



CONDUCT OF CANDO CONTRACTING LTD.

The Challenge

It has been very difficult to get accurate information from Cando Contracting Ltd. about their project. The facts do not support what they have told us.

Facts

Landowners who live right next to the rail yard property were not notified by Cando Contracting Ltd., CN Railway, Imperial Oil Ltd. or Strathcona County about the rail yard (now completed) to store 225 petroleum tank cars owned by Imperial Oil. On the other hand, Cando had commenced private discussions with Strathcona County in September 2009. Neighbouring landowners found out by accident on May 12, 2010 when one of the contractors bidding on the earthworks construction asked if neighbours would consider selling borrow (fill) material. The contractor indicated they had been told by Cando not to notify adjacent landowners so as not to alert them about the (at that time) proposed rail yard.

The early afternoon of May 14, 2010, Cando indicated they already owned the 5.2-acre parcel of land in question. Later the same afternoon, Cando indicated they were in the process of purchasing the land from CN. Then on June 21, 2010 Cando indicated they had a 15-year lease with CN for the property. We still do not know what the truth is.

On May 14, 2010, Cando indicated they had development permit approval from Strathcona County for the project. On the other hand, on May 28, 2010, Strathcona County administration indicated the development permit was only a "tracking tool" and was not approval for the project.

Cando has indicated they had nowhere else to build such a rail yard to store Imperial Oil's petroleum tank cars. In fact, several other viable options existed.

On June 28, 2010, Cando indicated the entire 5.2-acre property sloped north and therefore there would be no drainage south from the rail yard into a nearby farm dugout and adjacent protected natural areas. Alberta Environment had to point out that, based on Cando's own line drawing plans, the south half of the property drained south while the north half drained north into Mill Creek. The rail yard has already caused flooding of neighbouring private properties in 2011 and 2012.

Cando has indicated there will be little extra noise at the rail yard. In fact, there is ample literature that describes the increased noise generated by idling and slow-moving locomotives, shunting, coupling, decoupling, wheel and brake retarder squeal, and many other rail yard activities. Based on the rail yard now having been active for close to 2 years, the noise has been loud because the rail yard was built much closer to homes than allowed under CN policy and joint FCM/RAC guidelines.

Cando has indicated the rail yard is not very close to any homes or natural areas. In fact, the rail yard property is only 68m from one occupied home and only 163m from another occupied home; and, less than 30m from 2 protected wildlife conservation areas.

Cando has indicated there will be no devaluation of neighbouring property values. In fact, information exists indicating that neighbouring property values are significantly decreased next to rail yards. Homeowners next to the Cando rail yard have found out from property appraisers that their properties have been devalued significantly by the rail yard.

Cando downplays the fire hazard of their new rail yard. In fact, the fire hazard is significantly increased when locomotives idle and move slowly, both of which occur extensively at the rail yard. There has already been one wildfire started by CN since the rail yard became operational in November 2010. This wildfire, on May 17, 2011, set many piles of discarded railroad ties on fire in the CN Rail right-of-way and burned several acres of habitat in the adjacent Bretona ConservAction Area. The wildfire was only about 100 metres from the rail yard.

On May 14, 2010, Cando indicated they would be dropping off or picking up tanker rail cars only two to three times per week. In fact, during the second year of operation of the rail yard, it has been active almost every day, including weekends and holidays for several hours each day.

Updated August 12, 2012