

Transboundary talks moving to federal level

By [Margaret Bauman](#) - February 8, 2018



Alaska Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott and Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, say meetings with Canadian government officials in Ottawa over transboundary mining issues were productive, and will continue at a bilateral session coming up in April on broader issues for both nations.

Mallott and Sullivan were in Ottawa on Feb. 5 to talk with Canadian ministers of natural resources, environment and climate, fisheries and crown-indigenous relations and northern affairs about Alaska's concerns over the potential impact of operating, abandoned and planned British Columbia mines on salmon-rich rivers flowing into Southeast Alaska.

Alaska and British Columbia officials began implementing a statement of cooperation in December of 2016 on transboundary mining and water quality concerns in Southeast Alaska, but Alaska's concerns over continuous pollution from the abandoned Tulsequah Chief mine in British Columbia and financial guarantees for cleanup of future mine pollution were not addressed. With the Tulsequah Chief mine in receivership, there are currently no funds to halt pollution from the abandon mine into transboundary waters.



That was an issue, Alaska officials said, would have to be addressed on a federal government to government level.

Mallott said in a teleconference following the Ottawa meetings that the big change is that now there is federal government involvement on both sides. "We're not saying it's going to be resolved overnight, but now we have our own federal government engaged and motivated," said Sullivan, who described the conversations as friendly, constructive and detailed.

“It was a very productive meeting,” Mallott said. “We raised the level of awareness. We have dispelled some misunderstandings. We have influenced the priority of the issues involved with the transboundary river mining corridor and both of our federal governments are now engaged. We will continue to aggressively build those relationships.”

Related Stories

- [Federal council takes up GOA Chinook issues](#)

Margaret Bauman

Margaret Bauman is a veteran Alaska journalist focused on covering fisheries and environmental issues.

Bauman has been writing for The Cordova Times since 2010. You can reach her at

mbauman@thecordovetimes.com.