

SEABRIDGE GOLD

March 17, 2017

PO Box 210402,
Auke Bay, AK 99821

VIA Email

Attention: Chris Zimmer
Alaska Campaign Director
Rivers Without Borders
zimmer@riverswithoutborders.org

Dear Mr. Zimmer:

Re: Testimony from Chris Zimmer, Rivers Without Borders, in support of Alaskan State Legislature Bill HJR9

We would like to correct the record with regard to the following inaccurate statement you made in your Testimony to support of HJR9. *“The proposed Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell mine, one of the most ambitious open-pit mine projects ever attempted, was subject to only a screening level review and not a more rigorous panel level review, even after numerous requests to the Canadian federal government from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alaskan citizens and community leaders, and B.C. citizens for the most stringent environmental assessment of this project.”*

This statement is **inaccurate** with the implicit intention of providing a false impression and we request that the record be corrected with the factual information immediately.

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. The federal environmental assessment process was deemed to be a comprehensive study review following public consultation by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) in 2009. CEAA classifies three levels of environmental assessment: a screening level review; a comprehensive study review; and, a panel review. It important to note that the level of technical expertise required by the Government of Canada (i.e CEAA) to complete a comprehensive study review as compared to a panel review is **identical**, with the only difference in the environmental assessment processes being with the independent experts whom assess the project. For a comprehensive study review, these experts reside within the Federal Government agencies, as compared with a panel review, where three experts are appointed by the Minister of Environment from outside the government.

The independent environmental assessment review processes for KSM occurred over 70 months between March 2008 and December 2014 and concluded with receipt of the Federal Government's approval as signed by the Canadian 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.

The Canadian Minister of the Environment, in her decision statement approving KSM, concluded "*The project is not likely to cause adverse environmental effects as defined in the former Act (referring to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 1991), taking into account the implementation of mitigation measures described in the report*" and "*the mitigation measures and follow up programs described in the Report are appropriate for the project.*" This approval was granted only following a thorough independent review of the KSM's environmental impact statement which described the potential residual effects associated with the project on all valued ecosystem components, including water quality and quantity, in accordance and as defined by the former Act. A regional cumulative effects assessment and alternative analyses were also completed, as required by CEAA (and BC). The Minister, in making her decision, relied upon a Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency scientific report which stated, "*The agency has concluded that no significant adverse impacts on water quality, water quantity, fish, or human health are expected on the Alaskan side of the Unuk River.*"

In contrast to your assertion Alaskans were prevented in engaging in meaningful participation in the project's environmental review and their input was ultimately ignored, during the environmental review, Alaskans, including State and US regulators, Tribes, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and the general public, met to discuss the environmental review in over 85 separate meetings and as a result, Alaskan's views were taken into consideration during the environmental assessment approval process, as was referenced in the CEAA scientific report. The Canadian Minister 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 NGO's for an "environmental panel review" of the project. The Alaskan requests were not ignored but considered carefully by the Canadian Government. The Minister in her decision which was communicated to various US based regulatory authorities via letter, explained the environmental assessment of the KSM Project was deemed to be complete and she was confident in approving the project.

Going forward with regard to statements referencing KSM or Seabridge Gold, we expect that you will provide accurate facts upon which individuals and policy makers can make informed decisions. We are also requesting that the factual errors reported in the Testimony be publicly corrected.

Yours sincerely,



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

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