

joining hands across the waters ...

Gulf Islands Alliance

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September 18, 2010

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0H3

Via e-mail to: Jim.Prentice@ec.gc.ca

Re: CEAR #10-03-55529

Dear Sirs,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding potential impacts of the Raven Underground Coal Mine Project on the areas adjacent to the proposed site on Vancouver Island. In particular we are concerned about consequences that cannot be predicted given the scientific information currently available. The most salient of these is the impact of the underground mining activities on the quantity and quality of the fresh water supply for surrounding communities. The proposal anticipates an impact on an underground area of 3,100 hectares; an area for which aquifer mapping has yet to be completed and an area larger than that of Hornby Island (2,990 hectares) and Beacon Hill Park (75 hectares) put together. In our view, a comprehensive mapping and modeling of the aquifers must be conducted and fully considered **before** it is possible to understand and predict potential impacts on drinking water, other freshwater water resources, and habitats. This is of utmost importance.

A number of potential consequences, which are predictable, are also of great concern to our members. We would like to draw your attention to two: 1) for two islands in the Islands Trust federation, this project poses a very specific threat to the most fundamental need of all life forms. That is the quality of air we breathe. Studies show a range of public health issues associated with living in proximity to coal mines including lower health status, higher risks of cardiopulmonary disease, chronic lung disease, hypertension, and kidney disease. These are predictable consequences and they come with significant costs attached. 2) In addition, the burning of the coal products from the proposed mine would contribute to greenhouse gases and climate change. These too, are predictable and measureable, but come with un-measurable economic and social costs. The extraction and burning of coal would undermine citizen and local government efforts to reduce emissions and, furthermore, is inconsistent with both provincial and federal commitments and policies.

The Gulf Islands Alliance is a non-profit, grassroots organization actively dedicated to the protection of British Columbia's Gulf Islands, their natural environments, rural nature, and unique cultures, for existing and future generations.

We therefore urge you, as the federal Minister of Environment, to refer the Raven project to a joint federal/provincial **independent expert review panel conducting full public hearings through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.**

Sincerely,



Misty MacDuffee
Chair,
Gulf Islands Alliance

c.c.

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