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One Year After Biden's Commitment to Protect Bristol Bay, the Watershed and its Record-Breaking Salmon Fishery are Still at Risk

Full-page New York Times ad reminds Biden administration that they need to keep his promise

(Washington, DC/Alaska) — On August 8, 2020, then-presidential candidate Joe Biden released a [statement](#) committing to do “what President Trump has failed to do: listen to the scientists and experts to protect Bristol Bay — and all it offers to Alaska, our country, and the world.” One year later, the commitment remains unfulfilled. Recognizing this anniversary, the Bristol Bay Defense Fund — consisting of Tribes, commercial fishermen, sportsmen, businesses, and conservationists — are reminding the Biden administration to [Finish the Job](#) started by the Obama administration. The work to protect Bristol Bay begins by resuming the Clean Water Act 404(c) process to provide the Bay the lasting protection it needs. Activities marking the anniversary include a [full-page ad](#) in the New York times and digital advertising.

*“During his campaign, when Biden promised to protect Bristol Bay, he acknowledged that the Bristol Bay watershed is a national treasure that must not be put at risk by a foreign-owned mine,” said **Alannah Hurley, Executive Director of the United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB)**. “But one year later, his administration has yet to take action and the mine continues to threaten our ways of life and the livelihoods of thousands of people who depend on our salmon runs. The Pebble Mine remains the wrong mine in the wrong place. To keep his promise to our people, President Biden must end the uncertainty and resume the Clean Water Act process to protect our people and fishery.”*

*“Bristol Bay’s record-breaking salmon run this summer highlights the need to protect one of the last places where wild salmon not only survive, but thrive,” said **Kat Carscallen, Executive Director of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay**. “We are urgently asking President Biden to keep his promise to stop the toxic Pebble Mine and stand up for the tens of thousands of Americans whose jobs and way of life depend on Bristol Bay’s pristine water and wild salmon.”*

Unlike other North American salmon fisheries this year, Bristol Bay has [shattered records](#). Protecting Bristol Bay has always had broad bipartisan support, however, urgency grows to finish the job. Time is running out for Biden’s EPA to resume the process. They need to act before political pressures could throw the people of Bristol Bay back into uncertainty. The rare ecological bright spot in Bristol Bay remains under threat from the dangerous Pebble Mine, a proposed massive copper and gold mine that would be the largest open-pit mine in North America. Northern Dynasty Minerals CEO Ron Thiessen — the head of the company behind the Pebble Mine proposal — [recently said](#) “we have by no means given up on this project” amid bipartisan public opposition.

The United Tribes of Bristol Bay recently [invited EPA Administrator Michael Regan](#) to visit the region amid the 10 year anniversary of EPA officials first visiting Bristol Bay to consider protections for the watershed. Furthermore, letters asking EPA to resume work on 404(c) Clean Water Act protections have been sent by [United Fisherman of Alaska](#), [UTBB](#), and a coalition of environmental and conservation groups. In addition, the record sockeye salmon run comes following the recent launch of the “Finish the Job” campaign — a comprehensive outreach and media effort including [new TV](#), digital, and print ads urging the Biden administration to fulfill its commitment to protecting Bristol Bay by the end of September.

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