

MEDIA NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9th, 2008

Issued by:
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As a citizen of the area since 1952 and an employee of mining since 1969, I have experienced the changes of time here in Sudbury.

The changes have come only by the blood, sweat and tears of a community that endured the most destructive carnage of lost lives in the mines, mills, smelters and refinery, all the while living surrounded by an environment of a dead and bleak landscape from years of hideous industrial pollution.

I have been on the front lines of representation of the employees since 1973, as a Steward, Health and Safety member, Executive Board member and the last seven years as the senior officer, the President of Mine Mill 598/CAW.

The changes within the workplace and within the community have always been opposed by the companies as too expensive or not needed. The re-greening of Sudbury, the safety standards within the industry, and the betterment of our community has always had an allied relationship with workers collective strength of their union.

I have a front seat within our community and in using material from the Sudbury Soil Study and other sources, I have prepared this statement. It is not easy to put into a few words the context or my conclusion of the study, which can be found at www.sudburysoilstudy.com.

My full statement will be available at www.minemill598.com.

Sudbury Soils Study 2008
By union observer Rick Grylls

From the paper SARA – History of Sudbury Smelters June 1st, 2004:

20 Environmental Consciousness Awakens

“With the birth of the environmental movements in the 1960s, major sources of industrial pollution came under public scrutiny for the first time.

Although the dangers present in smelter emissions had been a concern to the community since the days of the early roaster yards. Only in the 1960s did the local, national and global concern reach the critical mass necessary to bring about change.

In 1967, the Ontario legislature passed the Air Pollution Act, and announced a schedule for reducing Inco’s emissions. That same year, Inco’s annual report included a section called “Pollution Control” for the first time. In 1968, the province created the Environmental Health Studies and Services Branch of the Department of Health. The first site selected to study the effects of long-term exposure to air pollution was Sudbury.”

20.1 The Government Response

“Although the companies were complying with the existing emissions controls, the bottom line remained of paramount importance; the Coniston smelter was closed because it was obsolete, and the Falconbridge pyrrhotite plant was an uneconomic operation. When the companies complained that the emission reduction targets threatened profits and jobs, the government capitulated, allowing the companies more time to meet reduction targets.

The trend of governments placing the interest of the mining industry ahead of environmental problems was highlighted by the widely publicized Happy Valley episode. In 1972, air pollution readings recorded conditions unfit for human habitation. The provincial Energy and Resources Minister decided it would be better to move the families than to interrupt production.

“Happy Valley has become the first community to be wiped from the map of Canada to make way for continued air pollution.”-Neil Stevens, Canadian Dimension, Nov. 1974

The extent of the pollution problem was brought into sharp focus by a secret 1974 federal government document titled “The Sudbury Pollution problem: Socio-Economic background,” inadvertently made public in 1977. Using a U.S. -based formula, the report concluded that environmental damage would cost Sudbury “approximately \$465,850,000 caused by emissions to human health, vegetation and property value in the Sudbury area on an annual basis (emphasis in original) Although it is difficult to place a dollar value on health effects, and both the MOE and the companies had invested considerable time, money and expertise into producing hundreds of reports investigating the environment health of the area, this report brought the enormity of the problem to the public eye.”

“Government has been extremely lenient with Inco and Falconbridge. Historically there have been no prosecutions under applicable environmental legislation, and from 1924-1970 there was a curtailment of a citizens right to sue for pollution damages, and there has been a lack of government-sponsored research on the damage caused by the copper-nickel smelters.” – The Sudbury Pollution Problem, Environment Canada 1974

20.2 Acid Rain and Sulphur Dioxide

“In the 1970s another “new” environmental issue hit the headlines: acid rain. Although Inco’s superstack had reduced the effects of emissions in the immediate area of the smelter, studies were showing that the dispersion did not necessary equal elimination: what goes up must come down. As lakes across North America showed damages from emissions produced in other provinces and even other countries, increasingly stringent controls came into effect.”

20.3 Metals in Sudbury Soil

“Not till the late 1960s did environmental concerns expand to include metal levels and acidifications of soils. Into the 1970s, studies by local foresters and ecologists showed that soil acidity and concentrations of copper and nickel were elevated in many of the same areas where sulphur dioxide damage had been observed. Researchers reported that it was acidity of the soil combined with the heavy metals that created an environment toxic to plant growth.

Public and regulatory interest in contaminated soils has greatly increased in the past decade. With the advent of the MOE soil cleanup guidelines in 1997, regulations and industry had a clear set of criteria with which to make

comparisons with monitoring data. In September 2001, the MOE released a summary report of approximately 30 years of soil metals data collected in the City of Greater Sudbury entitled “Metals in soil and vegetation in the Sudbury area – Survey of 2000 and addition historic data”. That report concluded that the concentrations of nickel, copper, cobalt and arsenic are elevated in the three historic smelting centres of Copper Cliff, Coniston and Falconbridge.

On September 12th, 2001 the Ministry of Environment held an open house at the Falconbridge Legion on the Sudbury soil samples that had been taken up to that time. One other person other than me showed up that day as people were preoccupied by the Twin Towers destruction. The information that had been collected had prompted the MOE to order an extensive assessment to review the 100 years of mining pollution.

The Falconbridge manager of that day assured me that the companies would take on the expense of the study and that the study was completely independent with the companies only input to the structure of the review would be supplying technical data to the committee.

As the next year unfolded I felt as a Union President of Mine Mill 598/CAW representing the workers of Falconbridge (now Xstrata) I would also stay at arms length and not apply for the Public Advisory Committee (PAC for short). In 2002 the process begins to take form and the study begins in January 2003.

The early process involved community information and interaction meetings on land, air, water, fish, from which came the most common question, expressed one evening from a bewildered mother when she rose up and quoted “to hell with the birds and bees, the flowers and trees what about my children”

As 2003 ended most of the community show and tells were rapped up and the internal structure of the assessment was well entrenched to structure, definition and to the questions to be asked by the Technical Committee, (TC for short). It also became aware to us that the companies were doing more than providing data; they were full partners at the table contrary to the total independent quotes the year before.

The title “health risk assessment” leads most to believe something different than what will actually happen.

From the November 5th 2004 Sudbury Soils Study update:

What is a Risk Assessment?

“Risk assessments can be carried out with a various elements of nature in mind: the physical environment (soil, air, surface water, and ground water), plants and animals, and humans within the study area. A risk assessment examines the possible risk to human health from hazards, such as exposure to chemicals in the environment. This type of study must take into account all factors that might affect how people respond to the chemicals. Things like a person’s age, length and duration of contact with the chemicals in air, water, soil, dust and food, lifestyle activities and occupation.”

What is a Human Health Study?

“Human health studies examine the health conditions of a particular community, and identify trends that might occur as a result of exposures or changes in the environment.

Human health studies can be done in a variety of ways. These include surveys, self-evaluation reports of health status, and database analyses of measured health events such as cancer, hospitalizations and prescription use, just to name a few.”

**From the Union “Risk Assessment” meeting, October 26th, 2004
Sudbury:**

“Risk assessments do not look directly at the health of the people. Risk assessment would probably conclude that there is no health risk.”

“One at a time, not a problem, together there is a problem. There are interactions between chemicals such as nickel, copper, cobalt, cadmium, selenium, mercury and arsenic. We need to know more about the additive affect. An example, nickel and copper and sulfur dioxide and nitrogen, these mixes cause cancers, clean up SO₂, nickel and copper pollutants.”

Thomas C. Hutchinson Full Professor, Environmental and Research Studies,
Trent University

From The Sudbury Star May 27, 2005

“However, no risk assessment to date has been able to answer all the questions, particularly with respect to cumulative effects.”

Dr. Christopher Wren, SARA Group

Enter the Unions 2004

In 2003 Homer Seguin and I questioned loudly that we did not trust the companies within the process and that the questions should be expanded to real health studies of the life long residents of Sudbury. We also questioned the single element theory of chemicals verses the synergistic combination of chemicals. While very little research has been sponsored to allow scientists to find out the effects of toxic cocktails of a number of elements together, it is know that the nickel/copper combination is a higher toxin than the single science assessments of each element, nickel or copper, on their own. Because of our voiced concerns, the unions were viewed as enemies to the sanction of the Technical Committee. We viewed the mining companies as the foxes in the hen house and we were viewed as “henny penny” and the sky is falling.

Active Union representatives were reluctantly allowed to observe the public meetings starting February 12th, 2004, but not the many working group meetings they held without observers and support staff. Homer being retired was not accepted here or the PAC committee because you needed unanimous votes from the TC committee.

One of the earliest observations I had was the five TC groups at the meeting were defending their position and interest of the people they represented. It was evident that not only the study was on some minds but also averting liability.

(Note: April 14th, 2008 the community of Blackwell, Oklahoma filed a class action suit against Blackwell Zinc smelter for contaminating the town with 58 million pounds of toxic waste including lead, arsenic, cadmium and zinc. In their worst polluting years the two Sudbury mining companies chimneys emitted close to 3 million tons of emissions a year. Their total in 100 years is over 100 million tons.

There is no recording of the amounts of fugitive emissions escaping from mines, mills, smelters and refinery into the towns and cities.

Lead as a chemical of concern was being held up by one of the mining companies but consensus was arrived because of strong public concerned from TC members. The clinical cleaning of the minutes of the meetings that were going on the web site was another area of expertise.

We were viewed with suspicion during the meetings as were others and it was evident any time that Homer Seguin or Eric Gillespie the environmental lawyer representing Port Colburne citizens in their soil contamination study was mentioned or when they addressed the committee, by the facial gestures and comments at the table after they left.

In the fall of 2007 via their government standing and regulations the Ministry of Environment had concerns, which draw a long process to reach final consensus on a few details. Meeting after meeting was being cancelled and carried over into 2008. Unknown to the unions, because we were not informed and did not find out until 3 p.m. Tuesday May 13th at the 2008 public meetings that the company managers Fred Stanford and Mike Romaniuk had gotten involved months earlier and forced the process forward. We had no knowledge or observation of what took place for the last four months up to these public meetings.

The unions were not made aware of the City of Sudbury presentation or the press release held just before the public meetings on the 13th of which I found out from a newspaper ad.

The rudest observation I saw was at the Tuesday, May 13th, 2008, 7 p.m. public information meeting at Science North when Homer was making his way up to the mike during the public input time. Up to this time the other citizens did not draw any reaction from TC representatives, but when Homer was making his way to the mike, many TC members, especially the company ones I was sitting behind, reacted with disgusted facial expressions, comments and laughing between themselves.

This ongoing disregard of unions and others is still very evident.

The Union, a legal right of every employee, was formed in 1942 by the workers of the mining companies to have a collective agreement with the employer to achieve better Health, Safety, work rules and payment for their labour, thereby enriching the lives of their family and community. It was men like Homer who fought from the 1950s to today for Health and Safety

improvements in the workplace, environmental improvements for our community, WCB payments for workers who got cancers from working in the sintering plants, and the enactment of the 1979 Occupational Health and Safety Act that makes Sudbury Mines some of the safest in the world. Maybe if those smirking faces sat through as many inquests of workers killed on the job, or the home visits to the grieving widows and orphaned children, or hospital visits to friends dying from cancer, maybe they would understand the compassion of Mr. Homer Seguin in getting answers to the unasked questions in relationship to the 100 years of pollution and our cities citizens health issues.

In my seven years as President of Mine Mill 598/CAW I have signed over 250 letters offering our Unions condolences for the loss of a husband, father of whom many were my close co-workers. Since 1990 over 570 of our members have died and their average age is 72, seven years less then the Canadian average.

Sudbury Soil Study Report

The report indicates the citizens of the area are still being negatively affected by lead and nickel. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in Atlanta, Georgia, public health statement for nickel tells you about nickel and its compounds and the effect of exposures. Person receptors are inhalation, ingestions, and skin contact.

From ATSDR: “Under acidic conditions, nickel is more mobile in soil and may seep into groundwater. Nickel does not appear to concentrate in fish. Studies show that it does not accumulate in plants growing on land that has been treated with nickel-containing sludge or in small animals.

“The concentration of nickel in water from rivers and lakes is very low. The average concentration of nickel is usually less than 10 parts of nickel in a billion parts of water (ppb) in rivers and lakes”

“The average concentration of nickel in drinking water is about 2ppb”.

