



Washington State Legislature

March 18, 2022

Honourable George Heyman, M.L.A.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Rm 112, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8W9E2

Honourable Bruce Ralston, M.L.A.
Minister of Energy Mines and Low Carbon Innovation
Room 138 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V1X4

Dear Ministers Heyman and Ralston:

This letter is to further our previous correspondence with you and Premier Horgan in May of 2021. At that time, my colleagues and I in the Washington legislature wrote of our concerns that current operations and planned mining operations in British Columbia in the headwaters of our shared transboundary rivers could have significant adverse effects on the environment and fisheries within the transboundary region. We observed at that time that a tailings dam breach at one of these upstream operations, like the one that occurred at the Mount Polley Mine in 2014, could have major negative environmental and economic consequences on Washington State downstream resources.

Minister Ralston, in his reply on behalf of Premier Horgan, stated that British Columbia recognized "...the need to protect the people of BC and our transboundary neighbors if a mining company fails to meet its obligations regarding reclamation and remediation of a mine site," and that the province would work "...to ensure owners of large industrial projects are bonded moving forward so they – not British Columbians – pay the full cost of environmental clean-up if their projects are abandoned." My colleagues and I were heartened by those commitments.

We now understand that after years of working on a Mine Reclamation Security Policy, the province will shortly release a preliminary policy. This is also welcome news, and we are hopeful that in its final form the Policy would, as a means of providing adequate consideration for Washington's downstream interests, include such provisions as:

- Mandating full bonding for new and operating mines that would require polluters to pay the true costs of pollution, thus motivating them to reduce harmful practices, as is the case for Washington and Alaska;
- Make full bonding not just a policy measure but a regulatory requirement, thus making it enforceable; and
- Creating an industry-funded mechanism (industry pooled fund) to cover catastrophic incidents.

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The commitment between British Columbia and Washington to act jointly to fight climate change and protect salmon and orcas in shared waters will lead to a clean, healthy and equitable future for our communities. We fully appreciate your recent action to retire mineral rights in the “Donut Hole” of the Upper Skagit Watershed, toward which this legislature just appropriated a \$4.5 million contribution. We have welcomed your work on projects of significance such as the CleanBC Roadmap and are encouraged that you will now move forward on the Mine Reclamation Security Policy.

We understand that British Columbia aspires to be a world-class, responsible mining jurisdiction, one that meets the highest international standards. We hope you will consider building in these recommendations as a means of helping to achieve that very admirable vision.

Sincerely,

Senator Jesse Salomon
32nd Legislative District

Senator Derek Stanford
1st Legislative District

Representative Davina Duerr
1st Legislative District

Senator Christine Rolfes
23rd Legislative District

Senator Kevin Van De Wege
24th Legislative District

Representative Cindy Ryu
32nd Legislative District

Senator Karen Keiser
33rd Legislative District

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
37th Legislative District

Representative Emily Wicks
38th Legislative District

Representative Alex Ramel
40th Legislative District

Senator Lisa Wellman
41st Legislative District

Senator Jamie Pedersen
43rd Legislative District

cc: Minister Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Minister Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship
Silas Brownsley, Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat