



Letter: The Southeast way of life must be protected

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Living in Alaska, our lives are intricately connected to the natural world, from the natural resource based economies that sustain our communities to the traditional and subsistence lifestyles we lead, filling our freezers and our bellies with delicious and nutritious wild foods. The thriving and productive waters and forests of our state are part of our Alaskan identity, and threats to our resources are threats to our very way of life.

As a resident and active community member of Wrangell, I have my thumb on the pulse of this thriving fishing community. I am well aware of and can clearly hear echoed the grave concerns regarding the threats that face our small town from the implications of climate change and large-scale transboundary mining, two threats which stand to impact our small coastal community's local economy, cultural identity and way of life that depends on a thriving marine ecosystem. I also know that we, as a community, must do our part to make a difference however we can.

I recently participated in the Blessing of the Stikine event that was hosted by the Wrangell Cooperative Association. It was inspiring to see the collaboration of Southeast municipalities, tribes, organizations and community members working together to address the collective concern of threats from British Columbian mine developments to our resources and economies. It is clear that although we come from many different backgrounds and experiences, we are united in our sense of community and our reverence for the river that helps to sustain the place that we call home and the lives we have built here.

As more and more voices continue to join in this effort, it is imperative that our elected leaders and representatives hear our concerns and engage the many involved stakeholders to find a solution to this pressing issue. We are asking our federal government to take control of this international issue and to support our regional rivers and waterways as agreed in the Boundary Waters Treaty.

I am pleased to learn that Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, supports our communities and has joined us in calling on our federal governments to address our concerns. Thank you, Sen. Murkowski, for requesting that President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry acknowledge the pressing issues of climate change and transboundary mine developments facing the people of Alaska, and that they take whatever means necessary to begin working toward permanent protection of our resources and way of life.

Angie Eldred,

Wrangell