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Juneau Empire

## Urged by Greens Creek executive, Assembly stalls mine resolution

A Greens Creek Mine executive successfully lobbied to stall a resolution requesting federal government intervention in protecting Southeast waters from unrivier Canadian mining projects.

(file:///C:/Users/kevin.gullufsen/Downloads/2807.final%20(1).pdf), under consideration at Monday's City and Borough of Juneau Assembly meeting, urges the State Department to work with Canada to develop protections for Southeast watersheds, which conservationists believe are under threat from British Columbia mines.

An email from Greens Creek's Mike Satre persuaded the Assembly to send the resolution back to the Committee of the Whole for further work.

Satre wrote that the resolution furthers anti-mining sentiment and does nothing to fix "rife inaccuracies" of a similar resolution passed in 2015. The resolution asks for intervention through what's called the Boundary Waters Treaty. Satre wrote that the Boundary Waters Treaty does not apply to waters that flow across borders, but only to waters like the Great Lakes, which sit between borders.

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In Satre's estimation, asking for State Department intervention would show bad faith between U.S. and Canada. Reached by phone Tuesday, he said the resolution would undermine current effort

"We want to support a process like that that works as opposed to generating an anti-mining sentiment and working towards a solution that could be decades in the making," Satre said. "The State of Alaska and Lt. Gov. Mallott are doing a great job of doing that."

Heather Hardcastle, a representative of local conservation group Salmon Beyond Borders, said in a Tuesday phone interview that Satre's emailed statements are wrong. The Boundary Waters Treaty does apply to transboundary rivers. Hardcastle said only State Department intervention will provide the protection conservationists are calling for.

"The state of Alaska cannot enter into any kind of binding agreement with a foreign country," Hardcastle said. "That can only take place if the State Department negotiates an agreement with Global Affairs Canada, so that is what we are going to continue to pursue is a resolution acknowledging that."

Hardcastle and Salmon Beyond Borders are preparing a rebuttal to Satre's letter. The next Committee of the Whole meeting is on Oct. 23. An agenda has not yet been set.

Satre is the Manager of Government and Community Relations for Greens Creek Mine, one of Juneau's largest private employers. Greens Creek is owned by Hecla Mining Company, which owns mining claims in British Columbia.

Satre said he was motivated to write the letter to protect the industry from being mischaracterized as environmentally irresponsible. He said he believes B.C. is working toward fixing any issues of mine compliance or regulation.

"The companies that do business in Alaska are also the companies that do business in Canada. Mining is a global industry and when anti-mining sentiment is spread, then we as an industry get concerned," Satre said.

Conservationists have long been concerned about what they say is a lack of regulation and enforcement for mining projects upriver from Southeast salmon habitat. A May 2016 report from the B.C. Auditor General found a lack of monitoring and inspection in mines. It also concluded that B.C. mines were underinsured by \$1.2 billion for environmental remediation.

Last year, Alaska's congressional delegation wrote a letter to then Secretary of State John Kerry asking for federal intervention through the International Joint Commission and the Boundary Waters Treaty

A similar resolution was session. Both the cities c