

Metal mining companies dump 180 Million Tons of toxic tailings into water bodies every year

WHY TAILINGS ARE TOXIC

Naturally occurring elements in crushed rock become toxic when exposed from mining:

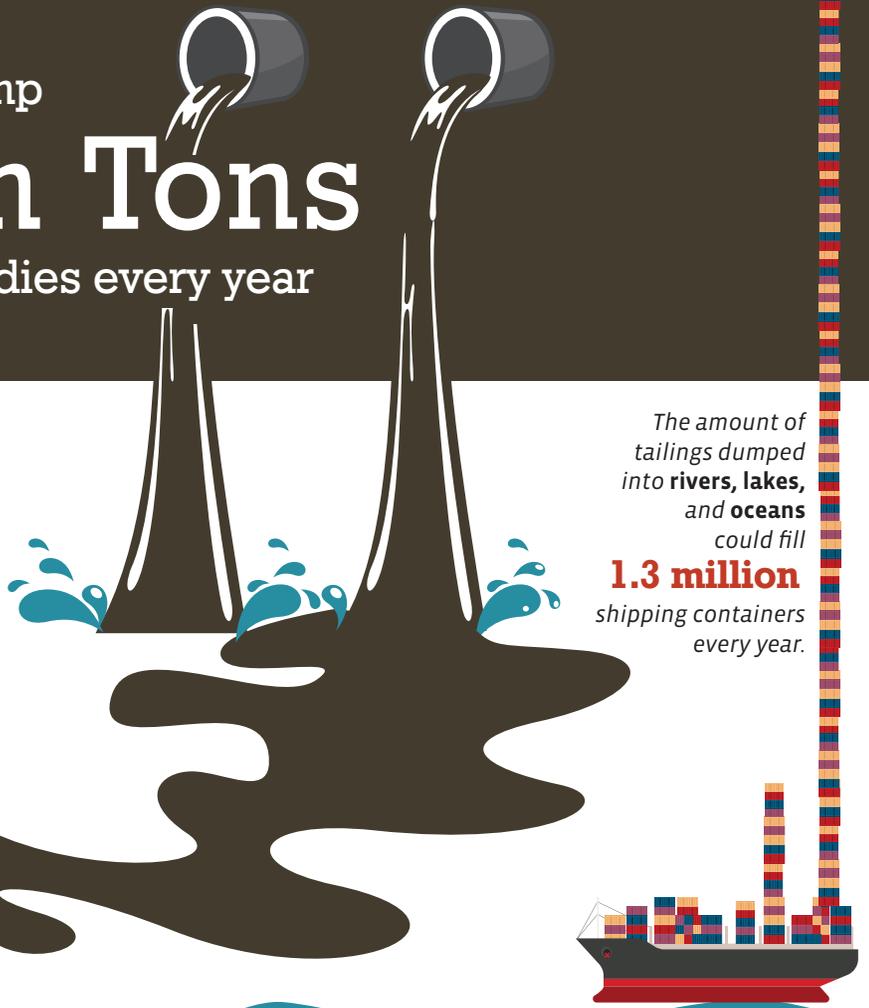
arsenic
lead
mercury



Additives used in processing:

petroleum byproducts
sulfuric acid
cyanide

The amount of tailings dumped into rivers, lakes, and oceans could fill **1.3 million** shipping containers every year.



WHAT'S AT STAKE

It's cheap for companies to dump waste into oceans, rivers and lakes. But the ecological costs are high.



Marine life dosed with toxic heavy metals and milling chemicals and smothered by murkiness from suspended particles cutting off the supply of water and oxygen.



Clogged river channels are forced to change course, and tailings have smothered and flooded vast areas of wetlands and forests.



Human health is at risk as metals and chemicals increase in concentration as they travel up the food chain.



Contamination can spread from rivers to floodplains and affect grazing livestock.



Mine wastes originally dumped into rivers have contaminated home drinking water.

7 HOT SPOTS FOR TAILINGS DUMPING



WHO DUMPS WASTE INTO NATURAL WATER BODIES?

- Barrick Gold (Canada)
- BHP Billiton (Australia/UK)
- Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold (USA)
- Goldcorp (Canada)
- Newcrest Mining (Australia)
- Newmont Mining (USA)
- Rio Tinto (UK/Australia)
- Teck (Canada)
- Vale (Brazil)
- Highlands Pacific (Australia)
- PanAust (Australia)



The top four mines that dump tailings into bodies of water account for 86% of the tailings dumped into bodies of water each year:

1. Freeport McMoRan and Rio Tinto's Grasberg mine in West Papua, Indonesia
2. Newmont Sumitomo Mining's Batu Hijau mine in Indonesia
3. Ok Tedi Mining Ltd.'s mine in Papua New Guinea
4. Cliff's Mining Company's Wabush/Scully mine in Labrador, Canada



EARTHWORKS

earthworksaction.org

2016

Source: "Troubled Waters" 2012 report, Earthworks and MineWatch Canada