

Mine Review Gets World Attention

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Ontario's review of underground mines was in the global spotlight at a recent mining conference in Sudbury.

The [health, safety and prevention review](#) was mentioned by a mine union leader as well as a mining company executive when they addressed about 160 delegates on October 26 at the 36th [International Conference of Safety in Mines Research Institutes](#). It was the first time the conference was held in Canada. The conference was attended by representatives of various countries, mine employers and unions from around the world. The theme was mining safety research.

"It gave the review attention on an international level that it didn't have before," says Bob Barclay, a member of the Ministry of Labour's (MOL) Mining Review Secretariat.

"It publicized it to the international mining community and, as a result, it raised people's interest and there was a lot of curiosity about it from people outside of Ontario."

Bob says the review's mention "sustained the momentum" of improving mining health and safety in Ontario.

"And, it wasn't just about us," he says. "It gave other people in the mining community around the world an opportunity to see how this can be done – how the review transpired and the results that came out of it. It's possible other jurisdictions may want to emulate it."

Bob presented the findings of the report as part of the conference's agenda. The session allowed stakeholders to hear about the process used to develop the review's findings as well as the final outcome. Bob also moderated a session on ground control, one of the review's key aspects.

Other MOL people who attended the conference included:

- Labour Minister Kevin Flynn who spoke at the opening ceremony on October 25
- Ron Hauguth, a mining inspector

- Patrick Giard, a mining engineer
- Sujoy Dey, a corporate risk officer



Since the conference, the review's final report has been requested by many stakeholders who were made aware of the review, Bob says. The mining community has provided positive feedback on the review's findings and its recommendations, he says.

Labour leader Leo Gerard told the conference the review was launched after a long struggle by Leo's home union local for an investigation into a rash of mining accidents.

Leo, international president of the United Steelworkers of America, said the review resulted in "a whole bunch of ideas" – not just what came out in the review's final report, but other things that the mining industry could make use of.

For example, he said he was thinking about how to certify people who have health and safety training and how to have "a consistent level of standards" for the training.

Company executive Fergus Kerr told the conference the review has "some excellent, current health and safety information" from mine operators and researchers.

"It's worth a read," said Fergus, who is vice-president of operations for Global Atomic Fuels Corporation. "It's worth studying if you have the opportunity."

Fergus co-chaired an advisory group of industry, labour and health and safety representatives that provided expert advice on the review led by Ontario's Chief Prevention Office George Gritziotis.

The review's 2015 final report contained 18 recommendations in six key areas, including new technology, health and safety hazards, training, emergency preparedness, the internal responsibility system, and ability of the health and safety system to meet the mining sector's needs.

"Implementation strategies for each of those recommendations have been developed and are being worked on by the Ministry of Labour, Ontario Mining Association and labour," Fergus said.

The conference was organized by [MIRARCO Mining Innovation](#), a non-profit mining research organization located at Laurentian University in Sudbury, and the [Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum](#) (CIM), a non-profit society of mining technical professionals.

MIRARCO President Vic Pakalnis said the conference put Canada on the world stage.

“And the fact the Ontario mining review was well received by participants indicates we’re on the right track to maintaining our global leadership position,” said Vic, who was conference chair.

