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June 13, 2015

SUMMARY #12

Rio Tinto Alcan Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) Hearings

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

On Wednesday, June 10th Dr. Julian Aherne, RTA's soil acidification expert and an author of the company's STAR (Sulphur Dioxide Technical Assessment Report), appeared on the witness stand. The appellants questioned the soil sampling methodology, analysis and interpretation used in the STAR.

First, the STAR assumed that the soil's capacity to neutralize acidification caused by sulphur dioxide emissions was largely influenced by the underlying bedrock. Previous witnesses had provided evidence that in the Kitimat Valley the bedrock is overlain by thick glacial and marine deposits. This suggests that the interpretation of the soil samples in the STAR did not reflect the region's geology. The appellants further questioned whether the mere 51 soil samples taken for the STAR were statistically adequate to represent the geological complexity of the Kitimat Valley.

The appellants cross-examined Dr. Aherne on the criterion used in the STAR to predict whether future sulphur acidification would damage vegetation. They suggested that RTA used a criterion that may only protect the roots of conifer trees, but would not protect the roots of deciduous trees or protect the long-term productivity of the soil.

June 10 Witnesses:

- Gaby Poirier, General Manager, Rio Tinto Alcan
- Dr. Julian Aherne, Associate Professor at Trent University & Canada Research Chair in Environmental Monitoring

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