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Mayor says Baffinland mine will have impacts on Iqaluit

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Iqaluit Mayor Madeleine Redfern says the Mary River iron mine would bring jobs and income to Nunavut, and more people to the capital, putting a strain on Iqaluit's infrastructure.

CBC News

Baffinland wants to develop a mine at the Mary River high-grade iron ore property, about 160 kilometres south of Pond Inlet on northern Baffin Island.

Madeleine Redfern says the mine will bring jobs and income to Nunavut, and she says people with money tend to migrate to the capital from small communities, putting a strain on the city's infrastructure.

"The City of Iqaluit is already struggling to meet the growth and demands from 300 new residents every year" she said. "This will add to that migration."

Eric Prosh of the Nunavut Government has told the hearings that Iqaluit's airport may get even busier during the mine's construction phase, prior to the company building its own airstrips.

Redfern also worries about social problems that might follow, when money begins to flow in some of the smaller communities.

"We are the only community that has the hospital, the only community with the courthouse, [the Baffin Correctional Centre], the women's and youth offender facility, men's shelter, women's shelters, and so if there are negative social impacts in those communities, we'll feel those pressures here. So it will impact our community."

Baffinland has argued that its Mary River project shouldn't have any major impact on community populations or demographics but both Redfern and the Nunavut Government, have rejected that claim.

"We'll not, actually, as a municipality, receive directly the royalties, or the fees from this" Redfern said. "Those will go to the government and the Inuit organizations, so we want to ensure that they're actually aware of our municipal issues and work with us."