

# PROTECT BRISTOL BAY NEWSLETTER

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## PEBBLE PROCESS CONDEMNED AT DC HEARING

On October 23, 2019, the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which oversees the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, held a hearing on the Pebble mine permitting process.

Witnesses who provided testimony at the hearing included United Tribes of Bristol Bay Executive Director Alannah Hurley, Bristol Bay commercial fisherman Mark Niver, Bristol Bay lodge owner Brian Kraft, former EPA Region 10 Administrator Dennis McLarren, former Rio Tinto mining engineer Richard Borden, Tiffany and Co. Chief Sustainability Officer Anisa Costa and Pebble Limited Partnership CEO Tom Collier.



*Witnesses at DC congressional hearing talk about the Pebble mine's impacts on Bristol Bay.*

The hearing was a great step in the efforts to protect Bristol Bay, illustrating that Congress is paying attention and highlighting the many issues with the permitting process. Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (Oregon), and others, criticized the Army Corps of Engineers for rushing the review of the project without properly considering the credibility of the proposal and the risks it carries, and dismissed Collier's assertions that the project was safe and financially viable.

At the hearing Chair DeFazio said: "Let me state, right from the start, that the Pebble mine proposal is a bad idea made even worse by the sham review process currently underway. . . This administration is once again putting private industry wants at the top of its agenda, risking the health and safety of our nation's ecosystem, the ancestral home for Alaska Natives, and the destruction of the nation's most productive salmon habitat. We need to stop this shell game and understand that a process that purposefully looks at only part of the picture, misses the entire view."

UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley testified: "While our people have opposed Pebble for nearly two decades, our recent experience with the Army Corps of Engineers has made it clear to us the government is paving the way for Pebble regardless of the facts, science, and consequences."

Richard Borden, now a consultant with Midgard Environmental Energy Services, is a former 23-year employee at mining giant Rio Tinto, one of the Pebble Limited Partnership former partners. He has over 30 years of experience in permitting, design, and en-

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# PEBBLE DRAFT EIS UNIVERSALLY CONDEMNED BY SCIENTISTS & FEDERAL AGENCIES

## What is the Pebble Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is a document created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) intended to provide a draft assessment of the impacts Pebble’s plan would have on Bristol Bay’s lands, waters, and people. The environmental impact statement is meant to be comprehensive, thorough, scientifically driven, and address environmental, economic, and social impacts of development. Unfortunately, the Pebble DEIS lacks many of these elements and has been universally condemned by the scientific community, including state and federal agencies. Despite specific requests for inclusion of more information, the DEIS is lacking critical data needed to assess all of Pebble’s potential impacts on Bristol Bay. Gaps include: impacts of the project and transportation corridor on the environment and salmon, no tailings dam failure scenarios, socioeconomic outcomes, and cultural and human health impacts.



Lucy Weedman testifies at New Stuyahok hearing on DEIS.

**“Based on the identified deficiencies, the draft EIS is so inadequate it precludes meaningful analysis.”**  
- Department of the Interior



## Background:

Prior to the Trump Administration, the Pebble Partnership had been touting for nearly two decades that Pebble’s entry into the permitting process was “right around the corner.” However, it wasn’t until the federal and state administration changed in the company’s favor that the Pebble Partnership finally submitted a Clean Water Act development permit application to the Army Corps of Engineers in December 2017. This kicked off the federal review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is clear the Army Corps is operating on a politically-driven timeline to reach a final permit decision before the end of Trump’s presidential term as their schedule calls for a permitting decision by Fall 2020. If this timeline is adhered to, Pebble will have gone through the permitting process in about two and half years when similar mines, like the Donlin project, typically take five to seven years. This fast-tracked permitting process has resulted in a disturbingly inadequate scientific review of Pebble’s impacts on Bristol Bay. Throughout the process to date, the Army Corps has faced nationwide criticism of the blatant corruption in the process, as the Corps continues to ignore the concerns of local residents, scientists, mining and engineering experts, and even other federal agencies who have criticized the quality and content of the DEIS.



