**Mount Polley discharge permit – community action call for clean water**

**December 1, 2016:** Dear friends, family, residents of the Fraser River Watershed, downstream neighbours, all British Columbians: We need your voices!

My name is Jacinda Mack. I am a member of the Xat’sull First Nation, and coordinator of First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining (FNWARM). I am writing to you on behalf of FNWARM to seek your help in preventing a disastrous mistake being permitted regarding the long-term operational plans for Mount Polley Mine

The province of British Columbia approved the mine to return to full-scale operations in June 2016, less than two years after the catastrophic tailings dam fail in August 2014- despite numerous ongoing concerns from First Nations and the public, including an incomplete criminal investigation. Once again, the mine has more contaminated water on-site than it can safely store.

**Mount Polley Mine now has an** **open application to discharge wastewater into the already seriously impacted Quesnel Lake, and to ground water via Bootjack Lake** as the long-term solution to their pollution. First Nations and local citizens of Quesnel Lake have expressed their deep concern for the mine to stop the contaminated discharges in an effort to protect us all - including downstream communities, businesses, and food security and dwindling populations of Fraser River salmon that are born in Quesnel Lake.

**I am reaching out to you for support letters during this comment period to require from the BC Ministry of Environment that, at minimum, Mount Polley Mine meet all water quality guidelines at the end of pipe, without needing to dilute it in the waterways of the Quesnel Lake/Bootjack Lake/ Fraser River watershed, as part of the long term water management plan. Comments are due by December 23, 2016.**

There are numerous outstanding issues at Mount Polley Mine, but this is a time-sensitive problem and we must demand strong environmental protections for clean water. Our collective future, and that of our children, depends on it.

Please take a few minutes to review the information below and use the provided government link to voice your concern about the planned waste water discharge and to support our call for full treatment to remove and contaminants. I am asking you do three things:

1. Use the link below to send you comments to the government before by Dec, 23 2016 ;
2. Share this with your friends, family and colleagues and encourage them to also write.
3. Help us keep track of the letters going to the government, by sending a copy of your comments to me [jacinda.mack@gmail.com](mailto:jacinda.mack@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Jacinda Mack. FNWARM Coordinator

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| **DISCHARGE PERMIT APPLICATION**  **Please submit comments with the subject line “Comments on technical assessment report” to:** [**MtPolleyEnvironmental.Enquiries@gov.bc.ca**](mailto:MtPolleyEnvironmental.Enquiries@gov.bc.ca) **Due Dec. 23, 2016**  **Content:** Please use you own words, but clearly state you opposition to the wastewater discharge proposal and your support for full water treatment measure to be taken before any wastewater is discharged. To further assist you, page three highlights some of the concerns and facts surrounding this discharge application.  **Reports:**   * Mt. Polley permit amendment application, technical assessment: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/mount-polley/> * Other information on the incident. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/mount-polley/> |
| **Recent Media Coverage**  Williams Lake Tribune: Letter- Time to Pull Together (Nov.8, 2016)  <http://www.wltribune.com/opinion/letters/400459181.html>  Mining Watch Canada Files Charges Against BC Government and Mount Polley Mine for 2014 Tailings Disaster  <http://miningwatch.ca/news/2016/10/18/miningwatch-canada-files-charges-against-bc-government-and-mount-polley-mine-2014>  **2 Year Anniversary Media Coverage**  Vancouver Sun: Mount Polley Clean Up Heavily Subsidized (Aug. 4, 2016)  <http://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-mount-polley-cleanup-heavily-taxpayer-subsidized>  Huffington Post: “All Is Not Well 2 Years After Mount Polley Disaster” (Aug 4, 2016)  <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/jacinda-mack/mount-polley-mine-disaster-bc-leak_b_11318498.html>  Globe and Mail: Mount Polley mine still at risk for future tailings breach: analyst (Aug. 4, 2016)  <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/mount-polley-mine-still-at-risk-for-future-tailings-breach-analyst/article31269473/>  DeSmog Canada, Mount Polley Mine Two Years In- It’s Worse than it’s ever been (Aug. 4, 2016)  <https://www.desmog.ca/2016/08/04/mount-polley-mine-disaster-two-years-it-s-worse-it-s-ever-been> |
| **What is FNWARM?**  Members of First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining ([www.fnwarm.com](http://www.fnwarm.com)), have all experiences the negative impacts of mining in their communities. FNWARM promotes mining reforms that respect Indigenous rights and the environment, make safety a priority, and ensuring that lands and communities are not destroyed for the short-term gain of others. FNWARM’s Jacinda Mack (Xat’sull First Nation) is also an Advisor to the national Indigenous Leadership Initiative and the international Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance. |

**ONGOING ISSUES & CONCERNS about Mount Polley Mine**

*The following are Mount Polley concerns expressed at public and First Nation community meetings in the Cariboo Region, most recently at Likely, (Oct. 30), and Williams Lake Indian Band (Nov. 14.)*

* End of pipe discharge proposed does not meet water quality guidelines and depends on Quesnel Lake to “treat” the pollution by diluting it. Assumes Quesnel Lake will never become saturated with mine pollution over time.
* The Long Term Water Management Plan does not mention removing mine tailings deposited in Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, and along the forest edges of Hazeltine Creek as a result of the Aug. 4, 2014 disaster. So far, the long-term plan is to simply leave them.
* No one knows the long-term effects of tailings deposits on human health, resident trout, salmon nurseries, birds and wildlife in the watershed and beyond. Adding more polluted wastewater to this system does not make sense.
* Quesnel Lake drains into the Fraser watershed, and could further impact salmon spawning grounds and future runs in these waters. Initial impacts will remain unknown until at least 2018, due to the 4-year salmon cycle. 2016 was a very poor salmon year.
* Quesnel Lake residents are afraid to drink Quesnel Lake water and now have severe water filter problems (post disaster), yet the mine denies the mine is associated with this.
* The discharge permit request states a 4-year operating period, but an expansion plan exists to operate the mine for ten or more years. (M200 permit)
* Mount Polley does not have a proven system in place to treat mine water after it closes, but are asking for approvals anyway and hopefully have it in place by the time they close.
* There appears to be an attempt to rush this permit. Initially the public was given only 30 days to respond to the complex 1,200 page *Long Term Water Management Plan* *Application*. Likely and Xat’sull members helped get this extended. It was first approved as a temporary permit that is valid until November 2017.
* There is an ongoing criminal investigation regarding the Aug.4, 2014 disaster and MPM operations- with no set date for an announcement on findings.
* Xat’sull First Nation, Williams Lake Indian Band, Tsilhqot’in Nation Government, Likely residents and businesses, and MiningWatch Canada have all filed papers to sue Mount Polley and the BC government.
* The globally accepted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People regarding Free, Prior & Informed Consent has not been followed- which states that CONSENT must be given by indigenous peoples to projects in their lands.
* **The government’s actions regarding Mount Polley will set precedent for future mining operations in BC and beyond.**