

HJR9 calls for international action on a federal level and therefore provides more opportunity for tribes to be included.

Alaska Bares All the Environmental Risks and Receives No Economic Benefits from Transboundary Mining

Central Council does not oppose resource development in Southeast Alaska. Mining is a significant contributor to our rural economies. However, transboundary mining poses no economic benefit to Alaskans. In fact, the permitting policies of British Columbia is a detriment to Alaskan opportunities for competitive investments.

Southeast Alaska's tourism and fishing industries provides for the livelihoods for families in the urban and rural communities in our region. The economic industries our communities depend upon must be protected. While the Canadian government may benefit, Alaska continues to carry the environmental risks associated with mines built and operating on relaxed permitting measures.

The State of Alaska has a Duty to Protect Citizens from the Potential Risks from Transboundary Development.

There are already significant examples of environmental degradation due to the mine permitting practices of British Columbia, as recent 2014 with the Mt Polley tailings dam failure. It is concerning to Central Council that draft "Principles Allocating Loss Arising from Hazardous Activities" is lacking within the Statement of Cooperation. Alaska must ensure that the compensation is paid to the victims of transboundary damage by activities on its territory. The governments must ensure the operator's liability and establish an additional fund, but British Columbia still has not established any policy despite the fact there has already been significant damage to watersheds.

As environmental degradation continues to happen in British Columbia mining cites such as Mt Polley and the Tulsequah Chief, the subsistence and traditional ways of life of Alaskan Natives and Canadian First Nations are at risk of extinction. Traditional language, culture, art, song, and dance were established on the traditional territories our ancestors inhabited since time immemorial. The trauma our societies face with the destruction of entire watersheds will be significant, and will manifest in the common socioeconomic effects of historical and colonial trauma.

Transboundary Mining and the risks associated to the land and our way of life will continue to be Central Council's priority. We will continue advocating on the need for sustainable mine permitting practices, build relationships with First Nations and other tribes facing transboundary issues, and urging our federal delegation and administration to hold British Columbia and Canada accountable.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Peterson
President



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
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March 14, 2017

Alaska State Legislature
House Fisheries Committee
Room 120
4th Ave and Main Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: In Support of House Joint Resolution 9

Dear House Fishery Committee Members,

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Central Council) is a federally recognized tribal government that provides services to rural residents in Southeast Alaska, the ancestral territory of Tlingit and Haida nations whom we serve and represent. The Tlingit and Haida people have lived off these lands and waters since time immemorial, and many tribal citizens also earn a living as commercial fishermen and other water-dependent livelihoods. Protecting Southeast economies, cultures, and traditional ways of life in our traditional homeland from the negative impacts of transboundary mining is of the utmost importance to Central Council. I appreciate the committee hearing House Joint Resolution 9. Central Council believes that the State of Alaska's Statement of Cooperation with British Columbia does not address serious concerns of Alaskans' interest. We hope that this issue continues to be monitored and discussed with all governments and stakeholders.

We therefore support House Joint Resolution 9 as a way to enhance ongoing efforts to address transboundary mining concerns because 1) the Statement of Cooperation between Alaska and British Columbia does not include tribal governments in government to government negotiations and cannot speak for or protect tribal interests, 2) Alaskans bare all the environmental risks and no economic benefits from transboundary mining and 3) State of Alaska has a duty to protect citizens from potential risks such as transboundary environmental degradation.

Statement of Cooperation Between Alaska and British Columbia Does Not Include Tribal Governments and Cannot Speak for Tribal Interests

The State of Alaska's Statement of Cooperation doesn't include the beneficial processes proven successful in Memorandums of Understanding between British Columbia and the State of Washington. Prior consultation and information sharing, as well as specific measures of coordination, cooperation, and consultation for federal recognized tribes is not included. This is a significant detriment to the scientific study of transboundary watersheds, as Central Council is the sole government collecting baseline water quality data on the major transboundary rivers in our region. In addition, since the State of Alaska does not recognize tribal governments, the State does not speak for tribes and cannot provide neither opposition nor support on any agreements.