Winter 2021

Alaska legislators, governors, members of congress, Tribes, community leaders, fishing and tourism groups, businesses and citizens have been making cleanup of the Tulsequah Chief mine in the Taku watershed a high priority for many years. We are pleased to report that this attention and pressure is paying off.

After more than six decades of toxic acid mine drainage from the abandoned Tulsequah Chief and more than two decades of Alaskans of all stripes fighting to stop the threat to Taku salmon posed by this mine, we are finally seeing the British Columbia (B.C.) government take the initial steps toward ending the pollution and closing down the Tulsequah Chief.

In August 2020, the B.C. government released a draft **Closure and Reclamation Plan for the Tulsequah Chief Mine Site** and appropriated $1.6 million to fund initial work; crews were on-site this past August and September.

In October, an Ontario court ruled to halt the long receivership process for Chieftain Metals, bankrupt owner of the Tulsequah Chief Mine. The decision is significant because as long as the receivership process was ongoing, B.C. was legally prevented from taking specific measures to assume responsibility for the mine. That legal prohibition is now lifted. B.C. can now move aggressively to fund and implement the cleanup and closure plan.

This is notable progress, but there is still much to be done. Continued pressure and attention from Alaska will be critical to ensuring B.C. seizes the opportunity presented by the recent court decision and quickly and thoroughly follows through on its cleanup plan.

Ending the Tulsequah Chief’s pollution once and for all is the best and timeliest opportunity to protect Southeast Alaska’s top salmon producing transboundary watershed. We urge Alaska’s leaders to work closely with B.C. to ensure it follows up on its commitments to close down and clean up the Tulsequah Chief.

The Taku needs your continued attention. Your vision, leadership, and cross-border engagement is crucial to keep the Taku productive and thriving. Please continue to make a permanent end to Tulsequah Chief acid mine drainage the top priority in the Southeast Alaska/northwest B.C. transboundary region. As the United Fishermen of Alaska wrote, “Let’s keep this momentum going and ensure the Tulsequah Chief Mine is cleaned up and closed once and for all.”

For more information, please contact Rivers Without Borders Alaska Campaign Director Chris Zimmer at 907/586-2166 or Zimmer@riverswithoutborders.org.