

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001
907-465-3500
fax: 907-465-3532



550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1700
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-269-7450
fax 907-269-7461
www.Gov.Alaska.Gov
Governor@Alaska.Gov

Governor Bill Walker
STATE OF ALASKA

October 31, 2018

The Honorable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia
P.O. Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC V8W 9E1

Via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Horgan,

Alaska values our many collaborations with the government of British Columbia. I am hopeful the mutually beneficial work we have been engaged in under the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation, signed by former Premier Christy Clark and me in 2015, and the related Statement of Cooperation on Protection of Transboundary Waters, will continue undiminished through succeeding administrations. Our joint efforts to protect the quality of rivers that extend across our shared boundary are particularly important to our indigenous peoples and our fishing industries.

I want to thank you for all of your administration's efforts in reviewing and enhancing your oversight of the mining industry in the province. This is important to Alaskans because there are a number of mines that are, or in the future could be developed, on a transboundary river. History has shown us around the world, where there isn't sufficient oversight of the management of tailings and wastewater generated from mining, severe environmental problems can occur.

One of the ongoing concerns Alaskans have is whether the amount of financial assurances British Columbia currently requires for mining companies who operate in the Transboundary region will be sufficient to pay for ongoing water management, monitoring and treatment costs, or final reclamation at closure of a mine, if the owner runs into financial difficulties. These concerns arise, in significant part, because statutory decision-makers in British Columbia may accept less than full security based on a company's financial strength, and the public has less access to the data and analyses used to set the amount of the financial assurances in British Columbia. The current liquidity concerns relating to Imperial Metals Corporation, owner of the Red Chris Mine, and the receivership of Chieftain Metals, former operator of the Tulsequah Chief Mine, underscore the need to have adequate financial assurances in place. Both of these properties are located on river drainages that flow into Alaska.

We appreciate the steps you have already taken to review the transparency and adequacy of your mine reclamation security policy and the opportunity for the public to comment on it. Alaska looks forward to submitting comments during the public comment period while we continue to have our discussions under Section 5 of the Statement of Cooperation on this and other topics of mutual interest.

The Honorable John Horgan

October 31, 2018

Page 2

Additionally, I see a part of the state of Alaska's responsibility to our indigenous peoples, and to the many other residents who rely on the health of these waters, to continue to raise our serious concerns about the long-outstanding management problems at the Tulsequah Mine site. As long as contaminants from the site continue to drain into the Tulsequah River and downstream to the Taku River, people on our side of the border will worry about the health of the fish and other marine life in Alaska that depend on the quality of these waters. Alaskans will also continue to question the ability of Canada and the Province to assure mineral development is done without sacrificing environmental values.

I again encourage the Province to do everything you can to expeditiously gain control of the Tulsequah Mine site, stop the unpermitted discharges, and fully remediate the site. We agree with the statement in the September 20, 2018 letter to Michelle Mungall, B.C. Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, from the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, that the situation has gone on far too long. We, too, are frustrated by the slow progress and are skeptical that any viable proposal to operate the site as a mine again will be forthcoming, and should not be a reason for delaying full reclamation of the site.

In closing, I appreciate all the work that has been done on both sides of our border to protect the quality of Transboundary Rivers, but there is more work to do. It is my hope British Columbia and Alaska will continue this work with the same high level of cooperation we have enjoyed during my administration. This cooperation, memorialized in the Statement of Cooperation, includes the sharing of information and best practices, collaborating on data gathering and research, sharing and discussing draft permits and authorizations, enhancing our engagement with our indigenous peoples and stakeholders, and improving the transparency of government decision-making. I believe the long-term protection of our shared rivers is dependent on this.

Sincerely,



Bill Walker
Governor

cc: Honorable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Honorable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Honorable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Dave Nikolejsin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Mark Zacharias, Deputy Minister of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Peter Robb, Assistant Deputy Minister, Mining and Mineral Resources Division
David Morel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Protection Division
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senator of Alaska
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senator of Alaska
The Honorable Don Young, United States Representative of Alaska
The Honorable Steve Bullock, Governor, State of Montana
The Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor, State of Washington