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January 25, 2014

Honorable Cathy Giessel  
Resources Committee  
Alaska State Senate  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Giessel,

Thank you for introducing SJR-15 which opposes international designations of lands and waters of Alaska unless previously approved by the State Legislature and U.S. Congress.

International land designations such as International Parks, World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves provide one more mechanism for environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) to harass and block development projects. Over the past 25 years I have watched how such designations have been used against projects around the world.

The New World Mine in Montana was blocked in large part by pressure from local and international ENGOS arguing that it was adjacent to Yellowstone National Park, a World Heritage Site. The proposed mine was across the Wyoming border in Montana; it was several miles into Montana; it was on a drainage flowing away from the Park; it was in an historic mining district where mining first began more than 100 years ago; the mine would have cleaned up the historic tailings and environmental problems from the early mining that occurred before current environmental criteria; the mine would have created several hundred skilled, year-around, high-quality jobs. However, the project was blocked by this pressure.

On December 18, 1996 the Volcanoes of Kamchatka World Heritage Site was "enrolled" as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations office that manages such listings. That very day ENGOS sent letters and press releases pressuring the Overseas Private Insurance Corporation (OPIC) to not provide political risk insurance for the proposed Aginskoye Mine because it was near this new World Heritage Site. The area of the proposed mine was not some pristine site. It included all manner of facilities and a village of more than 1000 people that had been exploring the area for a dozen years. If memory serves me, when Russia realized what was happening it moved the boundary of the World Heritage Site and the mine was built. Try that in the U.S.

A uranium mine in Australia that had been in operation for more than 10 years needed additional permits when it came under ENGO attack. It was surrounded by a World Heritage Site and the internationally-organized-connected ENGOS staged protests in Europe outside the board meeting of the company that was buying the yellowcake from the mine.

I cringe to think of what would have happened to the Red Dog Mine if Cape Krusenstern National Monument had been designated an international park as is now being proposed by the

U.S. State Department. The road across Krusenstern required an Act of Congress and I am certain the ENGOs would have lobbied hard against that Act. If such a park was created today what affect would it have on: making changes to the Red Dog Port (DeLong Mountains Transportation System); commercial fishing; developing Port Clarence for spill and emergency response vessels; offshore drilling; other offshore minerals exploration; development of state and private lands?

The very existence of an internationally designated area can and has been used in an attempt to block development on adjacent lands. I would fully expect to see a new international park used to harass and block development on State, Bering Straits Native Corporation and NANA lands.

I urge passage of this SJR-15 to help protect the future of all Alaska with my immediate concern being Western Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steven C. Borell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Steven C. Borell, P.E.  
Principal