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November 12, 2021

Dear editor,

I'm writing to respond to the letter by Becca Rodack, "**Canadian mining can have an impact in the U.S.**"

Teck is committed to protecting water quality and we have made significant progress implementing the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (EVWQP), a long-term approach to maintaining the health of the watershed. We have water treatment facilities operating now that are successfully achieving near complete removal of selenium and improving water quality with more facilities planned and under construction.

Teck also supports setting science-based standards and agrees with seven of the eight selenium criteria in Montana's Lake Koochanusa standard. However, the water column criteria does not match with real-world data seen in the fish themselves and is unreasonable because it is actually below natural background levels in some upstream Canadian waterways. We conduct extensive monitoring of water quality and aquatic health at more than 130 locations in the watershed and make those reports publicly available. Based on scientific understanding of selenium, the current concentrations in Lake Koochanusa and Kootenai River are not expected to impact fish populations.

Regarding the reference to the Westslope Cutthroat Trout population, an investigation into the decline indicates water quality constituents, including selenium, were not a primary contributor to the decline and that extreme winter conditions, sparse overwintering habitats, restrictive fish passage (including water use) and associated ice formation are the most likely primary causes. Recent monitoring of this population shows a positive trend.

We are committed to ensure water quality and aquatic health is protected, working with stakeholders in both Canada and the U.S. More information about the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan including monitoring results can be found at www.teck.com/elkvalley.

Regards,

Jeff Hanman
Vice President, Sustainable Development, Coal
Teck