

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

Almost seven years after the environmental disaster at British Columbia's Mount Polley Mine, we write to you to express the need to ensure Americans are protected from the potential downstream impacts of Canadian large-scale mines near transboundary watersheds. As you know, some Canadian mines could pose risks to communities and waters in Alaska. These risks create an interest for continued bilateral engagement and coordination between the United States and Canada.

Through the 2016 Statement of Cooperation with British Columbia, the State of Alaska continues its important work at the state-to-province level, making progress toward increased communication and information sharing. Continued engagement will provide additional leadership as we consider potential risks to downstream communities.

Federal engagement is appropriate to compliment the state and provincial efforts, and to ensure British Columbia and Canada act to uphold the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Congress has supported this effort for six years through the allocation of funding for transboundary water quality monitoring. Congress has also directed the U.S. Geological Survey, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of State to enter into a formal partnership with local tribes and other stakeholders to work together in addressing these issues. Further, Congress appropriated funds directly to the Department of State to increase its engagement on this issue in fiscal year 2021. However, this issue has not seen the same level of consideration by Canada, or yielded full engagement by British Columbia.

The Alaska Delegation has supported a coordinated effort by the State of Alaska and the U.S. State Department to ensure robust engagement at the federal and provincial level to address transboundary mining concerns. In October 2018, we wrote to the State Department, outlining the potential threats posed by British Columbia mines to the economic, subsistence and ecological interests in Alaska. Following this, eight U.S. Senators from Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Montana collectively wrote to the B.C. government in 2019 to express shared concerns for U.S. interests threatened by B.C.'s mines. This demonstrates the shared interest and need for engagement and leadership on this issue in response to the significant risk posed to states sharing watersheds with British Columbia.

Together, we urge the State Department to continue engagement with Canada to ensure communities are protected from potential negative impacts that may occur as a result of British Columbia's mines in watersheds shared with the United States.

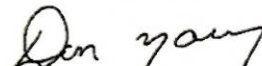
Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator



Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator



Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska