

Big Plume: 'Sorry for the smoke'

BY RENATO GANDIA, CALGARY SUN

FIRST POSTED: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2012 04:20 PM MST | UPDATED: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2012 07:10 PM MST



Smoke blankets south Calgary, as seen from above Macleod Trail at the Canyon Meadows LRT walking bridge, on Wednesday, February 8, 2012. Reports say the smoke is drifting from a fire on the Tsuu T'ina reserve west of the city. (Photo by LYLE ASPINALL/Calgary Sun)

 Recommend 6

5



[Report an error](#)

Related Stories

- [Alderman demands smoke action](#)

Tsuu T'ina Nation Chief Sanford Big Plume apologized for the inconvenience a landfill fire caused residents who were forced to endure a haze that blanketed south Calgary since Wednesday.

Big Plume thanked the Nation's neighbours in southwest Calgary for their patience and expressed hope it wouldn't become a political tool in city hall that could jeopardize relations.

"These kinds of fires are unfortunate, but not unusual, and have happened in several jurisdictions across Canada recently," said Big Plume.

"It is also my sincere hope that this successfully fought and contained event does not become political fodder that could jeopardize the improved relationship between Tsuu T'ina and the City of Calgary."

The fire began beneath the surface of a large landfill consisting of construction material and had burned for days while workers struggled to reach subsurface hot spots.

As of 2 p.m. Friday, fire units from Tsuu T'ina, Priddis and Redwood Meadows and dozens of drillers and heavy equipment operators extinguished the blaze.

In an attempt to avoid a similar hazy mess, Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart announced on Friday plans to craft a notice of motion to explore the city's options.

The alderman said she has received hundreds of calls from upset Calgarians about the smoke.

"It was so bad in some places you couldn't see across the street," she said.

"That is unacceptable."

Colley-Urquhart wants the city to look for solutions in existing municipal bylaws and at the federal level for guidance around dealing with environmental repercussions of a landfill belonging to another jurisdiction.

"We need to meet with local members of Parliament, request a meeting with the environment minister, we need to see if there's other precedent set in Canada for this sort of thing happening in other First Nation lands," she said.

"Just because it's not our jurisdiction, the fact remains that we are neighbours."

Colley-Urquhart said she wants to know if the city's strict landfill rules have any direct effect on what's being dumped on the Tsuu T'ina land.

"What I worry about is that we as a municipality has compounded this problem, upping the regulation and the standards of what we expect in our landfill."

The alderman said there had been “urban rumours” that organic materials not allowed at city landfills are being dumped on Native land and she wants the city to investigate whether that’s the case.

renato.gandia@sunmedia.ca

On Twitter: [SUNRenatoGandia](#)

