

Good morning everyone. Thank you for coming.

This morning, Sandy Pond Alliance to Protect Canadian Waters wishes to announce its intention to launch a legal challenge of the loophole in the federal Fisheries Act that allows Vale Inco to use Sandy Pond as a toxic waste dumpsite for its Long Harbour nickel processing plant being built in the community.

Vale Inco has already received federal and provincial approval to destroy Sandy Pond. The company was able to do this by taking advantage of an inconsistency in the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations of the Fisheries Act known as Schedule 2. Lakes that would normally be protected as fish habitat by the Fisheries Act can now be redefined as “tailings impoundment areas” according to this regulation. Once added to Schedule 2, healthy freshwater lakes and their habitat lose all protection and become dump sites for mining waste. Sandy Pond is only one of several lakes across the country that is targeted for destruction because of this loophole. We think it is time for this destruction to stop.

We fully understand what this project means to the residents of Long Harbour & Mount Arlington Heights. This project brings great hope for an area that is in need of economic development and job creation. To the people of the area, we want to say that we are not against development in your community. We share and support your hope but want to see this project unfold in a manner that truly respects people, community and the environment. In that regard, the Alliance has mailed a letter to residents of the area, expressing our concerns with the project.

Disposal of mining waste is a challenge to any industrial project but destroying a pristine lake is not a solution. There is no creativity or innovation in simply dumping toxic waste into a natural habitat and leaving the area with a disastrous environmental and health legacy.

Residents of Long Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada deserve better. We challenge government to reverse Schedule 2 and demand that Vale Inco develop another alternative to using Sandy Pond as its waste management option. Thank you.