

OPINION: MINING

Canada can be proud of its sustainable mining practices, says MAC president

Mining industry worth \$130-billion, thousands of jobs and billions of dollars for governments in tax revenue.



BY PIERRE GRATTON

The economic boom taking place in mining these days has not been seen in decades. Commodity prices are at near record levels, and Canada, with its vast and rich geological potential is benefiting from a dramatic growth opportunity. By some estimates, mining investment in Canada will equal \$130-billion in new private sector investment over the next five years, creating thousands of jobs across the country and billions of dollars in new tax revenues for governments.

A good portion of this would be in Canada's North. Just to put mining's potential contribution in perspective, the federal government's recent stimulus program equaled approximately \$40-billion.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent visit to the Meadowbank gold mine in Nunavut attracted some

controversy in this paper ("Feds' approach to Northern economic development 'short sighted,' *The Hill Times*, Aug. 29). Some critics alleged that the Prime Minister was placing economic development ahead of environmental values. The critics pointed to the fact that the Meadowbank mine, owned and operated by Agnico Eagle, had been authorized to deposit tailings—the finely ground rock that does not contain valuable minerals and metals and is left behind—in a natural water body. Further, it was asserted that the use of natural water bodies by mines is commonplace.

In fact, Canada can be proud of its sustainable mining practices and leads the world with a very rigorous and thorough environmental regime. It is critical that we set the record straight.

Mining is an essential human activity that touches almost every facet of our lives. It is from mining that we get all the minerals and metals that are critical to everything from the kitchen sink to iPads and children's nutrition. Mining has impacts; however,

we need to manage them carefully and responsibly. The disposal of tailings is fundamental to mining, so tailings must be placed somewhere safe, on land or under water.

Decades of research undertaken by governments, the mining industry, and, other communities of interest has given us an ever-increasing understanding of the complexities involved in the proper and safe storage of mine tailings. Some tailings, because it contains sulfur, can if left exposed to air and water generate acid that is harmful to the environment. The best available science suggests that underwater disposal of potentially acid-generating tailings can be an environmentally sound and permanent disposal option.

In general, the practice is to build an artificial tailings disposal facility. Sometimes, however, the safest place to deposit potentially acid-generating tailings is at the bottom of a natural water body, typically when terrain is very wet and land-based options are minimal (as in parts of Nunavut) or in mountainous terrain when the safest place is at the bottom of a valley where water collects (as in parts of B.C.). Whenever this occurs, compensation for the loss of fish habitat is required and, of course, full reclamation of

the entire mine site must occur after mining is completed. In the case of Meadowbank, this is exactly what happened. Between 2003 and 2006 the Meadowbank mine underwent a full environmental assessment and permitting process by both federal and territorial governments, involving the Nunavut Impact Review Board, the Nunavut Planning Commission, the Nunavut Water Board, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Kivalliq Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and others. After this lengthy review, which included significant public consultation, a second regulatory process under the Fisheries Act was conducted to determine whether the deposition of tailings in a natural water body was the best option from an environmental, social and economic perspective. The company had to undertake an alternatives assessment, a rigorous review of different options for depositing tailings, with significant public participation.

Indeed, during the Meadowbank review, local communities, the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA), environmental NGOs such as MiningWatch, all participated. In Febru-

ary of 2008, after well over a year's study, the federal government concluded that the best option for this mine was to use an existing water body. It was a decision supported by many participants, including local Inuit communities and the KIA, who own the land on which the mine is located.

The regulatory process that Meadowbank went through was established in 2002 by the former Liberal government (the article mistakenly referred to 2008 amendments to the Fisheries Act). Since 2002, just over a dozen mining projects have gone through this process, more than half of them for disturbances to small creeks or streams; the impact on the millions of lakes, ponds and streams that cover this country has been negligible.

The recent Speech from the Throne stated that Canada "is committed to developing Canada's extraordinary resource wealth in a way that protects the environment. ... It will engage the provinces, territories and industry on ways to improve the regulatory and environmental assessment process for resource projects, while ensuring meaningful consultation with affected communities, including aboriginal communities." We in the mining industry agree and we stand ready to deliver jobs, and responsible growth for all Canadians.

