

*Alaska Center * Alaska Community Action on Toxics * Alaska Wilderness League
* Defenders of Wildlife * Friends of McNeil River * National Parks Conservation
Association * National Wildlife Federation * Sierra Club * Trustees for Alaska*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 24, 2020

Contacts:

Leah Moss, Alaska Center, leah@akcenter.org, 917-613-6791

Gwenn Dobbs, Defenders of Wildlife, gdobbs@defenders.org, (202) 772-0269

Dawnell Smith, Trustees for Alaska, dsmith@trustees.org, 907-433-2013

Groups call out Army Corps for negligent review of Pebble's faulty mine proposal
Deficient analysis sweeps science and legal obligations under the rug

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published a final environmental impact statement for the proposed Pebble mine that fails to address the concerns of scientists, federal and state agencies, Bristol Bay communities, technical experts, and Alaskans who have repeatedly pointed out that the proposed mine poses an existential threat to Bristol Bay fisheries and communities. The release of the EIS allows the Army Corps to make a final permit decision as soon as next month.

Pebble's proposal would put a toxic copper mine at the headwaters of a watershed vital to the health of over 30 Alaska communities and the world's largest and last great sockeye salmon run. The region's salmon fisheries and other wildlife have nourished the Yup'ik, Dena'ina, and Alutiiq peoples forever, and continue to sustain their cultures and ways of life.

Bristol Bay fisheries produce 50 percent of the world's food supply of wild sockeye salmon, and support 14,000 commercial fishing jobs, 7,000 sport fishing and hunting jobs, and thousands and thousands of other jobs in tourism, hospitality and other sectors.

The Army Corps' analysis of Pebble's faulty proposal panders to politics and the special interests of [a foreign mining company with zero mining experience](#) while endangering a fishing region that has sustained human and animal life for millennia.

The groups listed in this statement join the majority of Alaskans in demanding enduring protections for Bristol Bay communities, salmon, water and wildlife, and will continue to fight to protect Bristol Bay.

Organization statements:

"The Corps' analysis is fatally flawed and woefully lacking. It ignores scientific, technical, and traditional knowledge and input that shows that this proposed mine would devastate Bristol

Bay's salmon fisheries, an economic sector and food source essential to the livelihoods and ways of life of Alaskans," said **Brian Litmans, legal director for Trustees for Alaska**. "We will take all necessary steps to hold the Corps accountable to the law."

"The Army Corps' final EIS shows a blatant disregard for the scientific process and the Indigenous communities that have spoken out to protect these vital waterways," said **Polly Carr, executive director of the Alaska Center**. "Alaskans will not sit idly by as corporations and compromised administrations take from our communities to line their pockets. We need to look past this short-sighted extraction, and toward a more sustainable economy that supports the health and well-being of our communities. It's time that leadership takes a stand for Alaskans and not corporate greed."

"The Corps of Engineers has utterly failed to consider the inevitable acute, long-term, and multigenerational adverse health effects on the people and communities of the region in the final environmental impact statement, setting the stage for approval of this massive and destructive mine," said **Pamela Miller, executive director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics**. "The project represents a grave environmental injustice. The Corps has abandoned its responsibility to protect water quality, fish habitat, wildlife, and the health of our communities. We will continue to challenge this until we stop this dangerous and ill-conceived project."

"It's a reoccurring nightmare that won't end. For decades now, the shortsighted proposal of Pebble Mine has threatened to poison Bristol Bay, destroy the world's largest remaining wild sockeye salmon fishery, and spoil critical habitat for the endangered Cook Inlet beluga," said **Katharine Bear Nalven, Defenders of Wildlife Alaska representative**. "Bristol Bay is the lifeblood of Alaska. We will not sit idly by as the Pebble project further imperils a beleaguered population of endangered belugas and wipes out a world-class salmon fishery."

"The EIS continues to ignore or downplay the impact the project would have on bears, the bear viewing industry of southcentral Alaska, and the tourism industry at large," said **Drew Hamilton of Friends of McNeil River**. "The bear viewing industry has grown dramatically in the last 20 years to become an important part of Alaska's diversified tourist economy. Despite the increasing economic benefits of bear viewing, the Pebble's proposed transportation corridor and industrial export terminal on the shores of Cook Inlet puts brown bears and the burgeoning bear viewing economy at risk. These developments will displace denning habitat, change bear movements, increase defense of life and property killings and prompt a variety of additional impacts. Yet the Environmental Impact Statement does nothing to analyze the extent, magnitude, and scope of these impacts."

"The Army Corps' final rushed review continues to determinedly ignore the threats Pebble Mine poses to Alaska communities, Katmai and Lake Clark National Parks' brown bears, and the world's largest wild sockeye salmon run," said **Jim Adams, Alaska Regional Director, National Parks Conservation Association**. "The National Parks Conservation Association rejects this dangerous gamble that favors international mining interests over people, parks and Bristol Bay's salmon run and the billion-dollar Bristol Bay commercial fishery, recreational fishery and subsistence fishery that it sustains."

“Bristol Bay is the most important salmon fishery in the world and supports tens of thousands of jobs,” said **Collin O’Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation**. “The science is overwhelmingly clear: the proposed Pebble Mine is a catastrophe waiting to happen. It’s simply unconscionable to fast-track such a high-risk project with a shoddy environment review that failed to evaluate the consequences should the proposed six-story dam fail and release 10 billion gallons of toxic waste into Bristol Bay’s treasured, pristine ecosystem. The administration should instead put a stop to this project and protect Alaska’s salmon and the communities that depend upon Bristol Bay.”