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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTDOWN IS UNDERWAY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT INTO PROPOSED COAL MINE “We need aquifer mapping and a full expert panel review”, says CoalWatch

The countdown is on for people to express concerns in the opening round of public comment into the proposal for a massive coal mine in Comox Valley.

Citizens have until Sept. 20 to formally comment during this first comment period on the proposed mine as part of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency’s review of the project.

But CoalWatch Comox Valley says there is still not enough information about the proposed mine and its potential impacts.

“The background documents, which were posted to the agency’s website on Friday, leave too many unanswered questions,” says CoalWatch chairperson John Snyder. “It is impossible to assess the impact of this proposed mine without a thorough mapping of the aquifers throughout the region.”

He said CoalWatch will make a submission that will call for full mapping and modelling of the aquifers, and for a full independent expert panel review.

"This is the first opportunity for the public to voice their concerns over the project by submitting their comments. It's essential that the public stays informed and engaged as the environmental assessment process goes forward," said Snyder.

“With so much at stake, it’s crucial to have the most rigorous assessment possible,” said Snyder. “This mine could jeopardize our well water, our air quality, salmon habitat, and hundreds of jobs in the shellfish industry. All the activity associated with this mine, and other mines connected to it, have the potential to totally change the character of the Comox Valley”.

“It poses serious risks to road safety, with massive truckloads of coal driving on the dangerous Alberni Highway every day. And there is a great deal of concern about huge coal transport ships going in and out of the waters of Pacific Rim National Park to transport the coal to Asia.”

The proposed mine would be located in Fanny Bay, in the heart of the Baynes Sound Watershed. If approved, the mine would remove 2.2 million tonnes of coal per year for 20 years.

Before the mine can proceed, it must undergo federal and provincial environmental assessments. This comment period is the first of two for the federal environmental assessment. The public comment period for the provincial assessment has not yet started.

CoalWatch is encouraging individuals and organizations to submit comments to the federal environmental assessment agency prior to the Sept. 20 deadline. Comments can be e-mailed to Raven@ceaa-acee.gc.ca or mailed to:

Raven Underground Coal Mine Project
Andrew Rollo, Project Manager
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
805–1550 Alberni Street
Vancouver BC V6G 1A5

For more details about the proposed mine or CoalWatch Comox Valley, please visit www.coalwatch.ca

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For more comment please call John Snyder at 250.335.2246