



**RESOLUTION: KIC 19-56**

**TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL OF THE KETCHIKAN INDIAN COMMUNITY (KIC) UNUK**

**WHEREAS,** the Ketchikan Indian Community (“KIC or the “Tribe”), is a federally recognized Tribal government organized under a Constitution and Bylaws (collectively, the “Constitution”) ratified on October 18, 2017, and previously organized under a Constitution and Bylaws ratified on January 16, 1979, and previously organized under a Constitution and Bylaws ratified on January 27, 1940, in each instance pursuant to Section 16 of the Indian Reorganization Act (“IRA”) of 1934 as amended; and

**WHEREAS,** the KIC Tribal Council (the “Tribal Council”) is the representative Tribal Government of the Tribe; and

**WHEREAS,** We Ketchikan Indian Community live within the transboundary region of the Unuk Watershed and represent 6226 members; and

**WHEREAS,** We have been caretakers of this place since time-immemorial and have a duty to protect it for our generations yet to come; and

**WHEREAS,** Several proposed and operating mines, some of the largest in the world are located in the watersheds that sustain Southeast Alaskan communities; and

**WHEREAS,** The 43 communities and cultures of Southeast Alaska, including the Tsimshian, Tlingit and Haida Nations, are largely dependent on the relationship to waterways for commercial fisheries, sport fisheries, and other maritime harvest and food security; and

**WHEREAS,** The consequences of mining have a history of detrimental impacts on downstream rivers and water quality that healthy fisheries depend upon, therefore posing a threat to us in Ketchikan Indian Community; and

**WHEREAS,** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) maintains that the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples include “the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world”; and



- WHEREAS,** Canada ratified *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) in 2016, including the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) for all Indigenous groups impacted by the actions of the federal government; and
- WHEREAS,** Harvest sharing arrangements currently exist under provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty between the U.S. and Canada for Chinook, sockeye and Coho salmon returning to the Stikine River; and
- WHEREAS,** Mining projects in Canada do not contribute to the local economies of Alaska but will contribute harm to Alaskan waters; and
- WHEREAS,** The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the United States and Canada states that “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other”; and
- WHEREAS,** Both UNDRIP and the Boundary Waters Treaty recognize that the water, fish, and people of a shared watershed enjoy rights that transcend national boundaries; and
- WHEREAS,** The mines in the Unuk Watershed include the historic Eskay Creek Mine, the operational Brucejack Mine, and, most concerning, the proposed and permitted Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell (KSM) mega-mine; and
- WHEREAS,** The fully permitted KSM mega-mine exploratory operation is underway at the headwaters of the Unuk and Nass Rivers within British Columbia, under the company Seabridge Gold Inc.; and
- WHEREAS,** Waters of the Unuk River and the surrounding watershed support the life of integral foods, such as the five species of Pacific salmon, oolichan, trout, and plants and fungi that support subsistence within the watershed; and
- WHEREAS,** The KSM mine has potential to directly harm citizens of the United States and British Columbia by way of harm to the Unuk River’s water quality, which will directly impact foods and drinking water; and
- WHEREAS,** Large-scale extractive industries, including mining projects at all stages, can bring disruptive and damaging practices and consequences to the region including a rise in substance abuse, domestic violence, community divisions, economic disparity, and a decline in cultural practices; and
- WHEREAS,** Premier Horgan, leader of the British Columbia Provincial Government, has recently committed to bring provincial laws into harmony with UNDRIP; and



**WHEREAS,** Our Alaskan Senators have recently stated their support for greater mining protections on transboundary rivers in British Columbia (BC) and called upon BC leadership to take action to guarantee the protection of Alaska's natural resources; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the responsibility of the Alaskan and British Columbia Governments to work together to safeguard the Unuk Watershed from harm;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,** We, Ketchikan Indian Community, call upon the Government of British Columbia, as the jurisdiction where mines in the transboundary Unuk Watershed are regulated, to act immediately to protect the Unuk Watershed and all who depend on it from the impacts of mining.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT,** We strongly support Premier Horgan's efforts to implement UNDRIP, including FPIC, in all Indigenous communities for all Indigenous people, specifically including those in Alaska.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT,** We ask the British Columbia Provincial Government and Agencies to conduct a new environmental assessment for the KSM mine that incorporates the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Free Prior and Informed Consent in light of the new British Columbia Environmental Assessment Act, which came into force in August of 2019 and takes into account a wider range of effects in the final approval process than was conducted for the current environmental assessment, including health, society, gender, climate change, Aboriginal peoples, jobs, and the economy.