Donna Roehl provides testimony on DEIS in Neuhalen.

through the permitting process in about two and half years when similar mines, like the Donlin project, typically take five to seven years. This fast-tracked permitting process has resulted in a disturbingly inadequate scientific review of Pebble’s impacts on Bristol Bay. Throughout the process to date, the Army Corps has faced nationwide criticism of the blatant corruption in the process, as the Corps continues to ignore the concerns of local residents, scientists, mining and engineering experts, and even other federal agencies who have criticized the quality and content of the DEIS.

## Is the permit application for a “smaller mine” legitimate?

For over 20 years, Pebble’s biggest talking point to the mining industry and potential investors is that it’s a mega mine worth over 465 billion dollars if developed in its entirety. The simple truth is that with a large, low-grade mineral deposit like Pebble, there is no way to extract all the resources without building one of the world’s largest open-pit mines. Recently, Pebble claimed they’re going to build a “smaller” mine, one they claim to be less environmentally disruptive and that only extracts a portion of the minerals. The permit application Pebble submitted in 2017 proposed a project that would mine less than 20 percent of the resource, but as proposed it would *still* be among the

largest mines in Alaska. Further, they've amended their application and grown their project plans several times in the past two years, including after public input opportunities closed and after the Draft EIS was published. Pebble also has not done an economic feasibility study on the "smaller" mine they propose, and mining experts have insisted that in order for the project to be profitable it will eventually need to be developed in its entirety. Pebble's proposal for a "smaller" mine is clearly intended to fool Alaskans into thinking a smaller mine wouldn't harm the watershed. Unfortunately, the

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**"Based on a careful review of the Pebble Mine DEIS, it is my professional opinion that the document and associated analysis is fatally flawed. The DEIS contains an unacceptable number of deficiencies, omissions and errors for such a large, complex project in an extremely sensitive environment. Due to the global significance of the salmon fishery, any EIS within the Bristol Bay watershed should be held to the highest standard, but the Pebble DEIS does not even meet industry standard practice." -Former Rio Tinto Mining Engineer Richard Borden**

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USACE is refusing to acknowledge or study mine expansion scenarios. It is also clear that even the size proposed by Pebble in their permit application would have devastating impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed based on the scientific findings of the 2014 Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. The BBWA studied a small, medium, and full size mine at the Pebble deposit, and found that all would irreversibly harm salmon. The current project, as proposed in permitting, is larger than the EPA's smallest (and still deemed harmful) scenario.

### **What is wrong with the DEIS & what needs to happen?**

There are critical issues with Pebble's DEIS: data discrepancies, missing and erroneous information, and poor if not absent scientific analysis. After tens of thousands of people and groups, including tribes, fishermen, scientific experts, federal agencies, and many more provided in-depth suggestions on what the DEIS should study, the Army Corps all but ignored the public input in their draft publication. The DEIS is so inadequate that it has been highly criticized by leading state and federal agencies, lawmakers, and mining experts, who have called for the DEIS to be completely re-done. To put it simply, the Army Corps should be held accountable and the DEIS needs to be thrown out and re-started.

### **Pebble is saying the DEIS proves their mine won't harm salmon? Is this true?**

The Pebble Project claims the DEIS findings prove that development of the mine will not have a negative impact to fish.

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***"The proposed work will result in substantial and unacceptable impacts to aquatic resources of national importance. Consequently, we recommend that a permit not be issued for the project as currently proposed. We recommend more robust analysis be conducted to thoroughly identify, analyze, and reduce risks to these resources."* - US Fish & Wildlife Service**

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This could not be further from the truth. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service comments on the DEIS: "The project as proposed will have significant adverse impacts on important fish, wildlife, and aquatic habitats ... the proposed work will result in substantial and unacceptable impacts to aquatic resources of national importance. Consequently, we recommend that a permit not be issued for the project as currently proposed. We recommend more robust analysis be conducted to thoroughly identify, analyze, and reduce risks to these resources." The EPA's comments concurred, "The DEIS overlooks potential population-level effects from

the potential loss of genetic diversity of Bristol Bay salmon that may result in impacts beyond recovery thresholds of species. The DEIS should also include supporting information for the conclusion that there would be no measurable impacts to salmon populations ... The DEIS does not contain sufficient information to support a reasonable judgment that discharges from the proposed Pebble Mine will comply with the Clean Water Act, including concerns regarding the extent and magnitude of the substantial proposed impacts to streams, wetlands, and other aquatic resources. The project may have substantial and unacceptable adverse impacts on fisheries resources in the project area watersheds, which are aquatic resources of national importance." Pebble's claims are once again another baseless attempt to mislead the public and maintain shareholder and investor interest in the toxic project.