“The highest levels of nickel in drinking water, about 72 ppb, have been found in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, where there is a large natural nickel deposit and where nickel is mined and refined.”

“The most common adverse health affect of nickel in humans is an allergic reaction to nickel.”

“The International Agency for research on Cancer (IARC) has determined that some nickel compounds are carcinogenic to humans and that metallic nickel may possibly be carcinogenic to humans. The EPA has determined those nickel refinery dust and nickel subsulfides are human carcinogens.”

From the Sudbury water quality data March 31, 2003: “The source water, the Wahnapeitei River, like all surface sources may be under the influence of several sources of contamination. The primary influence is from atmospheric deposition of acid and metals from nickel and copper smelting operations in Sudbury, as well as mine drainage from the abandoned Whistle Mine north of Lake Wahnapeitei. Although this has been a greater influence in the past, the river does have elevated levels of nickel, copper and manganese due to the smelting industry.”

“Precautions: some people may be more vulnerable to contaminates in drinking water then the general population, in particular immuno-compromised persons, some elderly and infants. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care provider.”

Skin contact and ingestion have little effect on humans but inhalation exposure for a long period of time, especially the workers in the plant can be harmful. The Sudbury Study and other information indicate residents in the areas in and around the smelters have been exposed and are still an area of concern. Respiratory inflammation and respiratory cancers cannot be ruled out. The companies need to do more pollution control.

Falconbridge Arsenic Human Health Study

(Not part of study but referenced to on page 21, 3.2.7.)

In May 2004 the Sudbury District Health unit gave warning to the citizens of Falconbridge that they should take precautions with the soil as it contained higher amounts of metals especially arsenic. This causes a stir with the residents and the TC committee. The citizen reaction led to a urinary heath study (outside the Sudbury Soils Study) of seven hundred residents from Hanmer and Falconbridge. The study shows the same arsenic levels in both groups even though Falconbridge soils contains much high arsenic levels.

This study is compared to four other Canadian studies from cities with high industrial arsenic in the soil. Pages 38 and 39 of study:

Falconbridge 2004:	Overall Mean=7.2 (5.6): Under 13 Mean=9.1 (5.6)
Wawa 2001:	Overall Mean=5.6 (4.4): Under 13 Mean= 7.0 (5.1)
Wawa 2002:	Under 13 Mean=5.6 (3.4)
Deloro 1999:	Overall Mean=4.36 (4.0): Under 13 Mean=5.34 (5.6)
Sydney 2002	Overall Mean=6.4 (8.2): Under 13 Mean=6.7 (9.5)

The May 2005 letter to Falconbridge and Hanmer citizens gave answers to two questions.

Keep in mind these the guideline of arsenic is viewed as “typical daily intakes of arsenic” by Canadians.

Question One: Do Falconbridge residents have higher arsenic levels than residents living in a comparison area with lower levels of arsenic in their soil?

Answer: No. Overall, Falconbridge residents’ urinary arsenic levels were very similar to those in the comparison community of Hanmer, which had lower levels of arsenic in soil.

Question Two: What health risks relative to other communities are associated with the urinary arsenic levels of Falconbridge residents?

Answer: Falconbridge and Hanmer residents on average are within typical daily intakes of arsenic by Canadians, and therefore are not at any increased exposure as compared to other Canadians in general. Health risk associated with arsenic levels for Falconbridge residents would be similar to those in the comparison community of Hanmer.

The letter sent to the homes and given to the public did not give all the answers from the study answer. What was missing from page 51 and 52 of the report is:

“With respect to absolute risk, however, it is known that arsenic exposure in general in Canada is close to or above the toxicological boundaries of increased cancer risk. Health Canada uses the rates of 1/1,000,000 or 1 in 1/100,000 as an acceptable risk. However, most arsenic exposures in Canada

provide a toxicological risk level above this level. What this means is that according to the mathematical risks of cancer, much of our ordinary arsenic intake as Canadians will be calculated as an increased risk.

