



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 14, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for HJR 9 and U.S. State Department Engagement on Trans-boundary Mines

Dear Chairwoman Stutes and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is a statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 34 Alaska commercial fishing organizations as well as over 400 individuals participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore federal waters. UFA works to promote and protect the common interest of Alaska's commercial fishing industry as a vital component of Alaska's social and economic well-being.

UFA continues to support the Alaska State Legislature and the State of Alaska in the ongoing efforts to ensure state resources are not further harmed by Canadian large-scale mining development in the headwaters of the Taku, Stikine, Unuk or other trans-boundary salmon rivers that flow from Northwest British Columbia (B.C.) into Southeast Alaska. We support Alaska House Joint Resolution 9, which calls on the United States government to investigate the long-term, region-wide downstream effects of proposed and existing B.C. industrial development in trans-boundary watersheds, as well as development of enforceable measures and financial assurances with the Canadian government to protect fisheries and fishermen from the potential negative impacts to Alaska fisheries from large-scale trans-boundary mining.

Based on expert testimony presented at the October 12, 2016 House Fisheries Committee hearing, there was a clear consensus that nothing short of an international agreement(s) between the United States and Canada can provide the enforceable measures and funding needed to protect the fish, water quality, businesses, employment and culture of the Alaska – B.C. trans-boundary region. Consequently, UFA continues to support elevation of trans-boundary water issues to the US State Department--presumably through the Boundary Waters Treaty--so that the that Alaska fisheries and fishermen are protected from potential adverse effects of mining development in British Columbia.

Thank you again for your efforts to ensure that the economic and ecological values of the Alaska – B.C. trans-boundary river systems are not compromised. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward this goal.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator