

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Dennis Egan
Representative Sam Kito III
Representative Justin Parish
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Dan Ortiz



State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska
99801-1182

January 31, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker
Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

The Honorable Byron Mallott
Lieutenant Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Walker and Lt. Governor Mallott:

For decades, acid mine drainage (AMD) pollution from the Tulsequah Chief mine has flowed across our border. The pollution affects water quality, making it harder to market Alaska seafood based on our clean, pristine ocean and rivers. Alaska has responsibly managed habitat in the transboundary Taku watershed and we need our neighbors in British Columbia (B.C.) to do the same.

Two mining companies have gone bankrupt trying to re-develop this mine. Under your administration's leadership B.C. Minister Bill Bennett witnessed the mine pollution firsthand. Recent statements by Minister Bennett indicate the province now recognizes it likely will need to assume responsibility for mine cleanup and closure, and the B.C. government has a budget surplus. That makes this the best opportunity since the Tulsequah Chief was abandoned in 1957 to achieve a lasting cleanup.

But remediation is no sure thing. B.C. has not specifically committed to cleanup, and Minister Bennett, who retires in May, has downplayed the effects of the AMD. Alaska must do all we can to ensure B.C. commits to and implements immediate, meaningful steps toward mine cleanup and closure.

Like you, we hope the Statement of Cooperation, negotiated in good faith, will prove its worth. The first, defining test is cleaning up the Tulsequah Chief. This will set the tone for Alaska fishermen, businesses, and communities, as B.C. pursues projects like Red Chris and the proposed KSM mine. We call on your Administration to ensure Alaska's downstream interests are not harmed by upstream development in B.C. in the past, present, or future. Cleaning up the old Tulsequah Chief mine would be an excellent way to start.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sen. Dennis Egan in blue ink.

Sen. Dennis Egan

Handwritten signature of Rep. Sam Kito in blue ink.

Rep. Sam Kito

Handwritten signature of Rep. Dan Ortiz in blue ink.

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