

# Sisson Mine

# Health Impacts and Public Responsibility

**An open-pit mine is a massive hole in the ground used to extract minerals and metals that are close to the surface.**

The **Sisson Mine** is a large [open-pit tungsten and molybdenum mine](#) proposed northwest of Fredericton, in the upper Nashwaak and Wolastoq (Saint John River) watershed. New Brunswickers rely on this water for drinking, fishing, recreation, and cultural use.

## What are the health concerns?

### Water Contamination

Hard-rock metal mining can release:

- Arsenic and other toxic heavy metals
- Acid drainage that spreads contamination
- Dissolved salts and processing residues, which change water chemistry

These pollutants can enter rivers and private wells and move downstream.

Long-term exposure is linked to:

- Health problems that affect how children grow and develop
- Impacts on the brain, memory, and learning
- Long-term health problems that need ongoing treatment

Contamination can happen long after mining ends. That means health risks and health care costs can continue for decades, even when the mine is no longer operating.

### Tailings Ponds

The largest part of the project is not the pit, it's the waste. The mine would [store millions of tonnes](#) of wet mining waste behind large earth dams.

These [tailings facilities](#):

- Must be monitored forever
- Can leak slowly over time
- Can fail during extreme weather

Canada has one of the [worst records for tailings failures](#), including:

- Mount Polley, B.C., where 24 million cubic metres of mine waste were released
- Mount Pleasant, N.B., where heavy rainfall in 1998 caused a tailings dam failure

When failures happen, drinking water can be put at risk.

### Air Pollution

Open-pit mining creates significant air pollution, including:

- Fine dust (PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>)
- Metal-containing particles
- Diesel exhaust

Exposure to these pollutants increases the risk of:

- Asthma and lung disease
- Heart disease
- Premature death

Children, seniors and people with existing health conditions are most vulnerable.

**The mine may operate for a few decades.  
The health risks could last for generations.**

# Who Pays the Price?

You & Me

## The mine is expected to run for 27 years, but if it closes early, here's what remains:

- **The open pit:** About 145 hectares (about 200 soccer fields) and 370 metres deep (deeper than the CN Tower's lookout level).
- **Tailings storage facility:** About 751–785 hectares (about 1,400–1,500 soccer fields; larger than many New Brunswick towns)
- **Tailings dam:** About eight kilometres long and 90 metres high (almost 16 times the length and twice the height of the Mactaquac Dam)
- **Total industrial footprint:** About 1,253 hectares (12.5 km<sup>2</sup>, about the same size as Fredericton)

## When pollution affects health, taxpayers pay, often for decades.

Communities bear the health impacts, the public health-care system absorbs the costs and taxpayers fund long-term treatment and monitoring.

No short-term economic benefit justifies the long-term health risks to New Brunswick communities.

## Take Action!

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