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OPINION: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Parliamentarians should support CETA, upgrade intellectual property regime

Intellectual property protection is the catalyst for discovery and most Canadians agree that we need to upgrade our IP regime to world class standards in order to attract more research jobs and investments that lead to the development of new cutting edge medicines and vaccines.



BY RUSSELL WILLIAMS

Canada has a great history when it comes to developing new treatments and cures that have saved countless lives around the globe.

We need only look at the work of Sir Frederick Banting and Charles Best, the co-discoverers of insulin, or the Montreal researchers who helped develop the revolutionary HIV/AIDS treatment known as 3TC.

But it's an open question whether a Canadian will lead or be involved in discovering the next new treatment that provides new hope to those who suffer from can-

cer, Alzheimer's or other diseases.

The answer depends partly on whether Canada has an intellectual property (IP) regime that will attract a greater share of the almost \$100-billion dollars invested in life sciences research annually or whether we will continue to lag behind the European Union, the United States, Japan and many of our other major trading partners.

Intellectual property protection is the catalyst for discovery and most Canadians agree that we need to upgrade our IP regime to world class standards in order to attract more research jobs and investments that lead to the development of new cutting edge medicines and vaccines.

A July 2011 poll conducted by Nanos Research recently found that about eight out of 10 Canadians (80.8 per cent) supported or somewhat supported an upgrade of our

IP rules to at least match those of the European Union and the U.S. Less than 11 per cent were opposed.

The poll of more than 1,200 Canadians also found that support for a free trade agreement with Europe is at roughly the same high level. Approximately 79.4 per cent were supportive or somewhat supportive of a free trade deal with the EU and less than 12 per cent were opposed.

These issues are connected because Canada is being urged to upgrade its IP regime as part of the ongoing negotiations between Canada and the 27 countries of the EU towards a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

According to the federal government, a trade deal with Europe has the potential to give "a \$12-billion boost to the Canadian economy and increase bilateral trade by over 20 percent."

CETA will build upon the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and its successor, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which have delivered unprecedented benefits to Canada. Since NAFTA took effect in 1994, trade involving Canada, the United States and Mexico has nearly tripled, topping \$1-trillion in 2008. Today, one in five Canadian jobs depends on international trade.

NAFTA and CETA combined would provide our relatively small but dynamic economy of 34 million people with privileged access to a market of almost one billion developed nation consumers.

The research-based pharmaceutical industry here in Canada has been joined by 22 other organizations from coast to coast that believe CETA and stronger IP will mean real benefits for Canadians. These include business, life sciences, patient and research groups, and the numbers are growing.

As a partner in health care, Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies are committed to building Canada's place as a global research powerhouse. Last year, our industry invested about \$1.5-billion in research and community projects throughout Canada and our goal is to work with governments and other partners to create the right conditions to grow that investment.

We are continuing to deliver on commitment to Canadians. Since January 2011, Rx&D companies have announced investments of more than \$400-million in a wide range of initiatives. These include a global drug development centre, research facilities and projects, manufacturing, chronic disease

management and disease prevention programs just to name a few.

These investments which are often made in partnerships with governments, hospitals and universities not only preserve and create good quality jobs for Canadians, but they also lead to the discovery of new ways to prevent and treat disease and enhance Canada's reputation for research excellence.

The fact is that improvements in IP over the past 25 years have spurred an 800 per cent increase in pharmaceutical research and development investment in Canada. Rather than fearing a trade agreement with the Europeans, we should embrace it as an opportunity to create prosperity and open our doors to a market of 500 million consumers.

Recently, International Trade Minister Ed Fast declared that improving trade is a "kitchen table" issue because it creates good jobs and opportunities for Canadians. We believe that improved IP is also worthy of dinner time discussion because it is fundamental to improving health and sustaining our health care system.

The government is aiming to reach an agreement with the EU in 2012. Let's work together to seize this opportunity because it will improve the quality of life of all Canadians.

Russell Williams is president of Rx&D. Prior to his appointment as Rx&D President, Mr. Williams was a member of the Quebec National Assembly for nearly 15 years, including service in leadership roles in health, social services, patient care and, research and development.

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