

ANB/ANS
Resolution

15-27

TITLE: Protecting Tribal Communities and Culture in Alaska by requesting the United States implement the Boundary Waters Treaty through International Joint Commission (IJC) Involvement and Seek the Consent of Tribal Governments in all Agreements between Alaska and British Columbia.

WHEREAS, we, the members of the Alaska Native Brotherhood whose mission is to better the lives of Native people and their families; continue the fight for civil rights and land rights of all Native people; to share the cultural knowledge, wisdom, and artistic beauty of Native Tribal Societies and strive for a spirit of Brotherhood and Sisterhood among all people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) was established in 1912 and is the oldest indigenous rights organization in the world; and

WHEREAS, transboundary rivers of the Northwest British Columbia and Southeast Alaska region, including the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers, are of tremendous and unique ecological, customary and traditional use ("subsistence"), cultural and recreational value and are some of the most productive salmon rivers on the entire North American west coast; and

WHEREAS, British Columbia is experiencing rapid and large-scale industrialization and development, including several current and proposed open-pit mines, as result of the BC Northwest Power Line bringing in electricity to the region and relaxed British Columbian and Canadian environmental laws; and

WHEREAS, the mine projects are located in areas that have high potential to create acid mine drainage and also pose associated risks with the waste rock piles, tailing dams, energy development, and roads due to the potential for accidents and spills, tailings dam breaches, acid mine drainage, and habitat fragmentation; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Tribes, B.C. First Nations, fishermen, local communities, elected leaders, and conservations groups on both sides of the United States/Canadian border have all raised concerns about the potential harm from the proposed developments to water quality, fish, wildlife and ultimately to the cultural existence, livelihoods, and local economies in the region; and

WHEREAS, healthy wild salmon populations in these river systems are a priority to our tribal nations and tribal citizens' community health, cultural existence, and sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, the United States must uphold its trust responsibility and obligation to consult with Tribes and protect our interests and citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty between the United State and Canada states that "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 for the United States and Canada to address transboundary river concerns known as the International Joint Commission.

WHEREAS, The State of Alaska has not recognized the Sovereign Nation status of the federally recognized indigenous Tribes within its borders; and

WHEREAS, The State of Alaska is entering into an agreement with B.C. allowing greater access to the permitting process of these mines; and

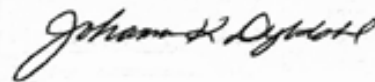
WHEREAS, Alaska Native Tribes and other organizations concerned about protecting water quality and salmon must be an integral to any transboundary watershed development decision making; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we strongly urge the United States government (Congress, White House, and federal agencies) to uphold its trust responsibility to Tribes and to work with the Canadian government by referring the transboundary issues to the International Joint Commission and to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure that our cultural existence and community health are not harmed by upstream development in BC; and

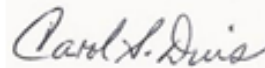
BE IT FURTHER REOLVED, that affected tribal governments be consulted with and represented in any agreements or policy discussions related to impacts to the waters of these rivers and communities per Executive Order 13175 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



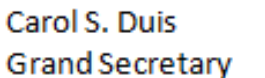
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