

Dear Representative Stutes,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to Alaskans' concerns regarding transboundary mining and the risks posed to our downstream interests.

My name is Breanna Walker, I am a student at the University of Alaska Southeast and have been living in Juneau, Alaska for almost two years. While I am a new resident to Alaska, I feel very strongly that these transboundary mines threaten the way of life in my new home.

I plan to spend my life in Alaska; I hope to have a career here, to make my home here, perhaps even raise a family here. The transboundary mines we are talking about threaten the very thing that brought me to the last frontier: salmon. Unlike many folks writing to you about this issue, I am not a fishermen. While I have certainly tried, time and time again, to catch a beautiful and elusive wild salmon, I tend to find myself distracted by the simple beauty of a colorful salmon swimming tirelessly upstream. Ultimately choosing to put down my rod, to simply watch the fish with utter fascination. You see, I came to Alaska with hopes of studying salmon, of seeing wild salmon in a still wild and healthy ecosystem. I studied Aquatic and Fishery Science at the University of Washington before transferring to UAS where I am continuing my studies. Down in Washington, the salmon runs are often low, the habitat has been lost, either cut down or dammed, the waters polluted, and so the list goes on. The salmon have, in many places in the lower 48, have been diminished. And so, I made my journey north to the last frontier in search of wild and salmon and wild places.

Mines like the Red Chris Mine, KSM, and Talsequah Chief Mine, threaten these sacred things. This place gives life. Clean freshwater gives salmon, and salmon feeds more creatures than one would image, including us. Salmon feed the orca, the forests, the eagles, the bears, the people. Everything that I know as Alaska, is, in essence, salmon. That is what makes this place special. We, as Alaskans, have nothing to gain from these mines, and yet everything to lose. I believe that mining should be held to the highest standards with so much at risk, especially in transboundary watersheds. The United States and Canadian federal governments must secure enforceable protections and financial assurances for our transboundary rivers.

Thank you for taking time to read my written testimony, I ask that you take it into consideration and ensure the State of Alaska secures the commitment from the United States federal government to pursue international solutions to this international problem.

Sincerely,
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