*Randy Alvarez testifies on the DEIS in Igiugig.*



*Hailey Carty, youth, testifies at Dillingham DEIS hearing.*

# PEBBLE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CONT'D

(Continued from page 3)

## What is next?

From late 2019 into the first couple months of 2020, the Army Corps of Engineers is consulting with 'Cooperating Agencies' behind closed doors to develop the Final EIS, slated for release to the public in 2020. All federal public comment opportunities for the EIS are over, and the permitting timeline calls for a permit decision by fall 2020. It is clear from recent investigative stories from CNN that

Alaska's Governor and the Trump Administration are corrupting the permitting process in Pebble's favor so we must keep pressuring our elected officials to hold the Army Corps accountable and stop this process from moving forward.

To stay updated on permitting developments and how you can remain involved in the effort to protect Bristol Bay, keep up with [utbb.org](http://utbb.org) and [facebook.com/UnitedTribesBB/](https://facebook.com/UnitedTribesBB/)

## GOVERNOR DUNLEAVY LOBBIES WHITE HOUSE & INVESTORS FOR PEBBLE

While Governor Dunleavy continues to publicly claim he is "neutral on Pebble," his private advocacy on behalf of the project tells another story. Last year, the governor nominated Jason Brune as the new commissioner for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), one of the state agencies responsible for mine permitting. Brune is a longtime public Pebble supporter and former employee of Anglo American, one of the major mining companies that backed Pebble prior to 2013. Despite widespread opposition from across the state at legislative confirmation hearings, Brune was narrowly confirmed by the legislature last spring.

An investigative report released by CNN revealed that Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy has been collaborating directly with the Pebble Limited Partnership to aggressively lobby on their behalf to the White House, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Letters obtained by CNN show that Governor Dunleavy forwarded requests, on behalf of the State of Alaska, that were ghost written by the Pebble Partnership to the White House, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency asking them to do away with the EPA's proposed protections for Bristol Bay and to fast track the Army Corps' environmental assessment.

Throughout the summer, Governor Dunleavy also lobbied for Pebble in different arenas. After sending letters to President Trump about Pebble, the Governor and the President had in-person meetings in Alaska, where Governor Dunleavy lobbied for the withdrawal of Bristol Bay's Clean Water Act protections. The governor refused to tell Alaska media the specifics of the June meeting with Trump, but reporting by CNN this winter uncovered the fact that he was providing regular updates to Pebble staff about his Trump communications. As part of that CNN investigation, the national news outlet published a piece that used the Trump-Dunleavy connection as an example of how politics is outweighing science in the Pebble review process.

In July, Bristol Bay organizations and Pebble opponents sent a letter to a potential Pebble investor, Wheaton Precious Metals, to inform the company of the investment risks and relentless local opposition to the project. "This

project, simply stated, is bad for business, as each of the former major mining partners ultimately concluded in deciding to abandon it," stated the letter from the anti-Pebble coalition.

In response to the letter from Bristol Bay, Governor Dunleavy sent a letter to Wheaton Precious Metals as well, ignoring Bristol Bay concerns and encouraging the company to invest in the proposed Pebble mine.

"The state will stand by those who invest in Alaska and will actively help defend them from frivolous and scurrilous attacks," he wrote, adding that "Alaska is open for business," and "the state is encouraged and supportive of your decision to invest in Alaska."

