

A Letter to The Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of Environment, from the Physicians and Surgeons of the City of Kamloops and Surrounding Area

The proposed Ajax Mine located partly in the City of Kamloops and within 2 kms of the nearest residences and an elementary school, will be blasting 180,000 tonnes of rock every day of the year.

Large amounts of dust will be generated, many tonnes a year, and will be distributed within the Thompson River Valley where Kamloops lies, downwind and downslope of the proposed mine. The dust will contribute to a marked deterioration in the airshed quality of the valley for many kilometres, since the city is subject to huge amounts of wind from the southwest.

The dust produced will contain particulate matter of sizes damaging to the human lung, and will contain contaminants from the minerals within the ore, such as Arsenic, Cadmium, Strontium, Manganese, and others. These particles can damage healthy lungs. Even more they will adversely affect anyone with pre-existing lung problems such as Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease, or Cystic Fibrosis.

“The important lesson we can gain from available research is that the direction of these studies is clear -- air pollution is harmful to health, and if reduced/avoided an improvement in population health can be expected.”

(Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report 2003 – Air Quality in British Columbia, A Public Health Perspective, page 61)

Kamloops citizens deserve the most rigorous investigation about the particulate emissions, and what trace minerals toxic or otherwise may be contained within them, to assess the potential effect on our airshed quality.

We, the Physicians and Surgeons of the Kamloops Area, are writing to ask for an Independent Panel Review of the proposed Ajax Mine project.