

SEABRIDGE GOLD

January 6, 2017

Ms. Jill Weitz
Campaign Manager
Salmon Beyond Borders
jweitz@tu.org; salmonbeyondborders@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Weitz,

We would like to bring your attention to several erroneous quotes with regard to Seabridge Gold's KSM Project attributed to you in a recent DeSmog Blog article titled *Southeast Alaska Asks Canada to Strengthen its Environmental Laws* and several false claims you recently made to the CEAA Review Panel in Prince Rupert, BC on December 9, 2016. We hope by correcting the record and providing you with factual information you will be more mindful in the future.

In the DeSmog blog article you are quoted saying "Changes made under the previous federal government excluded major mines in British Columbia from the federal environmental assessment process" which is not the case.

Contrary to your assertion, the KSM Project underwent a joint BC-Canada environmental assessment as mandated by the BC Environmental Assessment Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1992) respectively. These independent environmental assessment review processes occurred over 70 months between March 2008 and December 2014 and concluded with receipt of the Federal Government's approval as signed by the Minister of Environment on December 19, 2014. The BC approval was granted on July 30, 2014 with signatures from the Minister of Energy and Mines and the Minister of Environment.

We request that you correct the misinformation regarding the absence of a federal environmental assessment on the KSM project immediately.

You have also made statements suggesting, "Despite living directly downstream from the mine, Alaskans were frustratingly prevented from meaningful participation in the project's environmental review." Again this is false.

During this review, Alaskans, including State and US regulators, Tribes, and the general public, information about the KSM project and the environmental review process was exchanged in more than 85 separate meetings and as a result, Alaskans' views were taken into consideration during the environmental assessment approval process as was referenced in the CEAA scientific report. It is important to highlight that the concerns of the Alaskans associated with potential downstream risks and impacts were the same as those expressed by Canadian residents. The involvement of Alaskan regulators was documented in a 2014 *Juneau Empire* article which summarized the conclusions of these regulators, "*four of the same resource managers and specialists who reviewed Alaskan mines have examined KSM's plan. They found no significant issues with the application.*"

The Canadian Minister of Environment, in making her favourable decision to approve the KSM project, determined the independent scientific review of the KSM Project was more than adequate and rejected the requests received in the fall of 2014 from Alaskan-based non-governmental organizations for an “environmental panel review” of the project. These requests were not ignored. The Minister in her decision and in private letters to various US based regulatory authorities explained why she concluded the environmental assessment of the KSM Project was deemed to be complete and she was confident in approving the project.

We are also requesting that you correct the misinformation regarding the absence of meaningful consultation with regard to permitting the KSM project immediately.

Third, you have suggested “Not only is the BC process flawed in terms of identifying whether KSM would have significant environmental impacts but the baseline data needed to say that doesn’t exist.” Again this is a false statement.

Prior to entering into the Canadian Federal and Provincial mandated environmental assessment processes, Seabridge Gold was required to collect significant environmental baseline data. Seabridge initiated baseline data collection at KSM in 2007 and collected aquatic, wildfire, air chemistry, and traditional knowledge data in areas potentially affected by KSM up to the US-Canada border and this data was presented as supporting documentation in KSM’s environmental impact statement submission to the independent regulators who reviewed KSM’s submission. This baseline data collection continues today, well after the completion of the environmental assessment review process. This **data does exist** and is publicly available on the BCEAO or the CEAA websites or by contacting Seabridge directly.

Canadian and US laws prevented Seabridge from collecting additional baseline data in areas of the Unuk River located within the US. However, Seabridge in acknowledging the concerns being expressed by Alaskans regarding water quality within the lower Unuk River, offered in a 2013 letter to Alaskan Tribal representatives to fund water quality baseline and ongoing sampling in this area. This offer was ignored.

Finally, you have erroneously stated the KSM Mine Tailings management facility “is perched in the Bell/Irving/Nass Watershed in BC near Sulphurets Creeks, which runs into the Unuk River and will drain into Alaskan waters.” The KSM tailings management facility (TMF) is not situated in waters upstream of the US border. To imply otherwise is simply incorrect. KSM’s TMF is situated within the Bell Irving Watershed which flows entirely into Canadian waters and is located over 20-kilometres from Sulphurets Creek.

Again, we are requesting an immediate retraction of your statement with regard to the KSM TMF being upstream of US waters.

Ms. Weitz, we appreciate your efforts of protecting the environment which is also a guiding principle behind the design of the KSM Project. Seabridge has put the KSM project through extensive environmental and technical evaluations by independent experts to ensure its operation will not cause harm to the surrounding environment, including waterways and fish, and has worked closely with all stakeholders, including Alaskans, to ensure that their concerns were acknowledged and addressed throughout the environmental assessment review. We are confident in our design and the robustness of the environmental assessment review processes that were mandated by BC and Canada, respectively.

We continue to work closely with our stakeholders to ensure ongoing questions and concerns regarding the KSM Project are addressed honestly and transparently and hope in the future you will also provide factual information when discussing the KSM Project publicly. Going forward with regard to referencing KSM, I would be happy to work with you to ensure you have the correct facts so Alaskans can make an informed decision. I am available either via telephone at 867-445-5553 or via email at brent@seabridgegold.net to answer questions regarding KSM.

I reiterate that I am requesting that the numerous errors you have made publicly be corrected as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brent Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

R. Brent Murphy, M.Sc., P.Geol.
Vice President, Environmental Affairs

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