People living along the Hammond River near Saint John are worried about how a proposed gypsum quarry will affect their wells, wetlands and quality of life. The project contravenes regulations designed to protect the environment and local residents from this kind of disruption.

Hammond River Holdings, a J.D. Irving company, plans to extract an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of gypsum, metres away from the Hammond River in the rural community of Upham, over a 10-year period, beginning this spring. The gypsum will be transported to the nearby Atlantic Wallboard plant, also owned by J.D. Irving, for processing. Atlantic Wallboard manufactures drywall used by the construction industry.

According to the project’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), yet to be approved by the province of New Brunswick, the proposed quarry will destroy 13 wetlands and three fish-bearing tributaries of the Hammond River. The Hammond River is home to Atlantic salmon, brook trout, smallmouth bass, rainbow smelt, striped bass and shortnose sturgeon.

Cheryl Johnson is one of many Upham residents concerned about how the quarry will affect her country lifestyle. “I love life in the backwoods. We have a large garden where we grow much of our produce. We hunt and fish from the land,” says Johnson, a music teacher and member of Friends of Hammond River.

“J.D. Irving has bought several chunks of land downriver from us and has proposed a large industrial gypsum mine. There would be 25 explosions per year to loosen the rock, 35-40 trucks traveling the roads per day, and 6-10 jobs created on site that would be hired from within the company,” according to Johnson.

Sarah Blenis, another Upham resident, found out about the project when she witnessed core drilling operations in her area in the spring of 2018. She created the Protect Upham Facebook group to share information about the area in the spring of 2018. She created the Protect Upham Facebook group to share information about the area in the spring of 2018. She created the Protect Upham Facebook group to share information about the area in the spring of 2018. She created the Protect Upham Facebook group to share information about the area in the spring of 2018.

Jenn Sherwood’s father’s home is about 500 metres from the proposed blasting zone for the quarry. “Everyday my father is out on this land, taking care of his animals and garden, and hunting. We live off the land here,” says Sherwood.

“I have planned my whole life around building my forever home in Upham. I have been saving to start to build my home this spring and now I have had to stop because of how close it will be. I will now have to look to buy elsewhere because it will disrupt my water and foundation. This is something I can’t risk. I have planned my whole life to raise my children where my ancestors have all lived and now cannot. I am very angry with Irving,” says Sherwood who was planning to build a home that is about 150 metres from the proposed quarry site.

Blenis notes that the province’s quarry standards also prohibit operations within 60 metres of watercourses and regulated wetlands. “These setback limits are also being ignored,” affirms Blenis.

“When the community questioned these violations of Quarty Standards, residents were told by the government that the project will be subjected to the Mining Act, not the Quarry Standards. Because of how the gypsum will be used off-site,” explains Blenis, “When we asked about the regulations under the Mining Act, like royalties, we were informed by the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Mike Holland, that gypsum is a low-value mineral, and that royalties are not imposed on quarry operations.”

Upham residents are questioning whether the province’s lack of clarity on whether the project is a quarry or a mine has to do with the province’s renegotiating of a contract to supply Atlantic Wallboard with gypsum.

The J.D. Irving company was supposed to receive synthetic gypsum from NB Power’s Coleson Cove Generating Station in Saint John until 2020. Last year, the province announced that the power plant would not be able to fulfill the contract and supply the plant with gypsum. With the province now owing millions of dollars in shortfall penalties to Atlantic Wallboard, Blenis suspects that the province will give the Upham quarry the green light and not charge royalties. CBSO reported in 2015 that in the previous six years NB Power had paid Atlantic Wallboard more than $12.3 million in penalties and contract renegotiation fees.

Similar concerns regarding the environmental harm and lack of economic benefit from quarry operations have been raised throughout the province by residents in Fredericton, Norton, Bayside, Memramcook, Estey’s Bridge, and British Settlement.

“The Upham quarry project is not adhering to any setback limits to protect the environment or local community. It will not
It is a quarry or a mine?

David Frank

The Winnipeg General Strike at 100

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 was one of the most significant events in Canadian history. It started as a fight for union recognition but turned into a larger struggle. When many workers came out in support, it proved they no longer going to be "docile." At City Hall in Moncton, he told listeners that government seemed to be trying to "do away with labour organizations" but the workers did not think this was a revolutionary.

At public meetings in Saint John and Moncton, Tipping explained that the strike was about defending labour solidarity and resisting government reprisals. Speaking at Saint John’s Market Street Hall on July 19, he told a large crowd that the strike started as a fight for union recognition but turned into a larger struggle. When many workers came out in support, it proved they no longer going to be "docile.

In Moncton, a vote of thanks was proposed by Colline Desjardins and seconded by lese des Meules. Desjardins was a high school teacher in Acadia to serve as president of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. Only a few months earlier, delegates to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in Toronto voted to set up a Reconstruction Programme calling for major social reforms and improvements in the rights of workers. In its call to action, the CLC declared that solidary fighting for their rights, as the producers of the world’s wealth.

Meanwhile, back in Winnipeg, seven of the strike leaders were arrested. When this news reached the strikers, some were left behind in the Upham quarry. Two were acquitted. One of their supporters, J. S. Woodsworth, was charged with seditious libel for publishing reports of the strike. He was convicted of a lesser charge but never went back to prison. Winnipeg workers sent him to Ottawa as a Labour Member of Parliament. A decade later, he would head the Social Credit Party, the forerunner of the New Democratic Party.

The court documents in Winnipeg in 1919 included a remarkable set of statements, known as "red scare." This was part of the "red scare" fantasy that imagined that the general strike was the start of an attempt to overthrow the government, a conspiracy by the international communist movement.

A century later, the legacy of 1919 is highly visible in Winnipeg, where there are public memorials to the strike leaders and at least one street is named after one of the leaders. A popular musical about the strike has been revived for the outdoor stage this summer and will also be released on film. There is also a new monument, by Bernie Miller and Noam Gonick, to the events of Bloody Saturday. He was one of the leaders of the general strike and "a community strike" and "a revolution of".

The Winnipeg General Strike was a seminal event in Canadian history, an example of "revolutions" and "revolutionary" in its approach to social change. At their annual meetings of the Federation had adopted a resolution on the rights to union membership and collective bargaining. At their rights are often under attack and prevented from being protected. For these reasons, the general strike is sometimes described as "a community strike" and "a revolution of".

The Winnipeg General Strike was a seminal event in Canadian history, an example of "revolutions" and "revolutionary" in its approach to social change. At their annual meetings of the Federation had adopted a resolution on the rights to union membership and collective bargaining. At their rights are often under attack and prevented from being protected. For these reasons, the general strike is sometimes described as "a community strike" and "a revolution of".