Dunleavy's letter went even further, attempting to further silence local voices and concerns. "A fair, efficient, and thorough permitting process, without interference and threats from project opponents, is essential to the future economic growth of Alaska," Dunleavy wrote. "I am committed to making that happen, and once appropriate permits are granted, I am equally committed to removing obstacles that would hinder immediate construction."

It is clear Pebble is still desperately seeking a financial backer for its project and has Governor Dunleavy advocating for them in all arenas. Pebble's parent company, Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., has refinanced numerous times to continue paying for the permitting process and is running short on funds to finish the federal review.

The coalition followed Governor Dunleavy's letter to Wheaton with a clear response: "Even the slightest due diligence by any potential investor will quickly reveal that opposition to the Pebble mine has been driven and led by



*White House photo by Sheila Craighead*  
Governor Dunleavy meeting with Trump that led to rollback of EPA protections.

those of us whose lives, communities, culture and economic well-being would unavoidably be put at risk by this project because of the threat that it poses to the health of our incomparable fishery and the regional resources that depend on it," the letter said. "Make no mistake: We are committed to continuing our opposition for as long as it takes to defeat the Pebble

Bay Native Corporation conducted a poll of around 9,000 shareholders this year, the corporation found that three-quarters of the participants, 76%, oppose the proposed Pebble mine, and 85% are worried about the potential risks it could have on salmon. Even those closest to the mine site demonstrate opposition to the project; 57% of shareholders in the Iliamna



***"The state will stand by those who invest in Alaska and will actively help defend them from frivolous and scurrilous attacks...Alaska is open for business...the state is encouraged and supportive of your decision to invest in Alaska." -Governor Dunleavy in a letter to Wheaton Precious Minerals encouraging investment in Pebble despite Bristol Bay's opposition to the project.***

mine. We will never relent. If financial success is your goal, there are far better places to invest your money."

As of December 2019, Wheaton had made no public investment in Pebble. And in fact, every major partner associated with Northern Dynasty has chosen to walk away.

Despite the current Governor's efforts, it's clear that Pebble mine will never achieve the social license necessary to build its mine in Bristol Bay. Most recently, Bristol

sub-region oppose Pebble and 81% are concerned about the risks the project poses to Bristol Bay and its salmon runs.

Bristol Bay businesses, anglers, commercial fishermen, native corporations, tribes, and residents remain uniformly opposed to the Pebble mine but we all must remain vigilant in our pressure on the state government to respect the position of Bristol Bay when it comes to protecting our fishery.



## DC HEARING CONT'D

*(Continued from page 1)*

vironmental work with over 50 mining projects across the world. Borden proved to be a compelling witness against the Pebble project. During the hearing he shared with Committee members: "The Pebble Project is located in the most sensitive, globally significant and challenging environmental setting of any mining project I have ever reviewed. It will be extremely difficult to construct, operate and close a commercially viable mine in this setting in a way that does not do permanent material harm to the salmon fishery. ... The proposed EIS project only mines about ten percent of the total Pebble resource. The proposed EIS project by itself is also not the world class resource which is being advertised. Without a significant expansion it is not even in the top 25 ore bodies in the world for contained copper or gold. ... Based upon a careful review of the available financial data, it is my professional opinion that the mine plan being evaluated by the EIS is almost certainly not economically feasible, with an estimated negative net present value of three billion dollars."

Following the hearing, Rep. DeFazio sent a letter to Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, expressing his concerns of the environmental review underway by the Corps and calling for a new EIS.

Based on my review of the process undertaken by the Corps, thus far, as well as the testimony received before a hearing of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment on the Pebble Mine project, I am deeply concerned that your agency's review of this permit application and the associated review of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act. (NEPA) are so fundamentally flawed and inadequate as to preclude any meaningful review on the likely impacts of this project – in violation of your responsibilities under both the Clean Water Act and NEPA."



