

August 10, 1981

Ernst W. Mueller
Commissioner of Environmental Conservation
Pouch O
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Commissioner Mueller:

On behalf of the Water Resources Board, I would like to commend you and participating members of your staff on the excellent work done to date by the "Tri-agency Working Group." Their coordinating effort has had beneficial results for the public and the involved agencies, and effects have been felt both in the field and in state offices.

Board members have expressed interest in the group's present activities and in future plans which may be formulated. We understand that there has been discussion of change in the group's direction and/or makeup with regard to policy-setting versus management functions. We are concerned, as well, that leadership remain within the three agencies involved. While legislative participation is desirable on the membership level, it should not necessarily reach the executive level of the group.

Again, we applaud your efforts to date and are concerned that the good start continue and build in momentum.

On a separate issue, at the last Water Resources Board meeting held in Sitka in July, we had an excellent presentation on the Noranda Mining project underway on Admiralty Island. In the course of the discussion which involved the Noranda people, representatives of Habitat Protection from Fish and Game, regional office staff from Environmental Conservation, and the U.S. Forest Service, it became clear that this project would afford an excellent opportunity to develop baseline data not presently available on the effects of heavy metals on an Alaska ecosystem. To this end, we recommend that you work with the agencies involved to obtain joint funding for collection and interpretation of data. If we can be of any assistance in obtaining such funding, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Sims
Chairman

RHS:gm