

July 29, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I write regarding the recent cyanide spill at Victoria Gold's Eagle Mine in Yukon, Canada. As you know, I have personally raised the issue of transboundary mining and the importance of ensuring that pollutants from Canadian mines do not negatively impact Alaskan rivers numerous times since I became a Senator in 2015. This includes a trip with Alaska's Lieutenant Governor to Ottawa, where I expressed my concerns directly to members of your cabinet. This spill is a clear example of the reason for my concerns.

On June 24, part of the Eagle Mine released almost 300,000 cubic meters of cyanide solution into a sub-tributary of the Stewart Watershed. About 10 days later, high levels of cyanide—which is toxic to salmon and other fish—were detected in a nearby creek, and more cyanide is expected to enter that creek in the coming weeks. The Stewart Watershed encompasses one of many tributaries of the Yukon River, which flows into Alaska.

The health of our wildlife—particularly salmon—is of vital importance to Alaska, and in our meeting in DC earlier this month, I mentioned to you some of the challenges we are having on the Yukon River with salmon. We certainly do not want this spill to add to these challenges. Salmon are the lifeblood of my state and recent poor salmon runs, particularly on the Yukon River, have had a devastating effect on the health and livelihoods of communities all across Alaska. The introduction of more pollutants like cyanide into our streams will only increase the likelihood of poor salmon runs in the future and potentially increase health risks in our communities.

In light of these concerns, I request increased transparency and communication from senior Canadian officials regarding the Eagle Mine spill and other potential issues from Canada's abandoned, developing, and operating mine projects near the headwaters of Alaska's rivers. Specifically, I request Canada provide a detailed description of what happened to cause the Eagle Mine spill, the potential risks of the spill, and what immediate efforts Canada is making to clean the spill up completely, as well as to prevent future accidents such as these.

I look forward to increased coordination between Canadian and U.S. officials on all levels to help prevent these spills and to remediate mines that are leaching into Alaska's waters. While mines are an important part of resource development, there is no need to sacrifice environmental safeguards for development.

I look forward to working with you and your leadership to improve the transparency and coordination between our two nations on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

Copy to: U.S. Ambassador to Canada David L. Cohen
Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman