



For Immediate Release

October 11, 2016

## More testing, new technology asked of hazardous waste incinerator

The Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre is located at the top of the Swan Hills, 70 kilometres as the crow flies from the Town of Slave Lake, 80 km S from Kinuso, about 160 km due west from the Town of Athabasca, and 65 km NE from Fort Assiniboine. The plant is owned by Alberta Infrastructure. SHTC is operated by SUEZ Environmental, in a contract with the Government of Alberta. We wrote a challenge to the facility's 10 year Approval, and included the names of many local people who joined us in expressing concerns. When our concerns about operations at this facility were recognized by Alberta Environment and Parks in August of 2015, we were excited to get them addressed.

Keepers of the Athabasca participated in our first meeting with SUEZ Environmental and Alberta Environment and Parks on September 9, 2016. We agreed to work together to address these issues:

### **Human and environmental effects of 'unplanned' and 'allowable' PCB, dioxin, and furan releases**

Ever since the plant (then the Swan Hills Toxic Waste Treatment Facility) started burning waste in 1987, they have had 'allowable emissions' of extremely toxic chemicals, such as PCB's, dioxins, and furans, which are released in small, but continuous amounts through their smokestacks into the environment. Over decades, this adds up to a large amount toxic particulate matter into the atmosphere.

Serious "unplanned releases" occurred during fires and explosions in at least 1996, 1997, and 2009, releasing large amounts of toxins into the air. Lake sediment core samples in the Lesser Slave Lake show increased amounts of PCB's and dioxins in these years.

While in the past, monitoring has generally been restricted to about 20 kilometres around the plant, at our September 9, 2016 meeting, SUEZ Environmental agreed to provide a plan to perform core samples in the Town of Slave Lake, Town of Athabasca, and Town of Fort Assiniboine.

### **Are there better ways of managing today's hazardous wastes?**

Keepers of the Athabasca proposes to examine 'oxidation' technology as an alternative to incineration of PCB waste, and as an international company, SUEZ has agreed to help investigate this technology with their contacts and colleagues around the world.

<http://www.recyclingproductnews.com/article/1635/quotrevolutionaryquot-organic-industrial-waste-treatment-technology-introduced-to-north-america>

We ask Alberta Environment and Alberta Health to help facilitate this work to respond to our concerns, which are the concerns of many in communities all around the SHTC. We also ask that the GOA participate in these investigations in order to protect our health and environment. We hope that Alberta Environment and Alberta Health can help us evaluate health risks, technologies, and pollution investigation plans by using our own public expertise to help address these public concerns.

### **For more information, please contact:**

Jule Asterisk, Keepers of the Athabasca, 780 805-1709, [keepers.communications@gmail.com](mailto:keepers.communications@gmail.com)

Darryel Sawan, Consultation, Swan River First Nation, 780 775-3536, [srfndarryel@gmail.com](mailto:srfdarryel@gmail.com)