

**Q. After all these negatives, surely there's an up side? Mines do create jobs, after all.**

A. PPA estimates 80-100 direct jobs at the northern mine site. The company likes to point out that mining jobs pay very well, but this is only the case when you average in the incomes of the professional engineers and senior management. For local mine workers wages would likely be similar to the local construction industry.

**Q. Nonetheless, that sounds like pretty good money. Why not go for it?**

A. Because the jobs and money come with a cost. Although there has been no referendum (other than one held by the Sechelt Indian Band, which was nearly 80% opposed to PPA), it's apparent that an over-whelming majority of people believe that another large mine and an industrial port in our midst would severely impact tourism, recreation, water, real estate values and the natural environment. The belief is widespread that our future lies elsewhere, in tourism and the influx of people who of are moving to the Sunshine Coast for its spectacular natural assets.

**Q. So – assuming the provincial government doesn't interfere - it's a matter of democratic local choice. What opportunities will there be for public input?**

A. The environmental review process invites public submissions. Also, if and when PPA applies for rezoning and a change in the Official Regional Plan to allow a port at Wood Bay, public hearings must be held by the SCRD. All these opportunities would be advertised in the local press.

**Q. All right, what's next for PPA?**

A. The company announced in January that preliminary results of its exploration drilling of the limestone deposit were positive (although the total assay has not yet been made public), and it intends to apply for permits in March/April. First, however, PPA must undergo provincial (and possibly federal) environmental review, which could take a year or more.

**Q. This sounds like a long, expensive process. Can PPA afford it?**

A. That's anyone's guess. On the AIM stock exchange in London, where PPA shares are traded, investors did not respond with enthusiasm to the company's announced drilling results. The share price remains down more than 50% in the past year, a performance described as "adrift" by AFX News. And interest on a \$2 million loan the company took out to buy property at Wood Bay will rise to 24% later this year.

**Q. Nonetheless, with millions of dollars on the line for those insider shareholders, this struggle is far from over. So, how can we join the fight against PPA?**

A. Write to Richard Neufeld, Minister, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Box 9060, Prov. Stat. Gov., Victoria, V8W 9E2. These letters really count. And you also could give us a hand. Write with your email address to SOS, Box 2371, Sechelt, V0N3A0 and you will get regular postings on our plans and activities. Although there is no membership charge, donations are welcomed. We are all volunteers and every nickel is accounted for. Any surplus that remains when the battle is won – and it will be - will go to St. Mary's hospital.

[www.saveoursunhinecoast.com](http://www.saveoursunhinecoast.com)



## The People

vs

## Pan Pacific Aggregates

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***A progress report  
on the campaign to protect  
the Sechelt Peninsula  
from open pit mining***

[www.saveoursunhinecoast.com](http://www.saveoursunhinecoast.com)

**After two years of debate about Pan Pacific Aggregates (PPA), the issue is bogged down in misinformation and uncertainty. In an effort to clear the air, Save Our Sunshine Coast (SOSC) is sending this series of questions and answers to every household between Port Mellon and Egmont. We hope you find it useful and we welcome your comments.**

**Q. First off, who is SOSC?**

A. We are a group of concerned volunteers representing hundreds of citizens from all over the Sunshine Coast and adjacent islands. Our objective is to protect the natural beauty of the Sechelt Peninsula from open pit mining by PPA.

**Q. What exactly is PPA proposing?**

A. The company wants to operate two open pit mines, one for gabbro and industrial garnet near Sechelt, and a much larger mine for limestone farther north in the Caren Range. The limestone would be carried on a 10-km conveyor and shipped offshore on freighters through a port that PPA would build at Wood Bay, a mile west of Secret Cove on Malaspina Strait.

**Q. So what's wrong with that?**

A. The limestone mine would utterly obliterate a beautiful complex of lakes, streams and wetlands that has been used for a variety of recreational purposes for decades and by the First Nations People for Centuries. The port at Wood Bay would industrialize one of our most prized residential and recreational boating areas. And the conveyor would effectively sever the western slope of the Sechelt Peninsula to the movement of people and animals.

**Q. So, we have a proposal and opposition to it. Where do matters stand?**

A. Opposition to PPA has mounted steadily in the past year. Every local government, the Sechelt Indian Band and about 6000 petition signatories are now against the company's plans. To proceed at Wood Bay, PPA requires a change in zoning from the Sunshine Coast Regional District and revisions to the Official Community Plan for the area. They are unlikely to get either.

**Q. Well, doesn't this mean that the company is finished here – kaput?**

A. PPA doesn't think so. They have always maintained that the B.C. Mines Act can override local government opposition. But, in fact, the Act confers no such authority. What the company is really saying is that they expect the provincial government to intervene on their behalf and clear the way for the mines and port to go ahead.

**Q. Would the government do that?**

A. It could if it made a political decision to do so. But no government will take that kind of action if the political cost is likely to be too high. And the best way to assure that is by keeping local opposition on the boil. That's why so many citizen groups are allied against PPA.

**Q. This sounds like a stalemate, and yet PPA has been spending a lot of money drilling in the Caren Range. Why?**

A. Two reasons. Without exploration drilling, it isn't possible to know whether the limestone deposit is large and pure enough to be commercially viable. And secondly, a group of more than a dozen insiders hold millions of PPA shares that they acquired almost for nothing (.001 of a pound Sterling per share). If the company fails to sustain belief in the stock market that the mines are alive and well, the shares will be worthless.

**Q. There have been complaints in the local press about this exploration activity. What's the problem?**

A. Running heavy equipment is making an awful mess of the delicate wetlands in the Caren Range. Although this sort of damage is largely irreparable, PPA is required to post a bond to pay for cleanup. However, the provincial government refuses to tell the public the amount of the bond. Taxpayers could be stuck with the bill. It has happened before in B.C., many times in many places.

**Q. But surely the government has environmental protections that can limit damage on the ground?**

A. Exploration work doesn't require an environmental review. Actual mining does, but there is little that can be done to mitigate the destruction of the natural environment by a large open pit mine. B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Authority cannot stop a mine and has never done so. It is limited to suggesting measures for mitigation and compliance.

**Q. What about water? The Sunshine Coast already has a serious drinking water shortage which can only grow worse as population increases.**

A. Future demands will almost certainly require the SCRD to tap the Carlson Lake watershed, where PPA's northern mine would be located. The company says it will run a closed-circuit system, neither taking water from nor releasing it into the mine's surroundings. But settlement ponds leak into ground water and often overflow in periods of high rainfall. This has been the experience with mines all over the province, despite the most solemn promises of their proponents