



March 13, 2017

Representative Dan Ortiz
Alaska State House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 513
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Joint Resolution 9

The Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO) represents sportfishing guides, charter captains, and lodge owners throughout Southeast Alaska. SEAGO advocates for reasonable laws, regulations, and policies which ensure the long-term sustainability of our businesses and fishery resources. We write today to express SEAGO's support for House Joint Resolution 9 (HJR9), calling on the United States government to continue working with the Canadian government to investigate, mitigate, and prevent harmful transboundary effects of upstream Canadian mining and development.

Southeast guided sportfishing businesses depend on clean water and healthy wild fish. These businesses serve anglers from around the world travelling specifically to participate in fisheries fed by the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers. Both developed and proposed mines at the headwaters of these rivers put major river systems at long-term risk from a combination of acid mine drainage, toxic sediments, heavy metals, and other pollutants. The devastating failure of British Columbia's Mount Polley tailings dam serves as an example of the risks posed by these mines. It likewise demonstrates a lack of existing policies and practices to prevent, mitigate, or provide restitution for such occurrences.

As with other marine tourism industries, guided sport fishing puts millions of dollars into Southeast economies and creates hundreds of jobs. Clients, businesses, and employees frequent local businesses, and spend money on vehicles, gas, fishing supplies, fishing licenses, and fish stamps. Southeast Alaska cannot afford to endanger its fishing and tourism industries by ignoring risks to its waters.

The State of Alaska and the Province of British Columbia have already entered cooperative agreements to discuss the protection of our shared waterways. HJR 9 is a vital appeal to our federal government to take firm action in support of State efforts to safeguard our natural resources and businesses. As such, SEAGO respectfully requests that the Legislature move HJR 9 forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Weinstein', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Samantha Weinstein
Executive Director, SEAGO
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