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**Tribes, Commercial and Sport Fishers, and Conservation Groups
Celebrate EPA's Historic Decision to Protect Bristol Bay from Pebble
Mine**

In a landmark conservation victory, EPA's "Final Determination" vetoes the Pebble Mine following numerous public comment periods, record-breaking fishing seasons, and a 10+ year fight to protect Bristol Bay

(Dillingham, Alaska) — Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [issued](#) 404(c) Clean Water Act protections to end the threat of the Pebble Mine due to the adverse risks it poses to Bristol Bay's waters and the surrounding ecosystem.

The EPA's Final Determination is a landmark conservation decision celebrated by Tribes, commercial and sport fishers, and people in the region who first asked the EPA to step in and use its authority to veto Pebble Mine [thirteen years ago](#). As the final step in the 404(c) process, these protections will now become law under the Clean Water Act and will effectively prohibit the development of the Pebble Mine project. Now, groups dedicated to fighting for Bristol Bay and its people will have a solid foundation to continue working to protect the region from any and all future threats.

These protections will prohibit and restrict the use of certain waters—in the South Fork Koktuli, North Fork Koktuli, and Upper Talarik Creek Watersheds—in Bristol Bay as a disposal site for the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with mining at the Pebble deposit due to the adverse effects on salmon fisheries in the areas. Additionally, the Final Determination prohibits future proposals to develop a mine in the Pebble Deposit.

People from all across Alaska and the nation—including the United Tribes of Bristol Bay, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Association, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, local Tribes and municipalities, village corporations, dozens of NGOs and nonprofits, commercial fishermen, sportsmen, businesses, chefs, and more—are united in support behind this decision, which has been decades in the making.

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

"Under President Biden, the EPA has not only restored its commitment to science and law but truly listened to the original stewards and first peoples' of this land. Ignored by our own state government, our Tribes petitioned the EPA 13 years ago to use its 404(c) authority to protect Bristol Bay, to protect our people," **said Alannah Hurley, executive director of the United Tribes of Bristol Bay.** "Today, these Clean Water Act protections provide certainty that Pebble cannot be built in Bristol Bay. On behalf of UTBB, I'd like to say quyana, chin'an, thank you to the EPA and the Biden Administration not just for this decision, but for working throughout this 404(c) process to consult with our Tribes. EPA's action today helps us build the future where our people can remain Yup'ik, Dena'ina, and Alutiiq for generations to come."

"The Environmental Protection Agency's Final Determination is a landmark conservation decision that will protect Bristol Bay for generations to come," **said Tim Bristol, Executive Director of SalmonState.** "This hard-won victory would not have been possible without the perseverance of the Tribes, commercial and sport fishers, conservation groups, and others who never gave up fighting to ensure the longevity of the fishery in Bristol Bay and the cultures, community, and economy it supports. Thanks to the Biden administration and leaders like EPA Region 10 Administrator Sixkiller and EPA Administrator Regan, one of the world's most pristine watersheds and profitable wild salmon fishery will receive the durable, long-lasting protections it deserves."

"Today's decision is an existential win for Bristol Bay, for the region's tribes and communities, for science, and for nature on Earth," **said Joel Reynolds, Western Director and Senior Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.** "The Bristol Bay wild salmon fishery is a national treasure that, after over 12 years of EPA review, has now been protected from a relentless assault by a small underfunded Canadian company hoping to enrich itself at the expense of the people of Alaska. EPA's veto of this scheme is a victory for science over politics, wild salmon over greed, biodiversity over extinction, and law over anarchy. It's a great day for democracy."

"For the first time in two decades, our fishermen will head out on the water this fishing season without the existential threat of Pebble Mine looming just up-river," **said Katherine Carscallen, Director of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay.** "Thousands of small fishing businesses, and industry members are thanking the Biden administration and the Environmental Protection Agency for finalizing Clean Water Act protections which recognize the importance of Bristol Bay, its record-breaking salmon runs, and the irreplaceable sustainable jobs it supports."

"The Environmental Protection Agency's decision to veto Pebble Mine is a critical win for the most important wild salmon stronghold left on Earth," **said Guido Rahr, CEO of Wild Salmon Center.** "We are thankful that the EPA listened clearly to science and to the people of Bristol Bay and put in place protections to ensure the region's abundant salmon runs continue to

thrive for years to come. The decision marks a victory for clean water, for the thousands of people in local communities that are built around these fish, and for the 137 species that depend on that returning salmon, including orcas, grizzly bears, caddis flies and everything in between.”

Additional Information:

Thanks to thousands of years of Indigenous stewardship and sustainable management, Bristol Bay is home to record-shattering salmon runs that provide more than 60 percent of the world’s sockeye salmon, sustain Indigenous cultures and support billions in economic output, and employ tens of thousands of people in commercial fishing, hunting, sportfishing, outdoor recreation, and tourism.

This decision follows millions of public comments being submitted to the EPA urging the agency to stop Pebble Mine, three different major mining company partners abandoning the project, both Alaskan Senators—as well as President Biden—announcing their opposition to the mine, and an Alaska Native Corporation signing a conservation agreement to protect Bristol Bay lands from development. [More](#) information on the timeline to protect Bristol Bay.

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