

Groups concerned about Alaska-B.C. mines agreement

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Map: Seabridge Gold.

The KSM project is one of the mines sparking concern with Alaska environmental and other groups.

Juneau-based environmental group Rivers Without Borders says Statement of Cooperation between state and province does not have much teeth.

A mining watchdog group in Alaska says there needs to be more action when it comes to hammering out the details of a Statement of Cooperation agreement between the state and British Columbia over mining operations close to the border.

Chris Zimmer with Rivers Without Borders in Juneau says while an agreement was struck last fall, when the sides got down to the nuts and bolts of negotiations late last month, it was more of an information-sharing session.

"A lot of people here in Alaska are very skeptical about this Statement of Cooperation because it's non binding, it's not funded, a lot of the talk was well who's going to pay for the monitoring (program outlined in the agreement) and there was no answer there." Zimmer said.

"It's really not responsive to what the people here in Alaska have wanted."

Zimmer says Alaskan environmental groups, the fishing industry, and First Nations would like to see binding protection measures, financial assurances, and adherence to the Boundary Waters Treaty, along with more federal involvement.

He adds the way B.C. is dealing with the Tulsequah Chief Mine south of Atlin--which has been leaking acid rock drainage into the Tulsequah River for 60 years--is not providing much confidence for Alaska as more mines are developed near the border.