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SUMMARY #10

Rio Tinto Alcan Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) Hearings

KITIMAT – Kitimat Rod and Gun Association, 86 Haisla Blvd. | Kitimat BC | V8C 2B7

Hearings continued on June 4 and 5 with testimony from David Marmorek, an expert in adaptive management and aquatic ecology with ESSA consultants. Mr. Marmorek is an RTA witness who co-authored the Sulphur Dioxide Technical Assessment Report (STAR) and Environmental Effects Monitoring (EEM) program.

Both the STAR and EEM program use adaptive management to deal with the effects of the 55 percent increase in sulphur dioxide emissions from RTA's Kitimat aluminum smelter. Adaptive management is a natural resource planning process where various management actions are tried, monitored and evaluated to see which best achieves plan objectives. The appellants question the use of adaptive management where the "management action" is to release a harmful gas into the air that people breathe. They argue that it equates to conducting a science experiment upon residents of Kitimat to understand how SO₂ affects human health.

Mr. Marmorek's evidence showed that his experience with adaptive management has been in its application to the physical environment, particularly with the restoration of degraded ecosystems. He does not have experience in adaptive management as it relates to industrial development and its effects on human health. The STAR for Rio Tinto Alcan's smelter appears to be the first application of adaptive management on industrial air emissions and human health.

Mr. Marmorek stated that RTA's monitoring and mitigation plan (the EEM program) would be used until all "critical uncertainties" are resolved. However, the EEM program does not consider incidences of asthma as a result of SO₂ exposure to be a critical uncertainty. It also does not consider climate change a critical uncertainty despite the impact of weather on emission dispersion.

RTA and MOE are using adaptive management to test whether the Kitimat Modernization Project design effectively protects residents' health. The appellants say that this is not an appropriate approach given the known impact of SO₂ on human health.

June 4-5 Witnesses:

- Ian Sharpe, a Director with the BC Ministry of Environment
- David Marmorek, adaptive management expert and aquatic ecologist with ESSA consultants

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