

KAIROS: ECUMENICAL INITIATIVES FOR JUSTICE

Nanaimo Chapter

Rachel Shaw, Environmental Assessment Office,
PO Box 9426 Stn. Prov. Govt.,
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1

May 31, 2011

Dear Ms. Shaw

Re. Raven Underground Coal

Last night, May 30, some of us had the opportunity to travel to Courtenay and attend the community forum regarding the proposed Raven Underground Coal project. Like the vast majority of the 500 people present, we were deeply disturbed by the failure of the project proponents to properly address the concerns brought forward by local citizens.

We were impressed by the depth of knowledge shown by the questioners about a wide range of environmental issues related to the project. This was in spite of the fact that each questioner had only two minutes to state his or her issue and question. Among these issues the following seemed to us to be particularly relevant.

1. The inadequate information concerning the impact of the proposed mine on local aquifers, groundwater and drainage systems.
2. The possibly disastrous impact of the proposed mine on the vital shellfish industry of Baynes Sound as well as on other varieties of marine life that depend upon clean and healthy tidal waters.
3. The impact on migrating birds.
4. The impact on highway traffic with hundreds of huge truckloads of ore being transported to Port Alberni to be loaded onto ships and transported to markets in Asia.
5. The impact of dredging and ongoing pollution of the Alberni Inlet.
6. The impact on climate change of methane gas released by the mining process.
7. The impact on global climate change from the release of CO₂ as a result of the burning of the coal in Asian countries, particularly Korea and Japan, which will be receiving the coal and converting it into electrical energy.
8. The impact on the tourist industry of Vancouver Island. The suggestion of mine tourism would be laughable were so much not at stake in this entire debate.
9. The impact of the mine on the local quality of life.

Inadequate information was provided on these and other questions and, although the meeting was told that this was only the first stage in a more lengthy review process, informed local people think that this process must be upgraded to a **joint federal/provincial independent expert Review Panel with full public hearings**.

We urge that such a Review Panel be appointed so that this issue can be thoroughly studied by the public before any decision is made to proceed with the project.

Thank you for giving this your attention.

On behalf of the local KAIROS group