## EPA WITHDRDRAWS EPA 404(C) PROTECTIONS AFTER DUNLEAVY MET WITH TRUMP, LOCAL GROUPS SUE

On July 30, the Environmental Protection Agency officially withdrew the proposed Clean Water Act Section 404(c) protections for the Bristol Bay watershed. The proposed protections were science-based proactive measures that would place limitations on the Pebble mine’s development to protect wild salmon. The withdrawal was a major step forward for the Pebble project, as the protections had to be addressed before the Army Corps

the agency filed lengthy technical comments noting serious flaws in Pebble’s current environmental review. “The Draft Environmental Impact Statement overlooks potential population-level effects from the potential loss of genetic diversity of Bristol Bay salmon that may result in impacts beyond recovery thresholds of species,” the agency wrote. “The DEIS does not contain sufficient information to support a reasonable judgment that dis-

***Salmon are more than just food for the people of Bristol Bay. [A]s sovereign Native nations, our member Tribes have worked in good faith with the U.S. government to protect our resources. Despite our efforts, however, a corrupt political landscape and a few backroom deals have resulted in the illegal withdrawal of peer-reviewed, science-based environmental protections for the world’s most pristine ecosystem and wild salmon habitat. We are calling out the Federal Administration for this wrongdoing, and we will stand with our partners and the people of Bristol Bay in the work to protect our home.” - Deputy Director of UTBB, Lindsay Layland***



could issue a permit decision.

The EPA’s political decision came at the peak of the summer 2019 fishery, with zero public process and no input from the region’s Tribes, residents, and other stakeholders. The withdrawal was contrary to the scientific record, and strong public record including the millions of comments from Americans supporting the protections. The withdrawal was a surprise to Bristol Bay, as regional leadership had met with EPA just a week prior and EPA communicated they had no plans of withdrawing the protections in the near future. This blatant violation of the government’s trust responsibility to Tribes was also counter to the EPA’s January 2018 statement that additional public comment and tribal consultation would be held before a decision was made.

At the time of the withdrawal, EPA claimed the 2014 proposed determination was outdated due to the permit processing taking place with the Army Corps. However, we now know that EPA’s withdrawal was ordered directly by President Donald Trump at the request of Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy.

Ironically, the EPA’s decision to withdraw the 404(c) protections came shortly after

charges from the proposed Pebble mine will comply with the Clean Water Act, including concerns regarding the extent and magnitude of the substantial proposed impacts to streams, wetlands, and other aquatic resources. The project may have substantial and unacceptable ad-



*Bristol Bay Defense Alliance held a press conference in Anchorage announcing lawsuit against EPA for removing proposed Bristol Bay protections.*

verse impacts on fisheries resources in the project area watersheds, which are aquatic resources of national importance.”

“EPA’s position that the Pebble DEIS prepared by the USACE is woefully inadequate and based on incorrect assumptions was supported by many other scientists and federal agencies, and did not provide a solid justification for withdrawing the proposed determination, said Bristol Bay Native Association President and CEO Ralph Andersen shortly after

the decision was announced. “The fact that the EPA would withdraw protections for Bristol Bay after the very same agency stated that the proposed Pebble mine could devastate our region makes no sense,” Andersen said. “This is unacceptable, and a clear example of politics taking priority over science at the federal level.”

In response to the withdrawal, a coalition of Bristol Bay organizations sued the EPA in October, asserting that the EPA’s action was illegal, arbitrary and capricious, and ignores the scientific and technical information of the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. The coalition, informally named the Bristol Bay Defense Alliance, includes Bristol Bay Native Association, United Tribes of Bristol Bay, Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, Bristol Bay Reserve Association and Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation.

At the press conference announcing Bristol Bay’s lawsuit against the EPA, Lindsay Layland from United Tribes of Bristol Bay stated: “Salmon are more than just food for the people of Bristol Bay. [A]s sovereign Native nations, our member Tribes have worked in good faith with the

U.S. government to protect our resources. Despite our efforts, however, a corrupt political landscape and a few backroom deals have resulted in the illegal withdrawal of peer-reviewed, science-based environmental protections for the world’s most pristine ecosystem and wild salmon habitat. We are calling out the Federal Administration for this wrongdoing, and we will stand with our partners and the people of Bristol Bay in the work to protect our home.”

Other sportfish and environmental organizations have since joined the lawsuit against EPA. The case is pending before Anchorage’s federal district court and we are confident we will succeed in getting the protections reinstated, stay tuned for updates.



