



FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN
BRISTOL BAY



June 10 2021

Michael Regan, Administrator
Jane Nishida, Acting Administrator
Mail Code 1101A
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Acting Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Administrator Regan,

As members of Alaska's fishing industry that depend on the health of the Bristol Bay watershed, we respectfully ask that the EPA take swift action to establish Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay's world-class wild salmon fishery. For over a decade, our industry has operated under the shadow of the Pebble Mine, creating risk and uncertainty for our bottom lines. We formally support the EPA using its authority under the Clean Water Act's Section 404(c) to stop the Pebble Mine from using Bristol Bay's headwaters as dredge and fill site, and echo the United Tribes of Bristol Bay's request delivered in a letter dated February 18, 2021:

"The Tribal people of Bristol Bay and those whose livelihoods depend on its waters have dealt with uncertainty from the threat of the Pebble Mine for far too long. Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act allows the federal government to permanently protect any watershed from the threat of mining. Our Tribes firmly believe, and therefore formally request, that the EPA use this authority under the Clean Water Act and make ending the threat of the Pebble Mine a top priority."

Bristol Bay's commercial salmon fishery is unlike any other in both its volume of fish and number of renewable jobs. It is a thriving economic engine that supplies over half the world's wild sockeye salmon, provides over 15,000 American jobs, and generates over \$2 billion in annual economic activity. Bristol Bay is a torchbearer for sustainable fisheries management, boasting record returns over the past decade, following a record 135 years of commercial fishing of this incredible resource. It has sustained a fishing tradition for generations of families throughout Alaska and the U.S. with Bristol Bay commercial fishing

permit holders and crew hailing from nearly every U.S. state. Unfortunately, Bristol Bay has also been one of the most endangered fisheries in the U.S. for the last decade due to the proposed Pebble Mine.

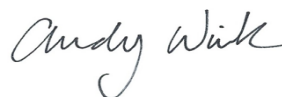
Despite the scientific record showing that the Pebble Mine would harm Bristol Bay's world-class fishery, the Bristol Bay region remains vulnerable to large-scale mining and the door is still open for the Pebble Mine to be developed the next time political winds shift in their favor. As businesses that are deeply invested in the sustainability of Bristol Bay, we find that risk unacceptable. Protecting Bristol Bay's salmon fishery is not only the right thing to do for the people of Bristol Bay, but it is in the best interest of our United States to establish certainty and stability for the thousands of Americans who depend on Bristol Bay's salmon. The EPA is the only federal agency that has the legal authority to take direct and decisive action to prohibit the Pebble Mine from dredging out Bristol Bay's ecologically sensitive and economically valuable headwaters. According to the EPA's 2014 Proposed Determination and 2012 Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, the comments and conclusions made in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the Army Corps' own Record of Decision that the Pebble Mine would pose an "unacceptable threat to the Bristol Bay fishery," there is little question that the Pebble Mine would cause adverse impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed and fisheries. Therefore, the EPA has clear authority and a duty to act under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

It is time to establish lasting protections for Bristol Bay and its wild salmon runs and put an end to the uncertainty that has been hanging over Alaska's fishing industry and the thousands of American fishing families who depend on Bristol Bay. We respectfully ask that you make Bristol Bay a top priority for your agency and move quickly to establish Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay. We hope that you listen to the call from Bristol Bay tribes, fishermen, and salmon lovers from every corner of the country who have asked your agency establish Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay without delay. Please help us ensure that we can continue to provide our fellow Americans and the world with nutritious wild seafood and support our families for generations to come.

Sincerely,



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CC:

Secretary, Department of Interior

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Acting Under Secretary of Commerce,

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Director, Bureau of Land Management Director,

National Park Service Director,

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator from Alaska

Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator from Alaska Maria Cantwell,

U.S. Senator from Washington

Patty Murray, U.S. Senator from Washington