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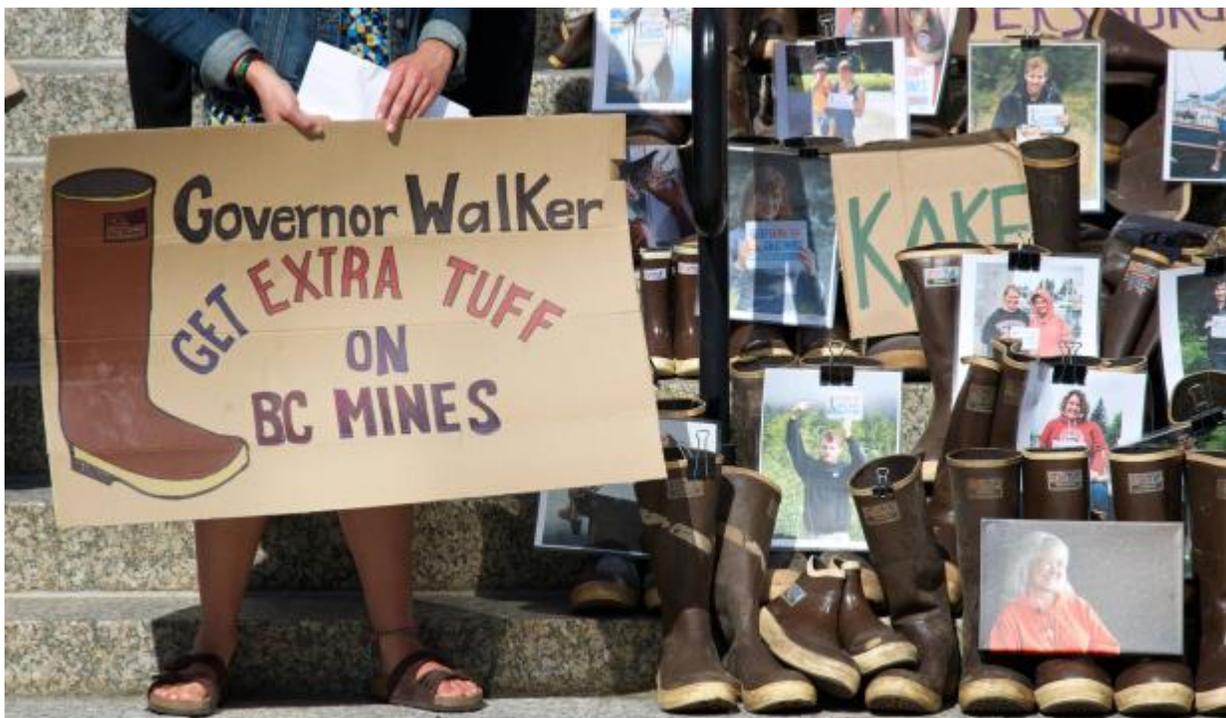
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By ALEX McCARTHY (/alex-mccarthy)

Juneau Empire

Mayor will pen letter to Secretary of State about transboundary mines

Letter will echo concerns in Gov. Walker letter from November, 2015 CBJ resolution



In this file photo from 2015, a protester stands next to rubber boots on the steps of the Alaska State Capitol during a rally to bring attention to the long-term protection of transboundary waters, principally the Taku, Stikine and Unuk watersheds. (Michael Penn | Juneau Empire)

In 2015, the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly passed a resolution asking the United States government to ask the Canadian government to keep Alaska's environmental interests in mind as it pursues mining in British Columbia.

Nearly three years later, the Assembly redoubled its efforts. The Assembly members agreed Monday to draft a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to work with Canadian officials to consider Alaska's fisheries and communities as it considers mining projects in B.C.

The letter will echo a letter

(https://www.salmonbeyondborders.org/uploads/3/9/0/1/39018435/signed_ak_delegation_le that Gov. Bill Walker, Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott and the Alaska Congressional Delegation sent

Tillerson on Nov. 13, Mayor Ken Koelsch said. That letter carries the signatures of Walker, Mallott, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan and Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska.

It will also refer back to the city's resolution in February 2015 urging the Canadian government to involve the **International Joint Commission** (<http://www.ijc.org/en/>) (IJC), which is a bi-national organization that looks to prevent and resolve disputes between the U.S. and Canada about their boundary waters. The 2015 resolution also asked that IJC investigate the long-term downstream effects of proposed and existing industrial developments.

SEE ALSO

Clean up, closure of the Tulsequah Chief is long overdue
(<http://juneauempire.com/opinion/2017-12-18/clean-closure-tulsequah-chief-long-overdue>)

City officials looking to stay in the loop as RCA considers AEL&P sale
(<http://juneauempire.com/local/news/2017-12-19/city-officials-looking-stay-loop-rca-considers-aelp-sale>)

Deputy Mayor Jerry Nankervis proposed that Koelsch draft the letter, referencing meetings that the Assembly members had with Salmon Beyond Borders, which is a campaign to "defend and sustain our transboundary rivers, jobs and way of life," according to its website.

The city also joins a group of 29 tribes **that partnered together in October** (<http://juneauempire.com/local/news/state/2017-10-20/group-29-tribes-oppose-pebble-mine-bc-s-transboundary-projects>) to work together in opposing mining projects in both Southeast and Bristol Bay. Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) and the Douglas Indian Association (DIA) were included in the agreement.

The governments of Alaska and B.C. have been in contact in recent years about the issue, signing a **Memorandum of Understanding** (https://gov.alaska.gov/Walker_media/press_release_resources/20151125_ak-bc_mou.pdf) in 2015 that was a non-binding agreement for the two governments to work together whenever possible. The two governments also signed a **Statement of Cooperation** ([<http://juneauempire.com/local/news/2017-12-18/mayor-will-pen-letter-secretary-state-about-transboundary-mines>](http://ltgov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/10/20161006-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Statement-of-Cooperation-Final.pdf) in October 2016 that served as another pledge for the two sides to work together in researching the long-term effects that mining projects would have.

A Salmon Without Borders **statement** (<https://www.salmonbeyondborders.org/press-releases/salmon-beyond-borders-statement-on-joint-state-of-alaska-alaska-congressional-delegation-letter-calling-for-international-solutions-regarding-transboundary-watersheds>) following the November letter said agreements such as the Memorandum of Understanding are good to see, but involving the federal government is a bigger step.

“A complementary process between the U.S. and Canada that ultimately leads to binding protections for Alaskans is essential in seeking an international solution for this international problem,” the statement read.

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