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**SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8014**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators McCoy and Salomon

TO THE HONORABLE JOHN HORGAN, PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, TO THE HONORABLE DR. DARRYL PLECAS, SPEAKER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, TO THE HONORABLE DOUG DONALDSON, MINISTER OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE HEYMAN, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY, AND TO THE HONORABLE MICHELLE MUNGALL, MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINES AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, The Skagit River watershed is shared by British Columbia and the state of Washington, with the headwaters high in the mountains of the province where the watershed north of the border supplies thirty percent of the waters flowing into the Salish Sea; and

WHEREAS, The Skagit headwaters provide enormous environmental resource values to the whole watershed and the Pacific Northwest, including habitat for wildlife such as the grizzly bear, and spawning habitat for the endangered bull trout; and

WHEREAS, That concurrently with the United States and Canada High Ross Treaty in 1984, the province and the city of Seattle entered an agreement to enhance the recreational and environmental opportunities within the watershed on both sides of the border, and created the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission to work toward these objectives; and

WHEREAS, The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission is led by four commissioners appointed by the province and four commissioners appointed by the city of Seattle; and

WHEREAS, Among the purposes of the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission is to seek the acquisition of mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreational purposes, including the area of the "donut hole," lying between two parks created by the province to protect the upper watershed's conservation and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission had been progressing toward achieving these purposes when it learned that the province had approved logging operations in the Silverdaisy areas of the donut hole; and

WHEREAS, Logging operations have now begun, and several more logging operations in this area are being planned; and

WHEREAS, The logging roads constructed into this area will also facilitate mining exploration on the mineral claims within this area, and in fact in recent weeks the company holding the claims has filed applications to begin exploratory operations; and

WHEREAS, The sediment loading to the river and its tributaries from logging operations will severely harm water quality and threaten the recovery of steelhead, chinook, and bull trout; and

WHEREAS, The potential of copper mining waste runoff poses severe danger to fish populations throughout the Skagit River, which supports the largest populations of threatened steelhead and Chinook salmon in the United States portion of the Salish Sea; and

WHEREAS, The company holding the mineral claims has a record of noncompliance with mine discharge standards, including responsibility for the Mount Polley mine waste spill near Williams Lake in 2014; and

WHEREAS, The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission seeks to halt logging operations and to acquire the mineral claims in order to ensure the permanent conservation of the upper Skagit watershed; and

WHEREAS, Numerous First Nations, tribes in the United States, the city of Seattle, and numerous conservation organizations have opposed the threat to the upper watershed's conservation and recreational values posed by logging and mining in the donut hole;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the province work with the city of Seattle and the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission to prevent logging and mining in the donut hole of the upper Skagit watershed, in order to ensure that the area's environmental and recreational resources are permanently protected.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable John Horgan, Premier of the province of British Columbia, to the Honorable Dr. Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, to the Honorable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, to the Honorable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and to the Honorable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.