feels like the Environmental Assessment Office has been in bed with KGHM," Kamloops city councillor Tina Lange told DeSmog Canada.

City council has voted to send an itemized list of concerns to elected officials before the final project decision is made.

"I'm pro mining. I'm pro resource development," Lange said. "But this project doesn't make sense. It's too big and too close to the city and we felt like our concerns were not heard by the Environmental Assessment Office.

"It was as if they were helping the mine tailor-make an application that the EA branch could rubber stamp."

The province is expected to make a decision on the project this fall.

Last fall KGHM asked the federal and provincial governments to put the review process on pause so the company could respond to the more than 2,000 comments submitted by the city, members of the public, local First Nations and the province.

The Environmental Assessment Office agreed to delay the 180-day review time frame until the company could respond to the comments.

Community members and city councillors expressed concern that the three-kilometre wide open-pit mine, which will be in operation for up to 23 years a mere two kilometres from local homes, will significantly affect local air quality.

Kamloops, which is situated in a natural valley, has been home to some of the worst air quality in the world lately, due to smoke from B.C.'s forest fires, Lange said.

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Major concerns about [water quality](#) were also raised, with locals saying KGHM did not give an adequate account of how toxic runoff from the mine's waste rock would be prevented from leaching into local waterways.

In addition, residents took issue with the project's tailings pond facility that sits perched above residential areas.

Now, with the release of a 460-page joint provincial-federal assessment [report](#), Kamloops representatives feel much of their involvement wasn't worth the time.

While the Kamloops city council voted early this week to send their list of concerns to elected officials, one councillor felt the plan didn't go far enough.

Voting against the plan was councillor Dennis Walsh, a long-time opponent of the Ajax mine and vocal advocate for local First Nations.

Walsh introduced a new motion asking the leaders of B.C.'s three main political parties to suspend the environmental assessment process. He cited Indigenous rights, environmental risks and municipal decision-making authority in his bid.

"It's important that as a community we stick together on these issues," Walsh told [Infotel.ca](#). "It's been made very clear on council and with (the Nation) that this mine will have a very harming risk and adverse effect on the community."

Walsh also proposed an additional motion to support the Stk'ém'lúps'émc te Secwépemc Nation in its fight against the project, which is proposed on the nation's unceded traditional territory. ↗

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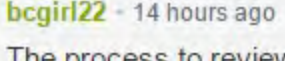
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bcgirl22 · 14 hours ago

The process to review Ajax has been a fiasco. Along with the city council, groups of concerned citizens who raised concerns have been condescendingly told that they have helped to make the application better while valid concerns have been deemed "not significant."

Online trolls comment on every Facebook story to make it appear the project has the support of the community. The BCEAO website is being flooded with proAjax comments very likely orchestrated by the proponent.

It feels like a really bad joke! The rest of BC has not been paying attention, but should! If this process doesn't change the same thing could happen anywhere!

You can help by submitting a comment here: <https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca...>

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The Bridge → bcgirl22 · 14 hours ago

When this was Afton Operating Ajax Pits East and West, the haul trucks went back to the processing site and the tailings ponds were over where New Gold is. But they keep preaching that Afton operated there for years. The haul trucks used to go under the Coquihala to the Afton processing site. They will destroy Jacko lake which is a great little fishing lake with big fish.

1 ^ v · Reply · Share



Greg → The Bridge · 4 hours ago

Jacko won't be hurt. Ever fish on the trophy lake at HVC?

^ v · Reply · Share



bcgirl22 → Greg · 39 minutes ago

So, cutting off part of the lake wouldn't harm it? Do you want to be able to EAT the fish you catch? They don't recommend that you eat the fish from trophy lake.

^ v · Reply · Share



MetisDen → The Bridge · 13 hours ago

just like the expansion at Lornex completely removed a nice little fishing lake.

^ v · Reply · Share



Greg → bcgirl22 · 4 hours ago

The majority of Kamloops IS pro Ajax. It's a loud minority who believe they are speaking for all of us

^ v · Reply · Share



bcgirl22 → Greg · 39 minutes ago

LOL!

^ v · Reply · Share



Paul Hodgson · a day ago

The good people of Kamloops should be applauding these councillor's, our situation in the Regional District of Fraser Fort George, our board member told us no one from the RDEFG reviewed the Environmental Assessment application for Graymont Giscome Lime Kiln, burning coal 800 meters from an elementary school. We residents have concerns about the proven errors in the EAC, and 46 air quality advisories so far in 2017. We certainly are not supporting our current board member or MLA.

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Steve Cooley · a day ago

A simple way to make the dust abatement and tailings disposal or tailings utilization easier would be to plan on taking 50 years to deplete the known reserves. Less rock crushed each day will yield less dust, or mud, and the tailings will accumulate at a slower rate. A slower rate will allow the accompanying water to disperse at an easier to control rate.

Stretching the life of the mine will spread its income to more labourers and the local businesses that supply the mine. Stretching the life will mean the owners will only make a large profit instead of an obscene profit.

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dave0ferg → Steve Cooley · 11 hours ago

Every day the mine operates brings it one day closer to closure.

^ v · Reply · Share



John Gregson · a day ago

3.22 Billion pounds of Cu over the life of the project! Why can't you use figures the average dumbfok can relate to? Like Olympic Swimming Pools or Football Fields. Three million ounces of gold! Sounds like a lot. How many wedding rings would that make?

1 ^ v · Reply · Share



dave0ferg → John Gregson · 11 hours ago

Assuming a 20 year life of the mine, it will produce 16 Kg of copper for every man woman and child in BC. That's probably over three times as much copper in the average house. At five bucks a kilo, that's \$80 worth.

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Brent McGillis · 9 hours ago

When you (toxic engorged corporate crony govt officials) have polluted all the waterways, choked the air we breath with pollution, and made the land too good to live on; how will you drink your own corporate bile you have created? Huh, you say you don't believe me? You obviously need proof, See: China.

^ v · Reply · Share



Greg · 4 hours ago

Council accepts a massive payday if the mine happens in one hand, but cries no in the other. So sad they have silenced themselves by this action. Ajax will be good for Kamloops anyway, and this city counsel has an expiration date of 2018

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bcgirl22 → Greg · 36 minutes ago

What a load of crap! The city council was trying to be responsible by negotiating an agreement as allowed within the process so that if the project is shoved down Kamloops' throat they have some compensation for the myriad costs to the city.

This comment is ridiculous. Mining companies should not be allowed to "pay off" cities and the fact that this negotiation was required is another example of the failure of the BC EAO to fairly assess project costs and benefits and assess appropriate levies on the company.

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