## PEBBLE FUNDED LAWSUIT DISMISSED

### ***Judge calls Pebble-funded effort to silence Bristol Bay “absurd”***

In an attempt to silence the people of Bristol Bay last spring, the Pebble Limited Partnership bankrolled a civil suit against the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association (BBRSDA), United Tribes of Bristol Bay, and SalmonState, claiming it was illegal for the BBRSDA to use organizational dollars to engage in or fund activities opposing the Pebble mine. Governor Mike Dunleavy’s administration also supported Pebble’s lawsuit, filing its own brief asserting that BBRSDA should restrict its activities to advertising only.

An Alaska Superior Court judge quickly dismissed the lawsuit filed by Gary Nielsen, Trefim Andrew, Tim Anelson, Henry Olympic, Pebble staffer Abe Williams, and his son Braden Williams, calling their argument “absurd.” Judge Yvonne Lamoureaux ruled the BBRSDA was within its authority to not only advocate to protect the wild salm-

on fishermen depend on, but also to contribute to other groups opposing the mine.

Judge Lamoureaux also reaffirmed the state statute creating the RSDA does not limit the term “promoting” or “marketing” to be only advertising, and therefore the RSDA can take more direct measures to promote and protect Bristol Bay Wild salmon.

The dismissal was celebrated widely by fishermen across Bristol Bay.

“We are very pleased that the Court saw the direct connection between promoting our salmon fishery and protecting the land and waters that make that fishery possible,” UTBB said in a statement. “The court’s order confirms the people and fishermen of Bristol Bay have the right to fight for our way of life.”

## FEDERAL LAWMAKERS RECOGNIZE PEBBLE PROCESS ISSUES

### ***Congress notes widespread deficiencies in draft EIS, calls for more robust environmental review***

Federal lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have joined the call for a more robust review of Pebble’s plan, issuing a stern warning to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 2020 budget.

Members of both the U.S. Senate and House took action last year to highlight the deficiencies in Pebble’s draft Environmental Impact Statement and direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the lead federal agency reviewing Pebble’s plans) to address them. The latest congressional action came in December, when the budget passed by Congress called on the Army Corps to address the shortcomings in its permitting process and environmental review.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 7—  
Army Corps release Preliminary Final EIS to Cooperating Agencies and all Bristol Bay Tribes
- February 10-14—  
Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, AK
- February 27—  
BRU Traditional Foods Feast, Dillingham, AK
- April 7-8 —  
Bristol Bay Sustainability Summit, Dillingham, AK

## FEDERAL LAWMAKERS RECOGNIZE PEBBLE PROCESS ISSUES IN BUDGET BILL CONT'D

*(Continued from page 7)*

The report language included in the Department of Interior budget states: “the Committee shares the agencies’ concerns that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement lacks certain critical information about the proposed project and related mitigation and therefore likely underestimates its potential risks and impacts.” The report language also states that “sound science must guide Federal decision making,” and further “encourages” the Environmental Protection Agency to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to veto the Pebble project “if these problems are not resolved.”

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski added that report language to the appropriations bill for the Department of the Interior during the committee process in September; it eventually was included in the final budget passed by the full congress in December 2019.

Prior to that, the U.S. House of Representatives was the first to take action passing what was called the “Huffman Amendment” to stop funding for the Army Corps’ Pebble permitting process during federal fiscal year 2020 due to the serious concerns about the corrupt review process. California Democratic Rep. Jared Huffman, who has Bristol Bay commercial fishery permit holders among his constituents, championed the effort hoping to send a clear message to the USACE that their conduct in Pebble’s permitting process is unacceptable and the process should be stopped until further investigation can

***“For nearly two years, the people of Bristol Bay have watched in horror as the Army Corps rushed through its review of Pebble, ignoring the devastating impacts the project could have in our region simply because of politics,” Andersen said. “The language in the appropriations bill sends a clear message that this is not appropriate behavior from a federal agency. This is an important step in stopping the sham review process currently underway, and we look forward to seeing the senator continue to hold them accountable for the robust public process and scientific review that this region deserves.”***

- The Final EIS is expected for public release in Summer 2020 with a permit decision in Fall 2020.

