



Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

Washington State Senate

Phone: (360) 786-7550
FAX: (360) 786-1999

May 1, 2019

The Honorable John Horgan
PO Box 9041 STN POV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W9E1

Premier Horgan,

As state legislators representing the communities and natural land of the Skagit River watershed and the state of Washington, we write with deep concern about the impacts of mining on the ecosystems of the Skagit River and Salish Sea.

The Skagit River is the largest river system that flows into Puget Sound, stretching 150 miles and draining 1.7 million acres in British Columbia and the state of Washington. It contains healthy populations of all five salmon species, critical to the recovery of Puget Sound's endangered orca population.

Our southern resident orca face many threats including polluted waters, boat traffic and a diminishing food supply. The majority of their diet consists of salmon, with Chinook salmon being the primary fare. These salmon are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, making their availability a limiting factor in the recovery of the southern resident orca.

Few things are more emblematic of the dire consequences of climate change than the plight of the orca. The world watched when our southern resident member, Tahlequah, carried her dead calf for a thousand miles and showed us all that we must take immediate action to protect them.

The Washington state Legislature is putting time, effort and resources into restoring and preserving salmon habitat to help with the recovery of our beloved resident orca. Local communities and Native American tribes have invested millions as well to restore and preserve the river and its salmon population.



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Siting a mine at the headwaters of this watershed risks too much. Industrial-scale mining operations introduce the potential for warmer water temperatures, increased sediment, and toxic chemicals and materials in this fragile ecosystem. This poses an unacceptable risk to the spawning salmon and river species that lay the foundation for the food web of the Salish Sea.

As you know, one of the main purposes of the United States-Canada High Ross Treaty was to maintain the environmental integrity of the watershed. It is our hope that you support this critical purpose and support the ecological system that crosses our shared borders. We ask you to immediately halt and deny any permits or planning for mining operations in the headwaters of the Skagit. This natural area is too important to the plant life and animals to imperil them for short term economic gain.

Sincerely,

Sen. Liz Lovelett

Washington state senator, 40th Legislative District

Cc: Dr. Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly
Mr. Andrew Weaver, Leader of the Green Party of British Columbia
Mrs. Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Mr. Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Ms. Michelle Mungal, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Governor Jay Inslee, state of Washington
Mayor Jenny Durkan, City of Seattle



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40th Legislative District

Senator John McCoy
38th Legislative District

Senator Christine Rolfes
23rd Legislative District

Senator Guy Palumbo
1st Legislative District

Senator Mona Das
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