For arsenic, the question is then, are Falconbridge or Hanmer residents experiencing an additional preventable risk because of their geographic location, the soils levels, or other circumstances? This study indicates that, on a community level, neither Falconbridge nor Hanmer shows preventable sources of environmental arsenic exposure, and in particular, not a soil-related risk of elevated inorganic urinary arsenic”

If the average Canadian whose “arsenic exposure in general in Canada is close to or above the toxicological boundaries of increased cancer risk.” and “much of our ordinary arsenic intake as Canadians will be calculated as an increased risk.” and Sudbury citizens consume the average food basket as the Canadian general population but we have the highest arsenic study, then how could the answer read “neither Falconbridge nor Hanmer shows preventable sources of environmental arsenic exposure.”

What is not asked or answered is why the Falconbridge study shows the residents had the highest levels of arsenic of the five contaminated site studies and the Sudbury study conclusion is “it is not from the soil”, then how are the residents getting more arsenic into their system then other Canadians.

Final observations and recommendations of this observer:

By the time the unions reached the table as observers the course forward was set. The questions we would have liked to be part of the study did not get included. By narrowing down questions you can reach pre-concluded answers.

We only viewed a small fraction of the actual work process and material at the TC public meetings and observed no working committee meetings.

This studied was aimed at future risk as reflected in the first SSS conclusion; “1. Based on **current conditions** in the Sudbury area, the study predicted little risk of health effects on Sudbury area residents associated with metals in the environment.”

This study is in no way associated to the previous 100 years of health risks and exposures from the 100 million tons of pollutants our historical Sudbury citizens faced and the effects it might have caused, which citizens personally live with today.

The people who did the science provided 100% accuracy to what they were instructed to do.

The support staffs to the TC committee, the observer, secretary, chair, and others were accountable to their given tasks.

The five active TC committee's representatives from Vale Inco, Xstrata (Falconbridge), Ministry of Environment, The Sudbury District Health Unit and the Greater City of Sudbury defended the positions of those they represented, and some showed resentment to the presence of the unions.

The towns and city continues to be polluted with fugitive chemicals of concern and sulfuric acid from the three smelter sites, from uncontrolled emissions from converter isles, furnaces, unprotected custom feed, and tailing waste and slag piles, exported by vehicles, wind and the rain off the mining properties.

The towns and city land has the historical fallout of 100 years. The study showed the 100 million tons of historical pollutions that fell from the sky has filtered into the ground and lays buried just below the surface, or settled on bottom of water covered areas, some of which has reached the water table and in disturbing it increases your contact with it.

The two companies, while voicing their strongest future commitment, must be keep accountable for the past and daily pollution output by stack, converters, furnaces, mines, slag on and off the property, tailing ponds, custom feeds, cottrell and smelter dust stockpiled in the open and exposed to wind and rain. Some of these stockpiles have been placed outside, unprotected in the last seven years while the study was taking place.

While re-greening is happening, that the companies increase their accountable for the rehabilitation of past contaminations of mine sites, tailing ponds, slag piles and dead land now, the sooner the better, not at the end of mine life closure plan.

Today's citizens should rejoice in the fact their children face a much cleaner future (approximately 10% of stack emissions and unknown amount of site fugitives) than what their parents faced in the past.

Citizens must become aware of the personal hygiene information distributed by the Ministry of Environment and the Sudbury District Health Unit regarding the chemicals of concern found in the soil, home dust and food, especially arsenic, lead and nickel.

The Unions will continue to work in making the companies improve the dust control and other Health and Safety elements in the mines, mills, smelters and refinery on behalf of the citizens they represent in the workplace, which will reduce the public's exposures from fugitive emission contamination and increase the life of the employees.

The companies must provide funding to the Sudbury District Health Unit for a truly independent "Health Audit of the Citizens of Sudbury", re the high numbers of cancers, diseases and shortened life span.

In conclusion I would like to relate the value of the study in comparison to real life situations.

If all risk assessments were viewed as well groomed dogs at the New York world dog show, the Sudbury Risk Assessment would win first place, but in answering the relationship of the 100 years of pollution and the real health questions about our citizens this Sudbury Health Risk Assessment will be as productive as sending a neutered dog to stud a breeding farm.

Like a good illusionist who has mesmerized the audience and in pulling down the curtain, it has made the elephant disappear and replaced it with a mouse.