



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 8, 2016

Representative David Talerico, Co-Chair
Representative Benjamin Nageak, Co-Chair
House Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau AK 99801

RE: Support for HJR 16 Urging the United States government to continue to work with the government of Canada to ensure that state resources are not harmed by upstream development in British Columbia.

Dear Representatives Talerico, Nageak and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 34 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore federal waters. Eleven of our member groups represent salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska, a large portion of which are inextricably dependent on salmon habitat in the rivers of British Columbia. Six groups harvest shellfish, halibut, herring and other species that utilize nearshore areas during critical life phases and are impacted by instream development.

UFA supports HJR 16 and very much appreciates the interest that Rep. Ortiz and other Southeast legislators, as well as the congressional delegation and Lt. Governor Byron Mallott, have shown on international mining issues in the boundary area, as well as efforts that have been made to date to engage the U.S. Secretary of State on this topic.

UFA and a broad group of southeast interests have repeatedly requested the U.S. State Department's (Department) action on this matter, and thus support HJR 16 calling upon the Department to refer the issue of transboundary mining to the International Joint Commission (IJC). We believe that involvement of the U.S. State Department will ultimately be necessary, to secure agreements to indemnify and compensate stakeholders in the event of catastrophic mine failures that could impact Alaska's water quality and salmon.

It is of utmost importance to secure the interests of Alaska and its fishing fleets through binding agreements that protect and ensure long term sustainability of our fish and wildlife resources. HJR 16 provides an opportunity to show that the state is unified in this effort; we encourage your support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator