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**Tribes, Commercial Fishermen, & Conservation Groups Respond to  
EPA's Next Step Towards Protecting Bristol Bay**

*EPA's "Recommended Determination" follows a 100+ day comment period on its proposed protections for the Bristol Bay region and a record-breaking fishing season*

**(Dillingham, Alaska)** — Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [issued](#) its Recommended Determination regarding the Pebble deposit for Bristol Bay. This marks the next step in the process for EPA to stop Pebble Mine by enacting 404(c) Clean Water Act protections for the region.

The release of the Recommended Determination brings EPA closer than ever before to enacting durable, long-lasting protections for Bristol Bay through the 404(c) process. The next step in this process is for the agency to formalize protections in a "Final Determination" before they are enacted.

Earlier this summer, the EPA published a revised Proposed Determination, launching a comment period to provide the public an opportunity to weigh in on their proposed protections. More than half a million people—including 31,000 Alaskans and 2,500 Bristol Bay residents—spoke out to once again resoundingly reject Pebble Mine.

**In response to the EPA's announcement, Tribes, commercial fishermen, and conservation groups released the following statements:**

"We welcome the Environmental Protection Agency advancing the process for protecting Bristol Bay," **said Alannah Hurley, Executive Director for the United Tribes of Bristol Bay.** "After twenty years of Pebble hanging over our heads, the Biden Administration has the opportunity to follow through on its commitments by finalizing comprehensive, durable protections for our region as soon as possible. We look forward to reviewing the EPA's Recommended Determination in greater detail to ensure it achieves the goal of protecting our people and region from the threat of the Pebble Mine."

"We are both excited and relieved to see the Environmental Protection Agency follow the science and listen to the public by moving forward with Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay," **said Tim Bristol, Executive Director of SalmonState.** "After another record-breaking fishing season, this news is welcome to all those who depend on Bristol Bay and its fisheries."

But there is no time to waste; the Biden administration must finalize 404(c) Clean Water Act protections for the world's most productive and profitable wild salmon fishery as soon as possible.”

“EPA’s action is an essential step forward for Bristol Bay Tribes and communities, joined overwhelmingly by Alaskans, fishermen, conservation groups, scientists, businesses, and people the world over,” **said Joel Reynolds, Western Director and Senior Attorney for NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)**. “Together, we have fought for more than a decade to stop the Pebble Mine and defend Bristol Bay’s extraordinary ecosystem. With EPA’s announcement today, lasting protection for Bristol Bay is finally within reach. We urge EPA now to finish the job – for good.”

“This summer’s record-breaking salmon return was thanks in large part to Bristol Bay’s pristine waters and healthy habitat,” **said Katherine Carscallen, Director of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay**. “Our fishermen were able to deliver 59 million wild sockeye to the market—something that isn’t happening anywhere else in the world. EPA’s release of their Recommended Determination today is an important step towards finalizing urgently needed protections for the region by the end of the year. We all know what is at stake, it’s time for the EPA to finish the job.”

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