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April 3, 2020

Mr. Russell Kirkham
Division of Mining, Land, and Water
500 W 7th Ave Suite 920
Anchorage, AK 99501-3577
Submitted via email at: coalprogram@alaska.gov

Re: Public Notice of Renewal Request For The Wishbone Hill Mine Permits (#s 01-89-796 & 02-89-796)

Dear Mr. Kirkham:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to support the renewal of the Wishbone Hill mine permits.

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

During its last permit renewal, both the State of Alaska and Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. performed a tremendous amount of study to ensure mining activity at Wishbone Hill met our permitting system's rigorous regulatory requirements. Through the Alaska Surface Coal Mining Control and Reclamation Act (ASMCR), Wishbone Hill was determined to have met the necessary safeguards to protect all aspects of the environment and public health.

The Matanuska Coal Fields have a long history of coal mining in Alaska. The low-sulfur, bituminous coal is a valuable state resource and allows us to boast "Alaska Clean Coal," continuing the Usibelli family's 76-year record of supplying an abundant and affordable energy source to Alaskans and beyond.

Mining at Wishbone Hill could bring needed economic benefits at a time when our state most needs them. Based on the last feasibility study, the project would employ approximately 100 people. Mining jobs in Alaska carry an average annual wage of approximately \$112,000, higher than the median household income of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and over twice the state average for all sectors of the economy. In addition, the State of Alaska and the Mat-Su Borough will receive revenues from mining taxes and royalties.

The Wishbone Hill projects provides for new economic opportunities while coexisting with the Alaska environment. For these reasons, we urge you approve the permit renewal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Deantha Crockett
Executive Director

