



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

APR 28 2014

Dear Senator Begich:

Thank you for your April 2 letter regarding water quality issues in the Stikine, Taku, and Unuk rivers that flow from Canada into Alaska.

The State Department understands the vital importance of the fishing and tourism industries to Alaska and to the rest of the United States. The jobs and revenue produced are crucial and it is our mission to protect these interests as well as our water resources. We recognize the particular importance that Alaska Native communities place on proper stewardship of Alaska's river. The State Department has long championed responsible environmental practices in extractive industries worldwide as a foreign policy priority.

Officials from our Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs will raise the issue of responsible mining activities in British Columbia, and concerns about its possible impact on water quality in transboundary rivers during an upcoming meeting with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs' environment team.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Frifield".

Julia Frifield
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
Mark Begich,
United States Senate.