



Re: Proposed Touquoy open-pit gold mine expansion in Moose River

Proposed Beaver Dam, Fifteen Mile Stream, and Cochrane Hill gold mining sites

Dear Premier Houston, Minister Rushton, and Deputy Minister Gatien,

It's hard to fathom that in 2022, we are having to explain that the proposed expansion of an open-pit gold mine in Nova Scotia would be an irresponsible course of action. Presumably, you are aware of the toxic legacy of gold mining in Nova Scotia. We've included several references at the end should you need a refresher.

If you happen to be under the impression that gold mining today is environmentally safe, then let us disabuse you of that notion. It's never a question of *if* a new or expanded gold mine will contaminate the environment, but *when*, and *for how long*?

Counter to what pro-mining propaganda suggests, gold is [not](#) a critical mineral in Canada, and it is not needed for clean energy or other climate solutions. Most of the gold mined today is used for jewelry production ([50-60%](#)) and for banking and investments ([30-40%](#)). Since gold can be infinitely recycled, demand going forward can be met by adopting circular economy policies and [innovative investment strategies](#).

How could it possibly be reasonable to produce 20 tons of contaminated waste for one new gold ring?

For every ounce of gold that Atlantic Gold produces, it extracts [70 tonnes of ore and rock waste](#). In a single year, that adds up to roughly 8 million tonnes at the Touquoy Mine. Moreover, toxic sodium cyanide is used to extract gold from rock. Gold mining is also energy intensive and results in [staggering](#) GHG emissions. In fact, carbon emissions from Atlantic Gold's 2020 gold production at Touquoy was equivalent to taking [106,663 return flights](#) between New York and Paris.

If you're uncertain as to the environmental harms caused by gold mining today, you are not qualified to make decisions concerning the mining of natural resources.

"But we need rural jobs!" Indeed we do. What happened to your government's promise of a green and sustainable economy, expressed in the Premier's [mandate letter](#)? By contaminating local watersheds and

ecosystems and endangering human health, gold mining impedes Nova Scotia's ability to provide green and sustainable jobs in rural areas.

Further devastation of the local environment through gold mining expansion is compounded by the modern-day context: we are dealing with a climate crisis, biodiversity crisis, and more. As a number of lauded world leaders have proclaimed, we are also the last generation that is in a position to do something about it.

If you aren't sufficiently terrified by the situation in which we find ourselves, please refer to the latest reports from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

- IPCC Report August 2021 – [Physical Science Basis](#) (aka “A Code Red for Humanity”)
- IPCC Report February 2022 – [Impacts, Adaptation, Vulnerability](#) (aka “An Atlas of Human Suffering”)
- IPCC Report April 2022 – [Mitigation of Climate Change](#) (aka “It’s Even Worse than We Thought”)

Finally, we urge you to reflect on the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act your government brought in last November. There is nothing in [EGCCRA](#) to support the willful harm that would result from the expansion of gold mining in this province. In fact, the long-lasting—and entirely avoidable—consequences of open-pit gold mining run counter to your party's legislation.

If you don't intend to uphold EGCCRA, please let us know so that we can spread the word.

On this Earth Day, you don't get to pat yourselves on the back. Rather, we suggest you take the UN Secretary General's words to heart:



It's time to uphold the commitments in EGCCRA and reject the proposed Touquoy open-pit gold mine expansion in Moose River, as well as the proposed Beaver Dam, Fifteen Mile Stream, and Cochrane Hill open-pit gold mines.

Sincerely,



Tynette Deveaux

Communications Coordinator
Beyond Coal Atlantic Campaign

Suggested readings

[Arsenic and mercury contamination and complex aquatic bioindicator responses to historical gold mining and modern watershed stressors in urban Nova Scotia, Canada - ScienceDirect](#)

(a peer-reviewed [study](#) led by Mount Allison University)

[Study shows long-lasting impacts to lake health from old gold mines | SMU News and Events](#)

[NS plans to close 2 sites contaminated by old gold mines | CBC News](#)

[Impact of gold mine contamination in NS understudied, research finds | CBC News](#)

[Atlantic Gold plans to mine "paradise"](#)

[Bill 57 - Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act - RA](#)