

**PETERSBURG BOROUGH, PETERSBURG, ALASKA
RESOLUTION #2017-18**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PETERSBURG BOROUGH IN SUPPORT OF THE
ENFORCEMENT OF THE BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY IN THE SOUTHEAST
ALASKA/NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSBOUNDARY REGION**

WHEREAS, the transboundary rivers of Southeast Alaska and Northwest British Columbia have tremendous unique economic, ecological, cultural, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, the pristine waters and intact habitats of these transboundary river systems are some of the most productive wild salmon rivers on the west coast of North America and must be protected to ensure the healthy wild salmon populations and abundant fisheries currently enjoyed by Southeast Alaskans and Canadians; and

WHEREAS, the Petersburg Borough Assembly supports responsible mining in tandem with assurances of protection for our fisheries and pristine waters; and

WHEREAS, large-scale mining in British Columbia is experiencing unprecedented and rapid expansion within the Taku River, Stikine River, and Unuk River watersheds; and

WHEREAS, projects of concern include Tulsequah Chief, New Polaris, and Big Bull in the Taku River watershed; Galore Creek, Red Chris Mine, and Schaft Creek in the Stikine River watershed; and the Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell project and Brucejack Mine in the headwaters of the Unuk River; and

WHEREAS, large-scale mining development could have significant adverse effects on the environment and fisheries within the transboundary region, including areas important to residents and businesses in Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, the projects of concern would generate billions of tons of acid generating tailings, which would be held behind large dams and which 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 current monitoring and enforcement efforts in British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor General of British Columbia issued a report on May 3, 2016, on her audit of compliance and enforcement in the mining sector and found that the British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Mines and Ministry of the Environment's "compliance and enforcement activities of the mining sector are inadequate to protect the province from significant environmental risks"; and


WHEREAS, the Statement of Cooperation on Protection of Transboundary Waters, signed by Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott, British Columbia Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett, , and British Columbia Minister of the Environment Mary Polak, on October 6, 2016 is important, but cannot provide binding, enforceable protections for the residents, rivers, and watersheds of the state; and

WHEREAS, commercial fishermen, subsistence and recreational users, elected leaders, local communities, and Native Tribes and First Nations on both sides of the Alaska / Canada border have raised concerns about the pace and scope of the proposed large-scale mining development in the watersheds of transboundary river systems and the potential for harm to water quality, fish and wildlife, and the socio-economic sustainability of our local communities within the region; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the United States and Canada states in Article IV, "It is further agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and 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 water concerns through the International Joint Commission.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Petersburg Borough Assembly strongly urges the United States government to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to develop binding and enforceable protections, including long term water quality monitoring and financial assurances, to ensure that Alaska and British Columbia interests and ways of life are not harmed by upstream Canadian development in the shared transboundary watersheds of Southeast Alaska and Northwest British Columbia.

Passed and approved by the Petersburg Borough Assembly, Petersburg Alaska this 2nd day of October, 2017.


Cindi Lagoudakis, Mayor

ATTEST:


Debra Thompson, Borough Clerk