**Sign up for email updates, action alerts, or register for the Sustainability Summit at:**

**[www.utbb.org](http://www.utbb.org)**

be completed to address the grave concerns with the process. That provision did not make it into the final budget, but its passage in the House sent a strong message to the USACE that elected officials were watching.

Bristol Bay leaders celebrated both efforts, and Bristol Bay Native Association President and CEO Ralph Andersen called the report language an important step for the region.

“For nearly two years, the people of Bristol Bay have watched in horror as the Army Corps rushed through its review of Pebble, ignoring the devastating impacts the project could have in our region simply because of politics,” Andersen said. “The language in the appropriations bill sends a clear message that this is not appropriate behavior from a federal agency. This is an important step in stopping the sham review process currently underway, and we look forward to seeing the senator continue to hold them accountable for the robust public process and scientific review that this region deserves.”

The committee report supported by Murkowski also noted that multiple federal agencies, Alaska Native groups and other stakeholders have identified glaring gaps and serious deficiencies in the DEIS, and these must be addressed even if doing so requires additional scientific study, data collection and more comprehensive analysis of the project’s potential impacts. The report language further encourages the Department of the Interior, National Marine Fisheries Service and Environmental Protection Agency to use their authorities to protect Bristol Bay if their concerns are not addressed.

Despite clear evidence that the DEIS lacks critical data and information that would be essential in any mine plan and decision on the permit, the Corps of Engineers has remained undeterred in meeting a political timeline for permitting the project, and has so far refused to produce a supplemental EIS addressing the highlighted issues.



UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley has continually called for elected leaders to stand up for the people of Bristol Bay.

“Bristol Bay has long been promised a fair process and a rigorous, scientific review of Pebble’s plan,” Hurley said. “It is clear that the Army Corps is not delivering on this promise, and we’re glad to see Congress take note of the corrupt review and call for an end to this facade. It’s time for the Army Corps to realize that they serve the people - not a foreign mining company - and stop pushing this toxic project forward.”



## NATION’S TRIBES STAND WITH BRISTOL BAY AGAINST PEBBLE

### **Largest tribal organization in the nation calls on federal government to protect wild salmon and Indigenous people**

In October 2019, the largest organization of Tribes in America condemned the federal government’s permitting process for the Pebble Mine, highlighting the government’s failure to uphold its trust responsibilities to Bristol Bay tribes.

The National Congress of American Indians, the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments, passed a resolution at its annual convention in Albuquerque demanding the federal government uphold its

***“We are so thankful for NCAI’s statement of solidarity that this disregard for tribal peoples is not acceptable. We stand in unity with the nation’s tribes to demand the government respect and protect our way of life by upholding basic standards in the environmental review process.”***

consultation obligations with sovereign Tribal nations regarding the proposed Pebble Mine, and ensure a rigorous, comprehensive and transparent environmental review is conducted as part of the federal permitting process. The resolution comes in the wake of national scrutiny of the Trump Administration’s rejection of science and failure to assess potential impacts of the proposed Pebble mine.

For the past two years, Bristol Bay’s Tribes have fought for their voices to be heard in the federal environmental review process. We have asked for basic levels of inclusion in this process, for example: adequate information to review project plans, materials in our languages, meetings in our communities, an analysis of the impacts to our people and way of life, and adequate time to review project plan. But our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The Army Corps (the lead federal agency reviewing Pebble’s Clean Water Act permit application) continues to trivialize and ignore the concerns of not only our people but all those who depend on the Bristol Bay fishery. The resounding unity in the condemnation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from federal agencies, scientists from around the nation, fishermen, and local people is a clear indication of how the Army Corps is determined to rush its environmental review of Pebble.

NCAI represents a diverse array of Tribes with differing perspectives on many issues. But in passing this resolution, the Congress affirmed that we all stand together in call-

*(Continued on page 12)*



# BRISTOL BAY SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

*Creating a Thriving Future*

April 7-8

Dillingham MS Gym

Join us to advance sustainable economic development  
so our region can thrive for generations to come!

