

# Alaska State Legislature

Official Business



State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801-1182

April 9, 2019

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Lieutenant Governor Kevin Meyer  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99801

Governor Dunleavy and Lieutenant Governor Meyer,

We write to ask you to join with thousands of Alaskans, dozens of municipalities, 15 of the 19 federally recognized tribes in Southeast Alaska, business owners and tour operators, commercial and sport fishing groups, Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young in the work to defend Alaska's resources from potential impacts of abandoned, operating, and future large-scale mines located in British Columbia (B.C.), near the headwaters of the "transboundary" Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers.

The Taku, Stikine-Iskut, and Unuk-Nass are world-class salmon rivers that originate in northwest B.C. and flow into Southeast Alaska. These rivers have been centers of culture, commerce, and biodiversity for thousands of years, producing 80% of Southeast Alaska king salmon. They contribute \$48 million annually to the Alaska economy, and are integral to the overall \$1 billion annual salmon fishing industry and the \$1 billion annual visitor industry of Southeast Alaska.

B.C. is responsible for at least twelve large-scale, open-pit and underground metal mines that are abandoned, permitted, or operating in the headwaters of these rivers. Without proper management in place to evaluate the potential cumulative effects of multiple mining projects and without robust financial assurances for the projects, these Canadian mining developments threaten to permanently impact the water resources and economic drivers of Southeast Alaska.

We strongly urge the State of Alaska Office of the Governor to continue to engage with the Province of B.C. on the issue of transboundary rivers under the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation (MoU), signed by former Governor Bill Walker and former B.C. Premier Christy Clark in 2015. The Statement of Cooperation on Protection of Transboundary Waters (SoC)--a central part of this MoU--focuses on the transparent sharing of information and best practices, collaboration on data gathering and research, and the discussion of draft permits and authorizations. Additionally, under Section 5 of the SoC, the State of Alaska and the Province of B.C. discuss specific concerns regarding the safety of earthen tailings dams and needed bonding at transboundary mines. The State of Alaska has formally requested B.C. to require that companies with transboundary mines post a full reclamation bond at permit, just as the State of Alaska requires. It is critical that these discussions continue.

In a continued effort to amplify this issue, we also encourage you to partner with the state administrations of the other U.S. states that share a border with British Columbia in a unified call to the U.S. Department of State to defend U.S. interests and resources. Washington, Idaho, and Montana all currently face similar issues with upstream B.C. mining activity in transboundary rivers. State leaders must take every opportunity to impress upon the U.S. federal government the urgent need for action in these shared and globally significant waterways.

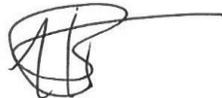
Thank you for your work to protect Alaskan interests and for ensuring that our state is represented on the front lines moving forward.

**Respectfully,**

**Alaska Legislators**



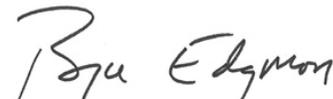
Senator Donald Olson



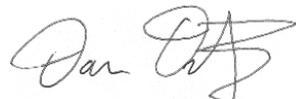
Senator Tom Begich



Senator Bill Wielechowski



Speaker Bryce Edgmon



Representative Dan Ortiz



Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins



Representative Tiffany Zulkosky



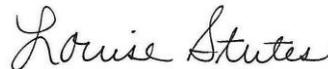
Representative Adam Wool



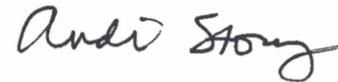
Senator Jesse Kiehl



Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson



Representative Louise Stutes



Representative Andi Story



Representative Harriet Drummond



Representative Geran Tarr



Representative Sara Haman

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*Andy Josephson*

Representative Andy Josephson

*John Lincoln*

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*Grier Hopkins*

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*Laddie Shaw*

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*Matt Claman*

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*Chris Tuck*

Representative Chris Tuck

*Zack Fields*

Representative Zack Fields