



Public Open House Summary Report

February 2004

Inco Limited ▪ Falconbridge Limited ▪ Ministry of the Environment ▪ Sudbury & District Health Unit ▪ City of Greater Sudbury ▪ Health Canada
Inco Ltée ▪ Falconbridge Ltée ▪ Ministère de l'Environnement ▪ Service de santé publique de Sudbury ▪ Ville du Grand Sudbury ▪ Santé Canada

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1) Background

The third public Open House for the Sudbury Soils Study was held on November 25, 2003, from 3:00pm to 9:00pm, in the Inco Cavern at Science North.

To ensure maximum attendance at this Open House, invitations were placed on the project website (<http://www.sudburysoilsstudy.com>) and published in local newspapers (*The Sudbury Star*, *Northern Life* and *Le Voyageur*), invitation letters were mailed to a list of 624 individuals and organizations in the Greater Sudbury Area, and news releases were distributed to generate newspaper articles and radio coverage. Notice of the Open House was also included in our *Update* newsletter, which was distributed to approximately 60,000 homes in the Greater Sudbury Area in *Northern Life* in mid-October.

A total of 87 Sudbury residents attended the Open House. They were provided an opportunity to meet with members of the Study team, including the SARA (Sudbury Area Risk Assessment) Group, and the Technical and Public Advisory Committees. Display boards at the Open House provided information on Study background, process and preliminary findings, including soil levels of the Study's six Chemicals of Concern – arsenic, cobalt, copper, lead, nickel and selenium. Mapping and general information were also provided for current and ongoing aspects of the Study, including vegetable garden and wildlife dietary items surveys, our creel survey (local fishing habits), and the air monitoring program, which will continue until October, 2004. Numerous technical experts with the SARA Group were available to answer questions on specific aspects of each of these studies. Selected display panels are available on our project website.

Discussion continued throughout the evening between members of the public and the Study team. Attendees were also asked to complete an exit questionnaire if there were any unanswered questions, or if they had any specific concerns they would like to see addressed throughout the Study.

A formal presentation was given at 7:30pm by Dr. Chris Wren, Director of the Sudbury Soils Study. This presentation focused on risk assessment, why the Study is important, what studies we are doing, and how residents can contribute to the Study. This presentation is available on the Study website. Dr. Wren was followed by Dr. Lesbia Smith, the SARA Group medical consultant, who gave a short overview of human health risk assessment, and made herself available for questions from attendees.

2) Summary of Results and Action Taken

The majority of attendees had their questions addressed by Study team members during the meeting, and did not complete exit questionnaires. The 21 questionnaires that were received provided detailed questions and comments, which will contribute to the Study process, and to shaping the consultation process to better serve the community and the Study itself. These responses are attached to this document.

Participants were very clear in their desire for the Study to address potential impacts of metals in soils on the environment and human health, and these concerns will continue to be addressed throughout the Study. The majority of attendees had an overwhelmingly positive response with respect to the Study process, and agreed that current undertakings in the human health and ecological risk assessments would consider all their concerns.

A number of attendees expressed concerns about water quality in the Sudbury area, which is of definite interest to the SARA Group as a contributing factor in the human health risk assessment. The Study will include a drinking water survey for a representative number of residences throughout the Greater Sudbury Area, to commence in 2004.

It was also suggested by some attendees that humans be tested for metal levels as part of the human health risk assessment. While this is not a current recommendation of the SARA Group, it is a major point that may become a final recommendation in the human health risk assessment. A urinary arsenic study is planned for the Town of Falconbridge for late summer 2004 to address the community's concerns following an advisory by the Sudbury & District Medical Officer of Health in 2003 regarding elevated levels of arsenic in soils immediate to the Falconbridge smelter site.

Alternative health practitioners and natural detoxification through methods such as chelation were also suggested by one attendee. These recommendations for further investigation have been passed on to the medical experts from both the Technical Committee and the SARA Group. Final recommendations from the SARA Group will consider all feasible mitigation strategies.

Other concerns included potential occupational exposures and economic effects, most specifically of decreased property values in the Sudbury area. Occupational exposure is an important contributing factor to human health in Sudbury, and will be considered as such in our Study. However, the main objective of the Sudbury Soils Study is to consider environmental exposures. Occupational exposure is a main concern of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees at Inco Ltd. and Falconbridge Ltd., and will be dealt with as a major item at that level. Economic concerns have been relayed to the City of Greater Sudbury for their consideration. The SARA Group and members of the Technical Committee have met with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Commission (CMHC) and GE Capital, to keep them up to date on the Study. We will continue to work with mortgage companies and local realtors to provide information as the Study progresses.

