

City of Tenakee Springs
RESOLUTION 2016-08

In the Council
September 24, 2015

Introduced by
John Wisenbaugh

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY OF TENAKEE SPRINGS, ALASKA, SUPPORTING
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION INVOLVEMENT IN THE ALASKA-
BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSBOUNDARY REGION**

- WHEREAS, the transboundary rivers and watersheds shared by British Columbia and Southeast Alaska are of tremendous and unique socio-economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational value; and
- WHEREAS, pristine rivers and well-managed watersheds ensure productive and healthy wild salmon populations throughout these transboundary river systems, and have done so for thousands of years; and
- WHEREAS, commercial mining in British Columbia (BC) is experiencing unprecedented expansion within the headwaters of the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers, with over a dozen new mines planned within these watersheds, and
- WHEREAS, those responsible for the Mount Polley mine disaster have been allowed to open another mine of the same design, Red Chris, in the headwaters of the Stikine River, showing a disregard in BC for the concerns of and consequences facing Southeast Alaskans; and
- WHEREAS, large-scale mining and energy development projects could have significant adverse effects on the environments, fisheries, and communities within the transboundary region; and
- WHEREAS, inadequate treatment of waste water and unprecedented levels of tailings contaminants could pose the threat of acid rock drainage for centuries, if not in perpetuity; and
- WHEREAS, ongoing acid rock drainage at the Tulsequah Chief mine and the Mount Polley tailings dam failure demonstrate weaknesses in monitoring and enforcement; and
- WHEREAS, environmental assessment processes must address the cumulative impacts of industrial development; and
- WHEREAS, no amount of monetary remediation could replace the habitats, livelihoods, and cultures that at present stand threatened by these mines; and
- WHEREAS, maintaining and protecting healthy wild salmon populations throughout these river systems must be a priority. The concerns of local communities, individuals, and user groups downstream from these projects must be integral to any transboundary watershed development decision making; and
- WHEREAS, commercial fishermen, subsistence users, elected leaders, local communities, and Native tribes along the Alaska/Canadian border have raised concerns about the pace and scope of

proposed industrial development in the headwaters of transboundary river systems and potential harm to water quality, fish and wildlife, and the socio-economic stability of communities within the region; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty states “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other” and provides a mechanism to address transboundary river concerns through an International Joint Commission; and

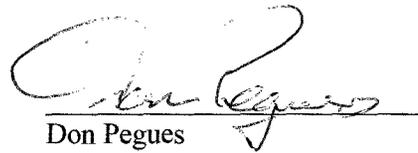
WHEREAS, the clean water, healthy fisheries, and sustainable communities that define our way of life in Southeast now hang in the balance; then

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly urge the government of the United States to work with the government of Canada to refer the issue of transboundary development in the BC and Alaska region to the International Joint Commission and to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure that our resources are not harmed by upstream development in BC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the concerns of affected local communities, commercial fishing interests, sovereign tribes with treaty-guaranteed rights, and other user groups must be integral to transboundary watershed development decision-making; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that affected communities and governments be consulted with and represented in any policy discussions related to impacts to these watersheds.

ADOPTED 6 ayes, 1 absent THIS 24th DAY OF September 2015


Don Pegues
City Council President
Ex officio MAYOR

ATTEST:


Mary Almy
City Clerk