

Expert Panel Convenes to Review Draft Report:

SOILS STUDY RECEIVES INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW

SUDBURY, ON – The Sudbury Soils Study was the focus this week for seven highly respected North American environmental health scientists who convened as an Independent Expert Review Panel (IERP) to assess the Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA), which is part of a comprehensive study underway in the region.

Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (*TERA*) of Cincinnati, Ohio, hosted a Public Briefing on Tuesday evening at Collège Boréal, attracting approximately 50 community members. Environmental scientist Jacqueline Patterson, who coordinated the panel selection for *TERA*, opened the briefing with an outline of the IERP process and introduced the panel members in attendance.

“We know that the soils study is very important to this community, and we are very honoured to be able to come here to review the scientific methods and assumptions that were used by the authors in this report,” said Patterson. “The role of the expert panel is to conduct an in-depth evaluation and interpretation of the science, to ensure that the study follows acceptable principles and is scientifically defensible.”

Following the briefing, the expert panel met for two days of technical meetings with the Sudbury Area Risk Assessment (SARA) Group, the consultants who conducted the study and prepared the draft HHRA report. Based on the findings of the peer-review, *TERA* will submit a consolidated report with recommendations to the Technical Committee, the multi-stakeholder group directing the Sudbury Soils Study.

“The technical meetings are being conducted in-camera at this stage, because the results are still in draft form and need to be verified by consensus among the panel members,” said Patterson in her opening remarks at the public briefing. “The amount of information that has been collected and analyzed in this study is tremendous, and the authors must be given time to consider the feedback from this panel, before the final HHRA is published.”

While the detailed IERP Report is expected to take several months to complete, the panel members agreed on the following general findings in their review of the HHRA, and released the following statements today:

- The panel found this to be a very comprehensive assessment. They were especially pleased to see the extent of sampling done in the community – for example: soil, air, dust, market basket and local foods.
- The assessment appropriately considered all sensitive groups of the population and the possible ways that people in Sudbury might be exposed.
- The panel found the overall approach to be appropriate and provided specific technical recommendations for revisions to improve the scientific soundness of the results. The panel also made suggestions to improve the clarity of the report.

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When results of the HHRA are released in early 2007, a consolidated summary of the panel's comments and recommendations will be published with the report and posted online at www.tera.org.

TERA is a non-profit corporation dedicated to helping environmental, industry, and government groups find common ground through the application of good science to risk assessment.

The Sudbury Soils Study is one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind ever conducted in Canada. Thousands of soil, air, water, vegetable, livestock and fish samples were analyzed for the presence of certain metals that are associated with historic mining activities.

Technical Committee members include representation from Inco, Xstrata Nickel (formerly Falconbridge), the City of Greater Sudbury, Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE), Sudbury & District Health Unit (SDHU), and Health Canada First Nations & Inuit Health Branch.

For more information on the Sudbury Soils Study, visit the website at www.sudburysoilsstudy.com or contact Dr. Chris Wren – Toll-free phone: 1-866-315-0228. Email: questions@sudburysoilsstudy.com