

The Council of Senior Citizens Organizations (COSCO) Sunshine Coast Branch is seeking the support of Gibsons Council in prohibiting or limiting the Howe Sound Pulp and Paper (HSPP) mill from burning certain toxic materials. HSPP is currently seeking an amended permit to burn demolition waste at their mill.

COSCO believes that a letter from the town to the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) would be helpful in having the permit application refused or amended.

Background on Waste Burning

Early in 2009 a [Coast Reporter article](#) indicated that the HSPP mill had been burning construction and demolition (C&D) waste including plastics for about three years. MoE had become aware of the practice in December of 2008 and began an investigation. Eventually in October 2009 MoE issued a Variance Order valid for up to a two years allowing the mill to burn one barge (5200 cubic metres) per week of C&D waste. The order specified a strict regime of emission sampling and monitoring during the period as well as an air shed modelling program. Reports and public consultations were also specified. Near the end of September 2010 HSPP held public open houses in Gibsons and Squamish as required by the variance order.

The open house held by HSPP in Gibsons on September 22 was well organized with large posters and glossy handouts (see [Coast Reporter coverage](#)). Experts from Leveltron Consultants Ltd. and from MoE were on hand to help interpret the results of the trial of the C&D waste burning and the modelling conducted by the consultants. The C&D waste during the trial consisted of 91% wood; 7% pressboard and plywood; 1% paper, fabric and formica; and 1% plastic and vinyl.

COSCO wrote an article after the open house to indicate that our communities in Howe Sound could be reasonably assured of their safety from any potentially hazardous emissions from the C&D burning provided that a limited number of conditions were met. Our article urged MoE to ensure that the following conditions were implemented as part of their new amended permit:

- Install independent monitoring of potentially hazardous emissions in Gibsons;
- Prohibit the burning of treated woods, painted wood, asbestos, railway ties and old tires;
- Specify a maximum amount of plastics (1-2%) and a maximum amounts of plywood or pressboard (5-7%) to be burned;
- Include asbestos in the monitoring regime;
- Specify a new monitoring protocol with dioxins and furans measured on a quarterly rather than an annual basis, and also specify the monitoring PM2.5 instead of PM10; and
- Order a new modelling trial to be conducted once the upgraded boilers have been installed.

More information: [Burning Construction and Demolition Waste at HSPP - Green Energy?](#) by Louis Legal, Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society