

# Lt. Governor Mallot and Sen. Sullivan talk transboundary mining with Canadian officials

By **June Leffler, KSTK - Wrangell** - February 5, 2018

Lt. Governor Byron Mallot and Sen. Dan Sullivan met with Canadian officials last Sunday and Monday to press for more U.S. input on transboundary mines.

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Sullivan says he wants Alaska and the U.S. to be more involved in the permitting process for mines located in Canadian watersheds that drain into Southeast Alaska. He also wants Canada to require mine operators compensate impacted Alaskans in case of environmental disasters.

"To protect essentially our economy, whether it's fisheries or tourism in Southeast Alaska," Sullivan said. "If, god forbid, we had a Mount Polley type disaster that went into our waters."

In 2014, the Mount Polley Mine tailings dam collapsed, releasing millions of gallons of waste into nearby lakes and the Cariboo River. The disaster has raised fears that similar accidents in the future could hurt the region's salmon runs.

Mallott and Sullivan also asked Canada to join water quality testing in Southeast waters. And the Alaskan officials requested the immediate reclamation of the Tulsequah Chief mine. It is an abandoned mine in British Columbia that continues to leak toxic water into a tributary of the Taku River near Juneau.

"What we've been able to do is A) emphasize that it's important to the federal government and B) that it's really important to us as Alaskans," Sullivan said. "And we put forward some specific requests. And we're going to press on those. And I think they are legitimate requests... we certainly hope our Canadian friends will follow up with us to work on it."

The U.S. State Department sent a letter to Sullivan saying it and the EPA are also talking to the Canadian government about these issues.