



Alaska and BC move closer to mining agreement

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BC's Energy and Mines minister says significant progress has been made for BC and Alaska to work together on mines in the border region.

Bill Bennett says Alaska's role in environmental assessment in mines in the trans-border region will be enhanced.

"Permitting of mine projects, plans for closure, remediation after a mine is completed all those things. Because they are downstream of these proposed mines they have a right to know what is going on and to be involved to some extent. So their role will be strengthened going forward."

Bennett says the hope is to make the agreement official in the fall.

"We hope to be able to codify the new relations with BC at some point this fall if we can get all the terms of the memorandum of understanding agreed to between the two jurisdictions. Hopefully the governor of Alaska and the Premier of our province will be able to sign that memorandum of understanding."

He says BC will also "find a way" to fix the closed Tulsequah Chief mine leaking acid into a major salmon bearing river flowing into Alaska.

Alaskan fisherman want to know if, and how, they would be compensated, if another BC mining disaster impacted them.

Dale Kelley with the Alaska Trollers Association says Alaskans want concrete measures to protect their water and fish, including bonds provided up front, if another accident like Mount Polley were to happen.

“The state of Alaska would be devastated if we had a large spill or some kind of problem on any one of these systems. Even the Nass and Skeena that impacts our fisheries directly, because we manage them in our state.”

Fisherman met with BC Mines Minister Bill Bennett this week to express their concerns about the potential for mining pollution flowing their way in the event of another catastrophe.