



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

**Physical Address:** 410 Calhoun Ave Ste 101, Juneau AK 99801

**Phone:** (907) 586-2820 **Fax:** (907) 463-2545

**Email:** [ufa@ufafish.org](mailto:ufa@ufafish.org) **Website:** [www.ufafish.org](http://www.ufafish.org)

June 29, 2017

Honorable Bill Walker, Governor  
Lt. Governor Byron Mallott  
State of Alaska  
PO Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

## **RE: Comments on Transboundary Rivers and MOU and implementation**

Dear Governor Walker and Lieutenant Governor Mallott,

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. Twelve of our member groups represent salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska, which are inextricably dependent on salmon habitat in the watersheds across Alaska's border with British Columbia.

UFA appreciates the Lt Governor and his Transboundary Team's efforts to safeguard Alaska's interests when it comes to large-mine development in watersheds that are shared between Alaska and Canada. At this time we do not have specific comments on the implementation documents related to the Statement of Cooperation. We support your efforts to engage the US State Department and Secretary of State on this issue. However, as we stated in our December 2015 letter, we do not believe the MOA and SOC currently provides enough protection for Alaska, Southeast communities, or fish dependent industries. Meaningful commitment by the federal governments of both countries will be necessary to ensure adequate financial resources to cover the costs associated with any significant damage resulting from mining activities in the TBR watersheds.

We support the ongoing effort to establish baseline water quality data from transboundary watersheds in order to document any damage to the productivity of these river systems that would hurt Alaska's salmon industry. We are concerned that funding is not currently available to fully document viable salmon habitat, as was discussed during the May 25 workshop, and support efforts to obtain funding and coordinate with other entities to obtain this data. Something akin to Alaska's Catalog of Anadromous Waters could prove to be useful when analyzing a loss of production or productivity in any of the transboundary watersheds.

We support Southeast fishing groups in their call for engagement by the U.S. State Department as necessary for securing binding agreements regarding indemnity and compensation in the event of catastrophic tailing dam failures upstream or other damaging activity that could negatively impact Alaska's water quality and fisheries. The interests and protection of Alaska and our fisheries are of utmost importance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jerry McCune  
President



Mark Vinsel  
Executive Administrator

#### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Tendermen's Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association  
Alaska Trollers Association • Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association  
Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United  
Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association  
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association  
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association  
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance  
Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association  
United Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association