



September 27, 2018

Mayor Jenny Durkan
 600 Fourth Avenue
 PO Box 94749
 Seattle, WA 94749

The Honorable John Horgan
 Premier of BC
 PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
 Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

RE: Request for Halt to Logging in the Upper Skagit Watershed

Dear Premier Horgan and Mayor Durkan:

The undersigned conservation, recreation and wildlife organizations are concerned about the recent logging within the headwaters of the Skagit River System, as highlighted on the front page of the Seattle Times (8/16/18). The Skagit River flows south from British Columbia through Washington State through North Cascades National Park and Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest before flowing into the Puget Sound.

We write to you both in your role as the Sponsors of the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) regarding activities of BC Timber Sales (BCTS), an arm of the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, for extensive logging in the Silverdaisy area at the headwaters of the Skagit River.

The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) and Seattle City Light report that extensive logging and road building have been authorized by the British Columbia Timber Sales (BCTS) in the Upper Skagit Watershed (Silverdaisy area). Logging roads for this sale have been cut through Manning Provincial Park. After a brief pause, logging has resumed and more sales are planned. This was done without any notice to SEEC and other important stakeholders including our organizations that have a direct interest in the fish, wildlife, and recreational resources of the Skagit River.

As you are aware, a 1984 Treaty resolved the dispute over raising Seattle’s Ross Dam and avoided flooding part of the Upper Skagit Watershed. One of the main purposes of the Treaty was to maintain the environmental integrity of the Watershed. The Treaty also created SEEC to administer this collaborative partnership. The BC government and the City of Seattle signed the accompanying Agreement.

Both governments established SEEC’s primary mission: (1) To conserve and protect wilderness and wildlife habitat, (2) To enhance recreational opportunities in the Skagit, and (3) To acquire mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreational objectives.

The logging is taking place in the “donut hole,” an area encircled by Skagit and Manning Provincial Parks, that was left out of the parks due to mineral claims. SEEC has been actively pursuing acquisition of these claims,

and with the knowledge and encouragement of the BC government, has been in negotiations with the mining company, Imperial Metals.

The logging in the Silverdaisy area is inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the 1984 treaty. It will have significant impact on the wilderness, wildlife habitat, and fishery resources of the Upper Skagit River.

The Skagit Watershed supports large, diverse fish and wildlife populations and provides over 30 percent of the freshwater flowing into Puget Sound. The watershed also provides critical grizzly bear and spotted owl habitat. Ross Lake supports one of the largest and most diverse populations of bull trout in Western Washington and lower BC. This species is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Ninety percent of the bull trout in Ross spawn in the Upper Skagit below the donut hole timber cut. The logging will increase sediment potentially decimating this population. Sediment smothers eggs, kills the invertebrates that the juveniles need for food, and makes it harder to find what food there is.

In addition to the direct impacts of logging, we are concerned that road development and land clearing will make it harder to prevent the proposed copper mine and incorporate the donut hole land into Manning Park.

A copper mine in the upper Skagit would be devastating. Copper is toxic to salmon and even small amounts can be detrimental. The Skagit River supports the largest populations of threatened steelhead and Chinook salmon in the Puget Sound, and the largest run of chum salmon in the conterminous US. These fish are a critical food resource for the imperiled Southern Resident Killer Whales. The State of Washington has invested approximately \$90 million dollars in salmon recovery funds into the Skagit River while the City of Seattle has invested an additional \$77 million dollars in habitat and flow protection. Washington Governor Inslee has convened the Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force and prey recovery (i.e. Chinook salmon) has been identified as a primary need. Mining in the headwaters threatens our investments in salmon recovery and our collective goals to restore salmon populations that are critical for orca survival; tribal, sport, and commercial fisheries; and the overall health of the Salish Sea.

We thank Mayor Durkan for leadership on this issue. We make the following requests of Premier Horgan:

- Advise BCTS that its logging plans are inconsistent with the 1984 Treaty, the mandate given SEEC, and the long-established interest of BC Parks to acquire the Silverdaisy area;
- Immediately stop logging activities and direct BCTS to halt any further planning and on-the-ground activities in the Silverdaisy area;
- Coordinate with and assist SEEC to accelerate the negotiations with the mineral tenure holder (Imperial Metals) to acquire the mine to fulfill the vision of the 1984 Treaty.

Thank you for considering our comments and requests. The Skagit River is an important resource for the people of the U.S. and Canada. We urge a renewed international partnership and commitment to the stewardship of the Skagit River that includes conservation of the headwaters and recognition of the principles embodied in the 1984 Treaty.

Sincerely,

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