



BERTA'S BRIEFINGS

REPRESENTATIVE BERTA GARDNER

Serving Geneva Woods, College Village, Green Acres, Tudor, Taku & Campbell Park

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Reflections on my Kensington Mine Tour

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

One of the things I enjoy very much about being a legislator is the opportunity it gives me to go out and see firsthand what's going on around our beautiful state. Last week several of us visited the Kensington Gold Mine located near Juneau. We set out early in the morning driving toward the end of the road; then taking a boat through the clear water of the Lynn Canal to the mining site.

Kensington is located at the mouth of Berners Bay, a jewel of a place with spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife (including whales in the summer). The gold rush miners were active in the region and the mountains are honeycombed with old mine shafts. After a safety briefing, we spent a full day touring various parts of the facility, starting at the mouth of the mine and following the process to see how the rocks are crushed smaller, and smaller, then mixed with chemicals to separate the "wheat from the chaff" you might say. Finally, in the assay facility, we got to see tiny bits of one of the products, small quantities of molten gold.



Rep. Berta Gardner visits the Kensington Mine with other Legislators and visitors

The visit prompted a few thoughts about mining. We are a resource development state and mining is important, especially in terms of Alaskan employment. There are several new mining projects taking off across the state – and even more on the drawing board. Although Alaska gets very little direct revenue from mining, the industry is critically important to many small communities who depend

on these local projects for good-paying, full-time jobs.

About 180 people work full time at Kensington and there are many others employed by the many contractors who provide mine services. The jobs provide over \$25 million in direct and indirect payroll. The mine generates several million dollars in local tax revenues and is now Juneau's second largest private employer.

As we continue to extract resources around our state it is critical that we focus on projects that create jobs for Alaskans while protecting our environment. We also need to ensure that our permitting process is competent, reliable and efficient – and that it inspires public confidence. Not every project is feasible or desirable. However, we need to realize that resource extraction is essential to our economic base, and if we do it right it can bring benefits. Let me know what you think.

I'm Berta and I'm still listening,



Berta
