

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indigenous Advocate Seeks Justice - Files charges against Imperial Metals Over Biggest Mining Spill in Canada

Bev Sellars and Jacinda Mack, Vancouver, August 4 2017

Vancouver, August 4, 2017, 3h30pm. As today marks the third anniversary of the Mt Polley Mine disaster and the time limit to file charges under BC laws, Indigenous advocate Bev Sellars announces that she filed [private charges](#) against Mount Polley Mining Corporation (Imperial Metals) at the Provincial Court of British Columbia this afternoon in Vancouver. Sellars was acting Chief of Xat'sull First Nation when the disaster struck near her community on August 4, 2014.

This legal action comes after the newly elected Horgan government announced earlier this week it would not file charges before the August 4 deadline, stating that “an investigation was still ongoing,” and passing the buck to the Trudeau government to enforce the federal Fisheries Act in the matter.

“We just couldn’t let it go. In my culture, we have a sacred responsibility not only to care for the land, waters, animals, and people living today, but also for the next seven generations to come. I could not bear to witness BC simply stepping aside and giving-up on its own responsibility to protect our shared environment and waters,” states Bev Sellars.

Sellars filed [charges](#) under 15 counts: 10 under the BC Environmental Management Act and 5 under the BC Mines Act. Most charges relate to the dumping of contaminated mining waste into the environment and surrounding waterways, and to poor and unsafe operational practices, allegedly in violations of multiple permit conditions and general provisions of both Acts and associated regulations.

Posted by Joan Russow

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Sellars believes her action could be a test for BC laws: *“If BC laws cannot be enforced when such a massive mining spill occurs, then we have a serious problem in BC and we must act to fix these laws.”*

The grandmother of 3 also hopes her action can act as a ‘door stopper,’ buying some more time for everyone involved, including the Province to complete its investigation and potentially carry over Sellars’ charges beyond today’s deadline. Sellars: *“While we are ready to go to full trial if necessary, we also believe it is ultimately the Province’s job to enforce its own laws when they are violated.”*

This legal action is supported by MiningWatch Canada, West Coast Environmental Law’s Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund, the Wilderness Committee, and the First Nation Women Advocating For Responsible Mining.

For information:

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- Patrick Canning, lawyer practicing environmental, First Nations and criminal law, [778-875-4897](tel:778-875-4897)
- Ugo Lapointe, MiningWatch Canada, [514-708-0134](tel:514-708-0134)
- Andrew Gage, West Coast Environmental Law, [604-601-2506](tel:604-601-2506)

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- Joe Foy, Wilderness Committee, [604-880-2580](tel:604-880-2580)