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MARK BEGICH
ALASKA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES AND COAST GUARD
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October 15, 2012

Honorable Col. Christopher Lestochi
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
PO Box 6898 (CEPOA-RD)
JBER, AK 99506-0898

Dear Col. Lestochi:

I am writing to you to follow up on a recent meeting I participated in with the Native Village of Tyonek. As you are well aware, PacRim Coal is currently seeking state and federal permits to build and operate the Chuitna coal strip mine 45 miles west of Anchorage, on the outskirts of Tyonek and Beluga. In order for this project to be completed, historical hunting and fishing grounds will be significantly disrupted before any mining operations occur.

Tyonek residents depend on a variety of natural resources in the designated mining region for daily life. As a result, I formally request that the Army Corps of Engineers include the Native Village of Tyonek (NVE) in all work group meetings, on a regular basis and in a meaningful way. NVE should also be respected as a full cooperating agency in all subgroups working on the Chuitna Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and its input should be considered as the work of the subgroups goes forward. While I do not have a formal position on the project, I find that when we all work together, Alaskans reach better decisions and more informed projects happen.

Additionally I request that in the next thirty days the Corps of Engineers provide my office with regular project updates and a full briefing on the status of the Chuitna Coal Mine. Please contact Andrea Sanders in my Washington D.C. office at (Andrea_Sanders@begich.senate.gov) or (202) 224-3004 to coordinate the briefing. I appreciate your cooperation and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mark Begich
United States Senator

SUITE 750
510 L STREET
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501
(907) 271-5915

SUITE 328
101 12TH AVENUE
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701
(907) 456-0261

SUITE 308
ONE SEALASKA PLAZA
JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 586-7700

SUITE 101
805 FRONTAGE ROAD
KENAI, AK 99611
(907) 283-4000

SUITE 230
1900 FIRST AVENUE
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901
(907) 225-3000

SUITE 309
851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
(907) 357-9956

SUITE SR-111
RUSSELL BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3004