



Federal Subsistence Board

Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 - 6199



In Reply Refer To:
OSM.A24072

JULY 29 2024

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, Northwest
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretaries Vilsack and Haaland:

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has received a letter from the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council). This letter is in support of the efforts made by Salmon Beyond Borders (SBB) to bring attention to transboundary mining and its possible negative impacts to subsistence resources. SBB presented information to the Council in October 2022 and requested the Council's support in elevating the concerns to both Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior and asked that specific actions be taken. The Council voted to send the attached letter in a further effort to highlight this issue and encourage action to protect the health of fisheries in these rivers.

This Council has been following the Canadian mining industry within the transboundary watersheds, which include the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk rivers in Southeast Alaska for several years. The Council has previously written letters to the Alaska Lieutenant Governor and requested that steps be taken to protect waters throughout the transboundary river watersheds that originate in British Columbia and flow into Southeast Alaska. The Council specifically asked the Lt. Governor to send a letter to the Secretary of State requesting Federal engagement in this issue regarding the large-scale mining operations that are currently running or are planned for transboundary river watersheds in Southeast Alaska. In addition, the Council requested an International Joint Commission referral to further safeguard water quality and fishery production in these rivers. To date, the Council has received no response.

The Council is continuing their advocacy by supporting similar efforts by SBB to draw attention to the risk posed by these mines, as outlined in the attached letter. The Council would like to see the requested actions in this letter be taken so that threats by Canadian upriver mining operations on Southeast Alaska subsistence resources can be eliminated, or at least mitigated. Upon review and consideration, the Council would appreciate the courtesy of your reply, which, it hopes, will outline the specific actions you will take in response to these requests.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter. The Federal Subsistence Management Program looks forward to working with you on this issue. You may reach me through my point of contact, Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, 907-206-0900 or, robbin_lavine@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosure: SERAC Letter to the Board supporting SBB efforts to address transboundary mining threats to subsistence resources (May 12, 2023) with 3 attachments

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Members
Office of Subsistence Management
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Assistant Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record