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Governor Walker and BC Premier Clark Sign Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation
First time Alaska and BC have renewed agreement since 2005

November 25, 2015 JUNEAU – Governor Bill Walker and British Columbia Premier Christy Clark signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Cooperation between Alaska and BC this morning. The Alaska/ BC MOU signing took place via videoconference in Juneau and Vancouver.

“As our next door neighbor, Canada plays a significant role in many Alaska industries, including trade, transportation, and tourism. This MOU underscores that connection, and I thank British Columbia Premier Clark for her support and cooperation in advancing this important relationship,” said Governor Walker. “As we work to improve our state’s economy, it is important that we actively reach out and foster good relationships with our trading partners and neighbors with whom we share so much in common.”

While the MOU is not a legally binding document, it is a firm commitment by both governments to continue working together where possible. Today’s MOU identifies the broad areas of continued or new activity by Alaska and British Columbia, including:

- Establishing a bilateral working group on the protection of transboundary waters;
- Sharing best practices on workforce development and training;
- Advancing marine transportation reliability and safety;
- Reinforcing emergency management mutual aid response through the existing Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement;
- Fostering continued growth of existing and increased transportation links;
- Continuing joint visitor industry promotion;
- And exploring other areas for cooperative action, including natural resource development, fisheries, ocean acidification, border management, trade and investment, and climate change adaptation.

Governor Walker noted that establishment of a bilateral working group on the protection of transboundary waters would not have been possible without the hard work of Lt. Governor Byron Mallott. The Lt. Governor will head up the Alaska side of the working group, while the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy and Mines will lead the BC side.

“Establishing this bilateral working group encourages tribes, First Nations, and other stakeholders to join the important conversation around our transboundary waters,” Governor Walker said. “I commend Lt. Governor Mallott for his persistence and dedication to this critical issue. State of Alaska departments have enjoyed frequent exchange and contact with their BC counterparts, and now we can expand on that relationship.”

“We have listened to Alaskans’ concerns about protecting waters in our transboundary rivers, and have already begun conversations in Alaska on a Statement of Cooperation specific to this working group’s future role,” said Lt. Governor Mallott. “Our next steps include sharing our ideas in a draft SOC with British Columbia officials so they can continue the conversation in Canada with their stakeholders.”

The Statement of Cooperation will be an appendix to the MOU signed by the Governor and Premier today.

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