



COOK INLETKEEPER®

PROTECTING ALASKA'S COOK INLET WATERSHED AND THE LIFE IT SUSTAINS

VIA EMAIL ONLY

(doolittle@acsalaska.net)

February 25, 2007

Dr. William Doolittle, Chair
Board of Trustees
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage AK 99508

RE: FULL METAL MINERALS/CHICKALOON COAL EXPLORATION PERMIT

Dear Dr. Doolittle:

Cook Inletkeeper is a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains. With over 600 members throughout the Cook Inlet region, Inletkeeper works tirelessly to protect water quality and fish habitat for current and future generations.

Inletkeeper greatly appreciates the role the Trust and its Board plays providing essential services to Alaska's mentally ill, and recognizes the need for the Trust to generate revenues from its real property assets. The Trust, however, has a fiduciary responsibility to develop its assets in ways that will improve the lives of Alaskan mental health clients statewide. Yet coal production, transportation and use are fraught with myriad downsides that may adversely affect trust clients throughout the region:

- Impacts to Alaska Lifestyles: Coal strip mining is an extremely intensive land use that invariably destroys the natural systems in which it occurs. As a result, coal mining in the Matanuska River watershed will undermine Alaska lifestyles based on hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits.
- Mercury in Alaska Fish: Mercury is a well-known neurotoxin produced by coal-fired power plants that persists in our environment. Governor Palin recently announced – for the first time ever – elevated mercury levels in Alaska fish.

- Climate Change: Of all the traditional fuel resources, coal produces the most greenhouse gases that aggravate climate change. As Alaska experiences the disproportionate effects of a warming climate, coal is our worst energy option for global warming.
- Coal Dust & Air Pollution: Coal is a notoriously dirty fuel that produces the particulates that aggravate asthmatic conditions, and it's a leading contributor of smog and other air pollution problems.

Accordingly, coal development and use likely will have adverse impacts on Trust clients, and the larger public trust, in the short and long term. Inletkeeper urges the Mental Health Trust Board to reconsider its Best Interest Finding regarding the Full Metal Minerals exploration proposal, and to revise its land use plans for this and other coal-bearing holdings so Trust clients can continue to enjoy the incredible bounties of this great state without the debilitating impacts of coal mining and use.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



Bob Shavelson
Executive Director

Cc: Mental Health Trust Land Office
NAMI Anchorage
NAMI Mat Su Valley
NAMI Homer