



# KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

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## **Ketchikan next stop for BC mine tour**

**By Nick Bowman**

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Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott and Bill Bennett, minister of energy and mines for British Columbia, will discuss Canadian mines and transboundary waters in Ketchikan on Thursday as part of a week-long tour of Southeast Alaska.

Hosted by the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce at noon at the Cape Fox Lodge, Mallott and Bennett will discuss B.C. mining projects with cross-border consequences for rivers emptying into Alaska waters.

Alaska Native groups, the fishing industry and local governments have grown more concerned with Canadian mines near the Unuk and Stikine rivers after the August 2014 collapse of the Mount Polley tailings dam, which spilled millions of gallons of mine waste into nearby waterways in southeast British Columbia.

The United Transboundary Mining Work Group will meet with Mallott and Bennett at Ketchikan Indian Community Thursday morning, but that meeting is for tribal members, according to Rob Sanderson, co-chair of the group with Carrie James, a member of the KIC Tribal Council.

The work group is opposed to current projects planned near the Alaska border, which have few defenders in Southeast.

Sanderson sounded frustrated on Wednesday, saying that he didn't expect change from the government in British Columbia or much help from the state.

"What we'd like to see from Bennett is not just talk," he said. "We want guarantees."

Dale Kelley, executive director of the Alaska Trollers Association, also argued for hard assurances from the Canadian government.

After a Wednesday meeting in Juneau with Mallott and Bennett, Kelley said the fishing industry needed more than information about proposed mines.

"Fishermen want commitments regarding the watersheds that impact our fisheries to be backed by the full force of the U.S. government and Crown because that offers the greatest chance that they will be binding and upheld over time," Kelley said in an announcement from Salmon Beyond Borders.

Attracting local attention is the Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell gold project, owned by Seabridge Gold, which sits 20 miles inland from the Alaska border near the Unuk River. The Unuk empties into Behm Canal at the northeast corner of Revillagigedo Island.

The KSM mine will have multiple dams to contain its tailings.

"Who is going to take charge of those after the mine's life?" Sanderson said. "Canada has not had a proven record of taking care of their tailing sights after the mine's closed."

Mallott and Bennett also plan to meet with local officials and the Alaska Mining Association at chamber offices after the noon luncheon, according to its executive director, Chelsea Goucher.