



City of Seattle
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

August 2, 2018

The Honorable John Horgan
P.O. Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W9E1 Canada

Dear Premier Horgan,

I am writing to you about a very concerning issue that has been brought to my attention by the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) and other important stakeholders. Without any notice to the SEEC, the British Columbia Timber Sales (BCTS) has approved extensive logging in the Silverdaisy area in the Upper Skagit Watershed. This area is in the "donut hole" created when the western boundary of Manning Provincial Park was moved to exclude some mining claims.

This letter is intended to signal the City of Seattle's grave concern about the proposed action and to formally request the Province of British Columbia to inform BCTS that the logging plans are inconsistent with the purposes of the United States-Canada High Ross Treaty (1984) and the concurrent Agreement signed by the City of Seattle and British Columbia. These actions also directly contradict the environmental stewardship and fish protection priorities your government values. We strongly believe that the BCTS must consult with the City of Seattle (Seattle) and the SEEC before authorizing any activity that would impact the ecological integrity and recreational resource value of the Silverdaisy area.

The 1984 Treaty resolved the dispute over raising Seattle's Ross Dam and avoided flooding part of the Upper Skagit Watershed (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. As you know, SEEC Commissioners are appointed by the Premier's office and the Mayor of Seattle. The Treaty recognized the Upper Skagit River as a unique watershed that provides recreational opportunities to both Americans and Canadians, and that the Upper Skagit River has extraordinary environmental value that we should protect.

The SEEC was directed to conserve and protect wilderness and wildlife habitat; enhance recreational opportunities; and acquire mineral and timber rights consistent with conservation and recreational purposes in the Watershed. Since 1984, SEEC has worked to protect the Skagit headwaters and sought to eliminate the risks of mining in the donut hole. With the encouragement of the British Columbia government, promising conversations were beginning with the mining company when news of the proposed logging operation reached the SEEC. Such logging would impact the unique terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the Watershed and would greatly impair the recreational opportunities supported by these ecosystems. The proposed logging in the Silverdaisy area is inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the 1984 Treaty.

The Watershed supports large, diverse fish and wildlife populations and provides over 30 percent of the freshwater flowing into Puget Sound. Seattle recognizes the local, regional, and national importance of these populations and the unique role that the Watershed has in supporting them. 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 United States. Furthermore, the Upper and Lower Skagit River supports the largest and most diverse population of bull trout in western Washington and lower British Columbia. This species is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the United States and listed as a Species of Special Concern in Canada. The City of Seattle has worked diligently to protect these populations from further harm and to support threatened populations in their recovery. The BCTS logging would degrade water quality conditions that are important for sustaining these vulnerable fish populations.

Notably, the State of Washington has invested approximately \$90 million in salmon recovery funds into the Skagit River, while the City of Seattle has invested an additional \$77 million in habitat and flow protection. Furthermore, the local communities and Native American tribes that depend on these fish have gone to extraordinary lengths to protect and restore the river and its salmon stocks. Failure to protect the ecologically and economically valuable fish populations and clean water quality of the Skagit River risks many millions of dollars of ongoing investment in salmon recovery and jeopardizes the biodiversity of the Salish Sea on both sides of our shared border.

In addition to this letter from the City of Seattle, we have been in communication with the Washington State Governor's Office, the SEEC, and concerned stakeholders.

We urge you to immediately direct BCTS to halt any further planning and on-the-ground activities in the Silverdaisy area. I have directed my staff to contact your office about scheduling a call between us. This is an opportunity for our two governments to develop a better understanding of how decisions to take this action were made and how to avoid similar situations from occurring again in the future. The City of Seattle and British Columbia have an important mandate under the Treaty, and an obligation to honor the intent and spirit of the groundbreaking Treaty signed in 1984. The public we serve expects nothing less.

Sincerely,

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle

Cc: Governor Jay Inslee
Shaun Hollingsworth, SEEC BC Co-Chair
Leo Bodensteiner, SEEC US Co-Chair
Mike Falkier, Executive Director, British Columbia Timber Sales
Jim Baggs, General Manager/CEO, Seattle City Light
Lilly Wilson-Codega, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Relations, City of Seattle