



Letter: Protect our water and fish

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International agreements are not based on trust and a handshake — they're based on binding commitments, enforceable treaties and other specific measures to hold each side accountable. President Ronald Reagan once quoted the Russian saying, "Trust, but verify," to emphasize verification procedures were necessary to ensure both sides complied with arms control treaties.

Today, the State of Alaska is "all trust" but "no verify." British Columbia is mining at the headwaters of the Taku, Stikine and Unuk watersheds. Any small error could irreparably damage our fisheries. Even though headlines have recently referred to a "Statement of Cooperation," there has been no support in Southeast Alaska where we will bear the brunt of B.C.'s mining development risks with no benefit.

While the Statement of Cooperation is largely focused on increasing Alaska's participation in B.C.'s mine review process, there is no guarantee of protection, as shown by Mount Polley and the Tulsequah Chief Mine. Alaska would not have an equal seat at the table with any decision-making power. Nothing in the statement is binding or funded.

After the Mount Polley mine disaster and the continuing pollution from the Tulsequah Chief mine, how can Alaskans trust the B.C. permitting process? We need to protect our water and our fish.

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