



ALASKA MINERS
ASSOCIATION

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March 18, 2015

Representative Mark Neuman
Representative Steve Thompson
House Finance Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB115

Dear Representative Neuman and Representative Thompson:

The Alaska Miners Association thanks you for the opportunity to comment on HB115, an Act relating to the sovereignty of the State and the transfer of public lands.

AMA is a non-profit membership organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,800 members that come from seven statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, vendors, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies. We look for and produce gold, silver, platinum, molybdenum, lead, zinc, copper, coal, limestone, sand and gravel, crushed stone, armor rock, and other materials.

Access to and across lands within the State of Alaska has been a top priority of the Alaska Miners Association for many years. In far too many instances, access to our mineral deposits, inholdings, or other vital land bases has been impeded by federal regulation, adverse policy, Presidential Orders and negative decisions.

Indeed, AMA publishes an annual "Issues of Concern" document, outlining the most important issues pertaining to mining activity in Alaska. A critical item at the forefront of the document details, "Finalize land conveyances to the State and Alaska Native Corporations and lift all Federal withdrawals and public land orders established by the Secretary of Interior under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act." These withdrawals need to be lifted in order to open federal lands to mineral entry under federal mining laws. The most recent version of this bill, CSHB115, addresses this point by requiring the United States government to lift certain land orders and federal withdrawals, ultimately delivering the promised acreage of lands at Statehood and at the time of passage of those two landmark pieces of Legislation.

The transfer of lands to the State of Alaska is in the best interests of Alaskans and allows the lands to be managed in a multiple use manner, with the maximum benefit to the people, as is required by our Constitution. We urge you to pass HB115 as swiftly as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Deantha Crockett
Executive Director