

Dear Sir,

I would like to make a submission to the engineering panel from a perspective that may be somewhat different from other submissions, and, hopefully, provide some insight into the causes of this spill.

This would be my submission: That there were serious concerns about the containment walls around the tailings facility prior to the breach, both from the workers and the engineering company responsible for the tailings "pond". There were more concerns about the strength and stability of the far end of the facility than the end where the breach occurred. This is what I believe happened as far as anyone knows. The walls of the dam around the tailings were made essentially of sand and silt. The walls were built higher as the volume of tailings and effluent increased. There came to be more and more pressure on the insufficient containment walls. The company contracted by Imperial Metals, Knight Piesold, informed the management at the mine that the walls were not strong enough to hold the tailings, and that there was a serious possibility that a breach could occur. The engineers said that the walls should be reinforced, presumably with earth fill, rocks and boulders to prevent a possible breach. The management at the mine, or someone higher up in the chain of command, possibly the CEO or board of directors, chose not to follow the advice of the engineering firm. Knight Piesold then resigned from their contract, saying, in effect, that they would no longer be responsible for the safety of the tailings facility. This would mean that either mine management, or someone higher up in Imperial Metals was negligent or responsible for not acting on the recommendations of the engineering firm.

What I truly believe happened is that mine management were told by Imperial Metals that their responsibility was production and quarterly profits, like almost all industries. The cost of totally reinforcing the tailings facility with rocks and earth fill on the outside of the containment walls, to do everything possible to prevent a breach happening would have been perhaps \$5 million. But this would have cut into profits and money is the "bottom Line". Now reclamation could cost \$200 million, although Imperial Metals has only spent \$67 million so far. No fines have been announced by government.

Imperial Metals donated \$145 million to the Liberal campaign fund in the last election. The contamination of Quesnel Lake is a true crime against the environment, and something that never should have happened. It is a place of incredible beauty, the deepest fjord-type lake in the world, with 495 miles of shoreline located

in an Interior rainforest in the Cariboo Mountains. The water in this lake is pure , cold , and clear. It is totally unique, and one of the treasures of North America. Due to the contamination, through upwelling and intrusions, the fish will consume the organisms that have been contaminated by the toxic chemicals, and the poisons will bio-accumulate. It remains to be seen what the effects of the contamination are, and with rain, snowpack, and the spring freshet, there may be a significant long term effect. To those of us who are close to the earth there is anger and bitterness over what has happened. To the politicians and businessmen there seems to only be a need for the mine to get back into production and local businesses to prosper again.

I hope that your panel will fully investigate this tailings breach, the worst environment disaster in BC mining history. If there is negligence or irresponsibility then that should be ascertained and made public.

Respectfully yours,