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Sen. Begich Meets With Ucore Officials
Reiterates Strong Support for Development of Bokan Rare Earth Mine

U.S. Sen. Mark Begich met on Saturday with President/CEO Jim McKenzie and other officials of Ucore Rare Metals, the developers of a proposed rare earth mine at Bokan Mountain on Prince of Wales Island.

Following the meeting, Sen. Begich issued the following statement:

“I had a very productive meeting with Ucore to learn firsthand about their project and the results of their exploration efforts to date. We had a great discussion about the potential this project holds for the country’s strategic position regarding rare earth supplies, as well as the huge opportunity it presents for jobs and economic development in Southern Southeast Alaska.

“The progress we are seeing is the result of four years of effort and investment by Ucore. I had recently written to Chief Tidwell in support of this project, and was subsequently pleased that the U.S. Forest Service recently approved Ucore’s exploration permit for drilling in roadless areas of the Tongass.

“Based upon this progress, it is vital that the permit for exploration in 2012 be reviewed expeditiously so that the mine can be put into production with no undue delay. I intend to discuss this project with the office of Secretary Vilsack not only to reiterate my support but to also request that the USFS keep an open line of communications with the company as next year’s permitting process moves forward.”

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