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WATER POLLUTION:

Alaska lawmakers press State Department over Canadian mines

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Members of Alaska's congressional delegation are urging Secretary of State John Kerry to press Canadians about potential mining pollution near the U.S. border.

In a letter, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Sen. Dan Sullivan and Rep. Don Young, all Alaska Republicans, told Kerry to "utilize all measures at your disposal to address this issue at the international level."

Environmentalists, Alaska Native groups and fishing organizations are calling for Kerry to make mining on the Canadian side of the transboundary region part of the discussion at the International Joint Commission, which the two countries use to protect shared waters ([Greenwire](#), March 22).

Opponents have long raised concerns about nearly a dozen British Columbia hardrock mines at various stages of development, and they cite a recent provincial auditor general [report](#) criticizing regulation.

Heather Hardcastle, campaign director for Salmon Beyond Borders, said about the letter: "This powerful statement underscores that Alaskans, regardless of political party, want Secretary Kerry to address [British Columbia] mining with Canadian officials so that clean water and healthy salmon runs will support our economy for generations to come."

Frederick Olsen, chairman of the United Tribal Transboundary Mining Work Group, said, "[Kerry] has 'big fish to fry' in our crazy world, but we need him to look over at us. We want to prevent fish from frying in our waters due to B.C.'s mine waste."

In the past, the State Department has addressed the concerns with its Canadian counterparts, who have defended their mining oversight.

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