

Permission to Pollute

Over the last two years, the ministry has been in the process of re-writing the air permit for the Crofton mill, providing concerned citizens with fuel for optimism. It was hoped that finally the government was going to live up to their responsibility to effectively regulate the air emissions from the mill.

Two thirds of all toxic release of the pulp and paper industry is emitted to the air according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, yet there are no Canadian provincial or federal regulations on toxic release to the air from pulp mills - simply guidelines and recommendations. It's up to the Ministry of Environment in BC to regulate through permits for each individual facility.

Unlimited amounts of hundreds of substances, including known carcinogens, are discharged every day from the Crofton mill into our common airshed. The permit effectively regulates only two substances - Total Reduced Sulphur Compounds (TRS) and Particulate Matter. Two substances!

A review of permits from other jurisdictions reveals a number of other standard substances and processes regulated in air permits for a pulp mill.

New Permit Drafted

The draft for a re-written permit for the Crofton mill was recently obtained from the

Ministry of Environment. The draft permit made it clear that the provincial government was taking no steps to further regulate mill emissions. Instead a permit has been proposed that raises the allowable discharge of emissions for the mill and limits only the same two substances. While limits for particulate matter have dropped in the proposal to reflect updated equipment, there are no lower concentrations for TRS proposed and some limits in the current permit have

Two thirds of all the toxic release of the pulp and paper industry is released to the air according to the US EPA

... Yet there are no Canadian provincial or federal regulations on toxic release to the air from pulp mills.

disappeared altogether.



One welcome addition is a strict definition of 'wood waste', which would preclude the incineration of demolition waste in the power boilers – an historical practice of the mill resulting in highly toxic emissions. Apart from this, the proposal breaks no new ground into regulating the mill's emissions.

The public demands full information and reasonable limits on emissions of hazardous chemicals into their air. The government has a responsibility to protect the health of

the public and the environment.

