

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of War  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Chris Wright  
Secretary of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave  
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Lee Zeldin  
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Secretaries:

In this era of increasing geopolitical tension, minerals and metals are more critical than ever to the U.S. economy and national defense. As we work to increase domestic production of these key commodities, particularly in resource-rich Alaska, Canada's mining sector will continue to play a role for both the U.S. and our allies. We note the Administration's important work to secure our supply chains through the Working Families Tax Cut Act, the Defense Production Act, the G7 Critical Minerals Production Alliance, the U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals, and other initiatives.

As you engage with your Canadian counterparts, we ask that you help address our concerns over both longstanding impacts and new concerns from Canadian projects just upstream from Alaska. In particular, we urge you to recognize ongoing and potential future impacts to Alaska from abandoned, operating, exploratory, and developing mine projects<sup>1</sup> located in British Columbia (BC) near the Canadian headwaters of Alaska's transboundary rivers.

First, decades of Canadian mining activities have impacted transboundary waters in Alaska and other states and that pollution must be fully stopped. A stark example is Canada's Tulsequah Chief mine, which has been leaking acid mine drainage into a transboundary river system for almost 70 years<sup>2</sup> — since before Alaska was even a state. We commend recent private voluntary efforts to help plan the remediation required for Tulsequah Chief. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments in Canada to ensure the mine is cleaned up, as the U.S. (and our congressional delegation) has requested for decades.

Second, as BC and Canada continue to permit new mines and tailings dams along transboundary rivers that are similar in design to Canada's Mount Polley tailings dam, which

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abb8819>

<sup>2</sup> <https://thenarwhal.ca/bc-mining-liabilities-cleanup-costs-taxpayers/>

collapsed in 2014,<sup>3</sup> we must secure binding protections and financial assurances for the transboundary rivers that flow from British Columbia and Yukon into Alaska.

These rivers have been centers of commerce for thousands of years, and currently help fuel billion-dollar, American-owned fishing and tourism industries. Even as new projects are permitted on the Canadian side of the border, however, British Columbia's reclamation bonding requirement, which ensures the availability of mine cleanup funds, is lower than Alaska's requirement, so reclamation costs could far exceed available funds.

Under a memorandum of understanding that was signed in 2015, the state of Alaska and the province of British Columbia enjoy a beneficial information exchange about these mines. This is laudable, and important work. However, there is no binding mechanism to ensure that U.S. input—from governments, indigenous groups or private organizations—is actually considered in Canadian transboundary mining planning and operation, despite the impact these activities can have on U.S. waters.

The U.S. and Canada have signed treaties to address these transboundary issues, including the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909<sup>4</sup> and the Pacific Salmon Treaty<sup>5</sup> for the Alaska-Canada transboundary region. The Boundary Waters treaty is quite specific, yet Canada is violating the treaty's Article IV, which states, "*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.*"

We see several opportunities for you to help protect Alaska's rivers, fishermen, tourism businesses, and cultural interests from pollution originating in Canada. Specifically, we ask that you:

- Demand the cleanup of abandoned mines in transboundary watersheds in Canada, especially the Tulsequah Chief mine, which has been leaking acid mine drainage into shared Alaska-Canada waters since 1957;
- Reject any potential investment of U.S. taxpayer dollars in Canadian mines or processing facilities unless and until Canada correspondingly commits—and allocates sufficient resources—to clean up all abandoned and leaking mine sites in transboundary watersheds;
- Join us in pushing Canada, and particularly British Columbia, to ensure that all Canadian mines along the Alaska-Canada border meet or exceed the State of Alaska's reclamation bonding requirements for mines; and
- Convince your Canadian colleagues to agree to utilize existing or new bilateral frameworks to establish robust consultation requirements and a dispute resolution mechanism with stakeholders on both sides of the border for existing and proposed transboundary mines.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/charges-approved-mount-polley-1.7406534>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ijc.org/en/boundary-waters-treaty-1909>

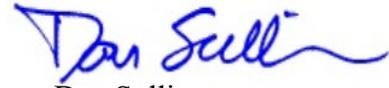
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.psc.org/about-us/history-purpose/pacific-salmon-treaty/>

The Trump administration presents an opening to end decades of inaction and stalemate over transboundary pollution. We urge you to use any and all economic and diplomatic tools at your disposal to effectuate this change in policy on both sides of the border so that we can restore and protect the vitality of Alaska's rivers, wild fish populations, and maritime industries long into the future.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator

CC:

Mr. Jarrod Agen, Executive Director, National Energy Dominance Council  
The Honorable Doug Burgum, U.S. Department of the Interior  
The Honorable Brooke Rollins, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Gerald Acker, International Joint Commission  
The Honorable Robert Gioia, International Joint Commission  
The Honorable Lance Yohe, International Joint Commission  
Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Commissioner John Crowther, Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Commissioner Randy Bates, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation