

First Nations, recreational, environmental and community groups unite against Aevitas hazardous waste site proposed for Fraser River floodplain.

Backgrounder

December 17, 2013

The property at 7582 Cannor Road in the Cattermole Business Park, is owned by G. Mohammed Enterprises Ltd and Cattermole Group Holdings Ltd. Former ALR land, zoned "M4 Heavy Industrial" in 2001.

A rezoning application to "M6 Special Industrial" was made for a 1.78ha (4.4 acre) portion of the property to allow Aevitas Inc. to build a hazardous waste facility. The facility will recycle 5,000 litres of transformer oil containing PCBs and 500,000 lamps containing mercury each month. In addition the facility will be used as a transfer station for various wastes including flammable, corrosive, toxic and infectious material.

The City of Chilliwack's Development Application Review Team reviewed the application in September 19, 2013. The rezoning bylaw received first reading by City Council on November 19. At a public hearing December 3 the rezoning was approved.

Community caught off guard

Many in the community were unaware of the rezoning and proposed hazardous waste facility until the day of the public hearing. It was argued that given the nature of the proposed facility the city should have done more to notify and engage area residents before the rezoning decision was made.

Sto:lo Tribal Council (STC) Fisheries Advisor Ernie Crey spoke at the December 3 public hearing. Crey stated that First Nations had not been aware of the proposal and asked for the rezoning to be delayed until First Nations could review it. Crey's request was denied.

City defends action

A post by "Chilliwack BC" on the Facebook group "Real Life in Chilliwack..Good and Bad" stated that the City "follows all the legal requirements outlined in the Local Government Act". Chilliwack Mayor Sharon Gaetz argued in the same thread that that the city's procedures were "completely adequate - and entirely legislatively correct."

Wrong site for hazardous use

While there is general agreement that recycling of the sort of materials that the Aevitas facility would handle is necessary and beneficial, many wonder why a facility next to the Fraser River was chosen and are calling for it to be relocated to a site that does not endanger fish stocks.



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Fact Sheet

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Property: 7582 Cannor Road, Chilliwack, BC, in the Cattermole business park

Owners: G. Mohammed Enterprises Ltd and Cattermole Group Holdings Ltd.

Zoning Changed: ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT BYLAW 2013, No. 3970 (RZ000815), a 1.78ha portion of the subject 9.1ha property from M4 Heavy Industrial to M6 Special Industrial to facilitate the construction of a waste recycling and transfer facility.

Waste Project Proponent: Aevitas Inc. <http://www.aevitas.ca>

Opposing Groups Represented:

- Sto:lo Tribal Council
- B.C. Federation of Drift Fishers
- Fraser Valley Salmon Society
- B.C. Federation of Fly Fishers
- Steelhead Society of B.C.
- Fraser Valley Angling Guides Association
- Fraser River Salmon Table
- Chilliwack Fish & Game Protective Association
- Watershed Watch Salmon Society
- Wilderness Committee
- WaterWealth Project

Concerns:

- Adequacy of public process leading to the rezoning
- Proximity to Fraser River and risk to fish stocks

Demands:

- Relocation of proposed facility to a site that does not pose risk to fish stocks.
- Comprehensive public reviews of the proposal by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Health.

Media Contacts:

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- Watershed Watch Salmon Society, Executive Director Craig Orr, cell: 604-809-2799
- WaterWealth Project, Campaign Director Sheila Muxlow, cell: 604-751-0172