

Petersburg Borough, Alaska
RESOLUTION #2022-08

**A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE PROMPT AND FULL CLOSURE AND CLEANUP OF THE
TULSEQUAH CHIEF MINE AND URGING THE B.C. GOVERNMENT TO OPPOSE ANY
EXTENSION OF THE RECEIVERSHIP PROCESS**

WHEREAS, The Taku River is usually Southeast Alaska's largest overall salmon producer, with Southeast's largest run of coho and king salmon. The Taku produces up to 100,000 Chinook, 300,000 coho, 400,000 sockeye, 50,000 chum and 1,000,000 pink salmon, as well as significant populations of steelhead trout, cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char and eulachon and is of tremendous and unique ecological, customary and traditional use ("subsistence"), cultural, commercial and recreational fisheries value; and

WHEREAS, Petersburg commercial fishermen and commercial salmon processors have historically fished for and processed salmon returning to the Taku River; and

WHEREAS, The Tulsequah Chief mine has been discharging toxic acidic wastewater into the Taku watershed since it was abandoned in 1957. The ongoing pollution is detrimental to maximum salmon production and is in violation of the Canadian Fisheries Act, B.C. mine permits and water quality standards, and an agreement with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation. Despite numerous calls for cleanup, the pollution continues; and

WHEREAS, The Petersburg Borough Assembly passed Resolution #2019-20 on December 16, 2019, urging the State of Alaska to ensure the B.C. government implement an open and transparent process to clean up and close the Tulsequah Chief Mine, and Resolution #2021-11 on October 19, 2021, in support of a permanent ban on tailings dams and for a temporary pause in the permitting, exploration, development and expansion of Canadian mines along Alaska-B.C. transboundary salmon rivers until the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are upheld and an international agreement on watershed protections is implemented; and

WHEREAS, The Petersburg Borough Assembly as well as Alaska legislators, governors, members of congress, other community leaders, fishing and tourism groups, businesses and other Alaskans have made cleanup of the Tulsequah Chief a main goal in discussions with B.C. Provincial and Canadian federal officials for many years. This concerted pressure is finally showing results; and

WHEREAS, The Taku is the traditional territory of Tlingit people on both sides of the border. The Douglas Indian Association, the federally recognized tribe in Alaska, and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, based in Atlin, B.C., have both called for the cleanup and closure of the Tulsequah Chief mine; and

WHEREAS, after decades of international controversy and two failed attempts to re-open this mine that have resulted in bankruptcies, it is clear the Tulsequah Chief is not a viable mine; and

WHEREAS, Chieftain Metals, the current owner of the Tulsequah Chief, is in a court-ordered bankruptcy receivership process that is scheduled to end this August. This process has hindered cleanup efforts; and

WHEREAS, there is concern that a creditor of Chieftain Metals could petition the court to extend the receivership process, which could significantly delay or prevent mine closure and cleanup;

WHEREAS, the government of British Columbia has made commitments to close and clean up the Tulsequah Chief and issued a draft reclamation plan in 2020. However, the acid mine drainage still continues, partly due to the receivership process restricting what actions B.C. can take; and

WHEREAS, Continued pressure and attention from Alaska will be critical to ensuring B.C. opposes any extension of the receivership process and moves aggressively to take over the mine, clean it up and close it down.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Petersburg Borough Assembly urges the B.C. government to oppose any extension of the receivership process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Petersburg Borough Assembly strongly urges the State of Alaska and United States federal government to make it clear to the B.C. and Canadian federal governments that the receivership process must end as scheduled this August and that B.C. should then move aggressively to take over the abandoned mine, close it down, and permanently stop the acid mine drainage.

Passed and Approved by the Petersburg Borough Assembly on May 16, 2022.

Mark Jensen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra K. Thompson, Borough Clerk