



May 23, 2023

Attn. Matthew Reece
Tongass National Forest Greens Creek Mine
NEP SEIS 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Greens Creek Mine North Extension Project

Mr. Reece:

The Alaska Chamber (the Chamber) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company's (HGCMC) request to expand their Tailings Disposal Facility (TDF) and related infrastructure as described in their North Extension Project (NEP). We wholeheartedly support Alternative D of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) as it minimizes new disturbance in the Admiralty Island National Monument, avoids direct disturbance to sensitive habitat, and provides for a long mine life ensuring the proven socioeconomic benefits that the mine provides continue well into the future.

The Chamber was founded in 1953 and is Alaska's largest statewide business advocacy organization. Our mission is to promote a healthy business environment in Alaska. Our members are from every industry and business size across the state. The Chamber has more than 700 members, representing 58,000 Alaskan workers and \$4.6 billion in annual wages.

In addition to supporting Alternative D, we would like to provide the following specific comments on the DSEIS: It is extremely concerning that the DSEIS has been significantly delayed since it was initiated in 2020. The original EIS and ROD took just over three years and was 514 pages in length. We are now almost three years into the SEIS process and the DSEIS is 556 pages in length. NEPA guidelines for an EIS stipulate a length of between 150 and 300 pages and a two-year timeframe. We urge you to simplify and complete the process in an expeditious manner.

Given the long delays in the SEIS process, the socioeconomic numbers should be updated to reflect the significant positive impacts that HGCMC has on the regional economy. In 2022, HGCMC was the largest private-sector employer and taxpayer in Juneau, with a direct economic impact in local communities of more than \$219 million, including approximately \$77 million in wages, \$29 million in taxes and fees, and \$112 million in purchases from vendors. Hecla's purchase of surplus hydropower has helped provide Juneau residents with over \$80 million in reduced electricity rates since 2009. HGCMC is also the largest single provider of student aid at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS).

HGCMC has submitted detailed comments for the record, many of which fix factual errors found in the DSEIS, and we hereby incorporate and support their comments with ours.

In addition to our comments on the DSEIS, we would also like to address significant misinformation that has been incorporated into the comments and public discussion of those opposed to the mine. Allegations of lead contamination in Hawk Inlet published in a poorly conceived and executed study have unfortunately led some stakeholders to believe that HGCMC has caused harm to the area. This is simply not the case. We would point you to the press release <https://dec.alaska.gov/commish/press-releases/23-05-friends-of-admiralty-study-is->



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misleading/ and webpage <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/hawk-inlet> published by ADEC that refutes these irresponsible allegations.

Thank you for considering these comments and we urge you to select Alternative D in your record of decision as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kati Capozzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kati Capozzi
President & CEO