Finally, there were a few concerns mentioned with respect to the Study process, including the level of openness, decision-making by the Technical Committee, and technical advisors for the PAC. In order to best address these concerns, the Technical Committee will now allocate one hour of their monthly meetings to the public for presentations and observation, becoming more available to any interested party who may have a question about process. The PAC understands the concern regarding having their own technical advisors, but have elected for now to use the extensive expertise provided by the Scientific Reviewers for the Technical Committee. The PAC has also suggested that it would expect the TC and SARA to provide access to other scientific reviewers as the PAC sees fit and as the TC and SARA judge reasonable. Dr. Ron Brecher, the human health Scientific Reviewer, made a special presentation on human health risk assessment for the PAC at their January 2004 meeting, and along with Dr. Stella Swanson (the ecological Scientific Reviewer), will be made available to the PAC for any technical advice they may require.

In addition to the detailed input, we received seven primary messages from participants:

- 1) We are concerned about our health, especially the health of our children;
- 2) We are concerned about the potential for increased exposure to metals from drinking water;
- 3) We are concerned about our property values;
- 4) We are concerned about the health of our recovering ecosystem;
- 5) We agree with the Study process for the risk assessments;
- 6) We do not believe there is important information missing from the risk assessment; and,
- 7) We want additional opportunities to hear directly from the researchers as the study progresses.

3) Impact on Sudbury Soils Study Project Design

This input is now helping focus study design and reporting, and the SARA Group's study plan and approach. In particular:

- 1) We will pay special attention to the health of children;
- 2) We will undertake a drinking water survey in 2004;
- 3) We will continue to be available to lenders and real estate representatives to explain the Study and what we know to date about the impacts of soil metal levels;
- 4) We will look closely at biodiversity and links between recovering ecosystems and metals;
- 5) We will continue to communicate results clearly and professionally, in a manner that is easily understood;
- 6) We will continue to conduct the Sudbury Soils Study in a transparent manner that assures community members that the results will be conclusive (including making the Technical Committee available to the public, with meetings now being open from 9:30-10:30am); and,
- 7) We will continue to make an effort to provide additional opportunities for public workshops and information sessions.

Public input from the Open Houses and our Have Your Say workshops on topics that should receive special attention in the Sudbury Soils Study will continue to frame many of the Study activities.

4) Impact on Sudbury Soils Study Public Consultation Process

In response to past public input, the SARA Group provided much more information at the November Open House, including detailed maps with soil concentrations and locations of sample sites, details of the Study process, and preliminary results from various activities within the Study. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and most attendees were satisfied with the amount of information presented. Comments regarding improving the amount and nature of information presented will be used to further improve our consultation efforts for future events. We will continue to provide a great deal of information on a variety of Study components at future Open Houses. We are also available through telephone (1-866-315-0228), email (questions@sudburysoilsstudy.com), and at our project website for further questions or information.

Also in response to past public input, a presentation was given by Dr. Chris Wren at this Open House, and attendees found both the presentation and overall Open House useful. Several mentions were made of increasing advertising for future Open Houses to increase public interest. We are currently investigating advertising on local radio stations, and have sent invitations to recent events to everyone on our email contact list to increase awareness of our public events. Your input will help us shape our future consultation efforts, through our Open Houses, workshops, newsletters, and project website. Your comments are always welcome!

5) Conclusion

As a vehicle to obtain detailed and comprehensive public input for the Sudbury Soils Study, the public Open House was very successful. We are half-way through our 2½ year process, and are now reaching the point where we can enter information into models for the human health and ecological risk assessments. We still have a lot of work to do, but we commit to asking for information whenever we can, and providing the public with results as they become finalized. Information provided by attendees will help to shape the Study, and how we present results to members of the Sudbury community. We wish to thank everyone who participated for their time and input. Based on the success of this third Open House, we will continue to hold community-based public meetings as the Study progresses.



Sudbury Soils Study

Public Open House Questionnaire

November 25, 2003

SUMMARY

Number of attendees: 87

Number of questionnaires completed: 21

1. Please describe your interest in this study (check one).

- a) Property Owner **8**
- b) Interested Citizen **11**
- c) Government Official **2**
- d) Public Interest Group (please specify name)
 - Falconbridge Citizens Comm. (Husband is on committee)
- e) Other (please specify)
 - Have become ill + think our compromised environment plays a definite role
 - Environmental consulting
 - Consultant (AMEC)

2. How did you find out about tonight's open house?

- Mailing **4** Newspaper **13**
- Other (please specify)
 - Email of Junction Creek Group
 - Last meeting
 - Word of mouth
 - Verbal
 - Glen Watson (Inco Ltd.)
 - Website

3. Do you have any particular issues or concerns about this study (please specify)?

- Occupational Exposures
- That this study is an open process looking at the results and then making an assessment of the real situation
- Why was mercury omitted?
- Why is sample site N-of York St./W of Paris high on many sample sites for metals
- No (3 responses)
- I continue to be opposed to the use of consensus decision making by the TC. I would support the hiring of technical experts to advise the PAC
- There was no opposing argument. It was a bit one sided.

