

To:

Jan Tore Sanner, Minister of Local Government and Modernization

Tine Sundtoft, Minister of Climate and Environment

Oslo, 2015

Time to protect the Norwegian fjords and our common sea

As a diverse group of environmental organizations in the countries surrounding the North and Barents Sea, we are writing to you to urge you not to allow dumping of mining waste in the Norwegian fjords.

We are aware of the plans to dump 300 million tons of toxic mining waste in Fjørdefjord on the West coast, and 30 million tons in Repparfjord in the North of Norway, and are deeply worried about the consequences this will have for the marine life and the ecosystems of the fjords, which are an integrated and important part of the wider ocean which we all depend on.

The Norwegian fjords are internationally known as a premier tourism destination, having received several awards from National Geographic because of their pristine and beautiful nature, combined with the local culture. Fjørdefjord is located in the centre of this world-renowned fjord landscape, hosting a rich biodiversity of several endangered IUCN red listed species, important cod stocks, Atlantic salmon, sea eagles, shoals of porpoise and orcas. Fisheries and sea food production is an important industry, and at the same time the local village Vevring is famous for its arts exhibitions and vibrant network of artists.

Norway is one of the world's premier seafood nations, based on the clean fjords and coast, contributing to the world's food supply with 38 million meals of seafood every day. The fjords and their connected rivers are also very important for the Atlantic salmon, which Norway has a special responsibility to protect. As both Fjørdefjorden and Repparfjord are designated "National salmon fjords" it is especially important to keep the ecosystems in these fjords healthy. The Atlantic salmon is also itself the foundation of an important tourism sector through salmon fishing.

Dumping of toxic mining waste therefore not only threatens the species-rich ecosystems of the fjords, but also existing industries in fisheries, seafood and tourism, and thereby the livelihoods of a large number of people. We have problems understanding why Norway, usually known for good environmental standards, would want to be one of only five countries in the world still to dispose of mining waste in sub-marine environments. It is in the world's interest that Norway stops dumping toxic mining waste into the sea.

We take note of the fact that the Norwegian Environment Agency, the Directorate of Fisheries and the Institute of Marine Research are all opposing the plans to dump mining waste in Fjørdefjord, and we urge you to listen to these experts and protect Fjørdefjord and the other Norwegian fjords against the dumping of mining waste, which includes large amounts of chemicals and heavy metals.

Sincerely

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