

Presented by: The Manager
Introduced:
Drafted by: A. G. Mead

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Serial No. 2710

A Resolution of the City and Borough of Juneau in Support of the International Joint Commission's Involvement in the Alaska and British Columbia Transboundary Region.

WHEREAS, the transboundary rivers of Northwest British Columbia and Southeast Alaska have tremendous unique economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, protecting productive pristine waters and intact habitats throughout these transboundary river systems is necessary to ensure healthy wild salmon populations and abundant fisheries; and

WHEREAS, large-scale mining in British Columbia is experiencing unprecedented and rapid expansion within the Taku, Stikine and Unuk watersheds; and

WHEREAS, proposed mines include Tulsequah Chief, New Polaris, and Big Bull in the Taku watershed; Galore Creek, Red Chris and Schaft Creek in the Stikine watershed; and the Kerr-Sulphurets Mitchell project in the headwaters of the Unuk River; and

WHEREAS, large-scale mining and energy development could have significant adverse effects on the environment and fisheries within the transboundary region, including areas important to residents of and businesses in Juneau; and

WHEREAS, the proposed mines would generate billions of tons of acid generating tailings, which would be held behind huge dams and which could pose the threat of acid rock drainage for centuries, if not in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, the tailings would need monitoring, maintenance, water treatment, and possible remediation for centuries, if not in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, ongoing acid rock drainage at the Tulsequah Chief mine, and the Mount Polley tailings dam failure demonstrate weaknesses in current monitoring and enforcement efforts in British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the federal-provincial environmental assessment process does not address the long-term, cumulative effects of industrial development in the transboundary region; and

WHEREAS, commercial fishermen, subsistence and recreational users, elected leaders, local communities and Native Tribes on both sides of the Alaskan/Canadian border have raised concerns about the pace and scope of the proposed industrial development in the headwaters of transboundary river systems and the potential for harm to water quality, fish and wildlife, and the socio-economic sustainability of local communities such as Juneau within the region; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty states “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other,” and the treaty establishes a mechanism to address transboundary river concerns known as the International Joint Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA:

Section 1. The City and Borough of Juneau strongly urges the United States government to continue to work with the government of Canada to refer the issue of transboundary development in the Alaska-British Columbia region to the International Joint Commission, and to use any and all powers afforded it under the Boundary Waters Treaty to investigate the long-term, region-wide downstream effects of proposed and existing industrial development and develop measures to ensure that Alaska resources are not harmed by upstream development in British Columbia.

Section 2. The concerns of affected local communities, individuals, and user groups downstream from these projects must be integral to transboundary watershed development decision-making. The City and Borough urges our Canadian neighbors and the United States government to establish greater opportunity for these voices to be heard.

Section 3. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately after its adoption.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Merrill Sanford, Mayor

Attest:

Laurie J. Sica, Municipal Clerk