- I think you need to advertise more – especially if you want to fill your two vacant positions
- Not at this time
- Have always wondered about possibility of health risks to humans and other wildlife and plants/veggies – grown locally – of metal concentrations in this area
- Linkage (real or perceived) between heavy metals and human health risks (especially the increased incidence of cancer)
- Concerns
- No. Sudbury property value!
- All aspects, but water is of grave concern (especially groundwater)
- Safety for my children. Are playgrounds safe from harmful chemicals?
- Commercial properties, esp. multi-residential re Phase 1 ESAs. CMHC & other lenders are giving our clients (vendors/buyers) a hard time regarding soil metals levels – forcing us to do Phase 2s – when the results come back above Table A, what do we say then?
- Health Risk
- Interested in results and in particular implications on human health

4. Considering the human health risk assessment being undertaken by the SARA Group, are you aware of any information that is missing in our studies? If yes, what?

- No, except impact of occupational exposure on HHRA
- We have no track on mercury by this group. Are others tracking this? Do the effects of these metals + mercury present a greater risk?
- It would be nice to have water sampled from various residential drinking wells.
- No, there was more info than expected
- No (8 responses)
- Not yet.
- Good Job! You may want to contact Dr. Mustard (Wellness Conference held here about 4 years ago) General health includes many factors as well as environment
- On the poster showing ranges/averages of concentrations of the studied elements, the norms for the province/Canada are not shown. Was this a deliberate decision to avoid 'panic'?
- Ground water

5. Considering the ecological risk assessment being undertaken by the SARA Group, are you aware of any information that is missing about special, unique or sensitive features? If yes, what are they?

- No (9 responses)
- Not yet.
- Particular interest in adverse effects of lead (paint) leading to illness in young children as well as nickel → more public knowledge is needed.
- Not at the moment
- Small rodent studies – esp. chipmunks + squirrels
- Someone needs to analyze the effects of (acid-) rain-water seeping through slag, into the underground water system

6. Do you agree with the study process for the risk assessments? What else would you would like us to consider?

- Yes (8 responses)
- Mercury as mentioned/questioned earlier.
- I think it's great! And I support it.
- OK
- If human health risks are found then the process of metals detoxification needs consideration – I would propose that alternative health practitioners be added to the committee – i.e. expertise in Chelation therapies.
- Not quite up to scratch, but I will be, and then I will probably get back to you.
- Awesome! Input on how to change the environment e.g., growing industrial hemp on the tailings to absorb metals & provide healthier air quality.
- Yes. Anything will be a plus
- Testing humans for contaminants would reveal a lot about factors in the environment
- Agree

7. Are you satisfied with the amount of information presented at this meeting? Is there anything else you would like to see on our website, or at future meetings?

- Yes (6 responses)
- I have not seen the website but will certainly review same. The info presented in the cavern was fine.
- Everything was straight forward and easy to understand. I think a video about the soil study would be popular in the library for the public.
- Well presented, easy to understand
- Yes, No (arrows to each question)
- Satisfied; yes, but not to the point of clapping my hands. What I would like to see is a variety of opinions on the issue. Studies done by other groups.
- Anxious to see the results; process seems to be taking far too long
- Well done. Easy to follow.
- Yes, same as no.6 (“anything will be a plus”)
- Will e-mail
- Some answers to questions raised by lenders – banks + CMHC. These people deal with numbers (dollars) and need to be educated to formulate a policy regarding Sudbury properties.
- Info presented is very comprehensive!

8. Did you find this Open House and the presentation useful?

Yes 16

No 0

Comments/suggestions?

- I am 'writing' before the presentation but expect good things, by the good visual presentation
- Very useful, a little bit repetitive
- Better music – heh
- You ran out of chocolate chip cookies!
- Nice greeting, good presentation
- Keep doing it

9. Do you have any further concerns or issues that you would like to bring to our attention?

- I would like to see the findings published on MCTV in documentary format.
- No (2 responses)
- No except. In the analysis of the high metal content, is any attempt being made to determine in what form the metals are present – solid particles? Adsorbed ions? etc...(this gentleman did get this question answered at the open house, after handing in the questionnaire)
- Do plants absorb chemicals in greater concentrations than the chemicals found in soil in which they are growing? In what part of the plant is the highest concentration of chemicals?
- Methinks that if a company makes a mess, it should pay to clean it up. (Re-greening) using Ontario Works (free labour) just doesn't cut it. Tisk-tisk-tisk.
- More advertising (news, radio) to arouse public interest – Could send newsletters home with the school kids or flyers in mailboxes
- No, you are doing a great job
- We talked to Dr Wren about our concerns: he directed us to specify in this questionnaire that our water would be tested at home during the water tests soon underway. Thank you.