*Great opportunity for entrepreneurs, innovators,  
fishermen, small business owners, Bristol Bay tribal,  
municipal & corporate leadership and staff!*

**Deadline to apply for limited  
travel scholarships: March 2**

**General Registration Deadline: April 1**

**Questions or ready to register?**

Register online & or apply for a travel scholarship at:

<http://bit.ly/sustainability-summit2020>

Or call UTBB for registration materials at (907) 842-1687



**united**  
TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY





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TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY



January 31, 2020

Camai,

On behalf of UTBB, BBNA, BBAHC, BBNC, BBEDC we write to invite you to join us for the second Bristol Bay Sustainability Summit. This regional gathering will advance Bristol Bay's shared vision for a thriving and sustainable future and will be held April 7-8 in Dillingham at the Middle School Gym. This two-day gathering will bring together people from around the region to further action plans and strategies for a sustainable economic future in our region.

The summit is designed for a wide range of participants, and is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs, innovators, business owners, fishermen, and Bristol Bay tribal, municipal and corporate leadership and staff. This year's agenda will feature an engaging mix of workforce development opportunities, tools & resources available to our communities, small business development support, innovative dialogue, and action-oriented community sustainability planning. We are excited to announce that this year we'll also offer a dedicated youth track for Bristol Bay High School students (see student application information below).

*Limited travel funding for both Bristol Bay resident student & adult is available, see application details below. We strongly encourage those attending in a professional or leadership capacity to utilize their organizational or workplace funding if available.*

How can you attend?

**Adult participants who DO NOT need a travel scholarship must register by April 1<sup>st</sup>.** You can register online at: <http://bit.ly/sustainability-summit2020> OR by contacting UTBB at (907) 842-1687 for registration forms to be emailed to [dlarson@utbb.org](mailto:dlarson@utbb.org), or faxed to (907)842-1853, or mailed to P.O. Box 1252 Dillingham, AK 99576.

**Adult participants who DO NEED a travel scholarship must register by March 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Registration can be filled out online at: <http://bit.ly/sustainability-summit2020> OR by contacting UTBB at (907) 842-1687 for registration forms to be emailed to [dlarson@utbb.org](mailto:dlarson@utbb.org), or faxed to (907)842-1853, or mailed to P.O. Box 1252 Dillingham, AK 99576.

**High School students interested must apply by March 2<sup>nd</sup>.** If accepted, all travel costs for student participation will be covered. Students can access the application materials online at: <http://bit.ly/sustainability-summit2020> OR by contacting UTBB at (907) 842-1687 for application packet to be emailed to [dlarson@utbb.org](mailto:dlarson@utbb.org), or faxed to (907)842-1853, or mailed to P.O. Box 1252 Dillingham, AK 99576.

Bristol Bay's people and renewable resources are the backbone of the economy that has sustained our communities since time immemorial. We look forward to working together for our region to thrive for generations to come. Please share this information with your communities!

Quyana/Chin'an!

UNITED TRIBES  
OF BRISTOL BAY  
MISSION:

“To protect our  
traditional  
Yup’ik,  
Dena’ina, and  
Alutiiq way of  
life.”



NATION’S TRIBES STAND WITH BRISTOL BAY AGAINST  
PEBBLE

*(Continued from page 9)*

ing for our rights to be upheld. For Bristol Bay Tribes, Pebble is a devastating threat to the viability of our people, yet we continue to be treated like second class citizens in the federal permitting process. We are so thankful for NCAI’s statement of solidarity that this disregard for tribal peoples is not acceptable. We stand in unity with the nation’s tribes to demand the government respect and protect our way of life by upholding basic standards in the environmental review process.

The resolution opposes mineral development that would impact traditional fish and wildlife without the consent of the affected Tribes. Bristol Bay has not and will never give Pebble consent to turn our home into a toxic mining district.

Now it’s time for the government to listen. America has a long and ugly history in its treatment of indigenous peoples. Stopping the sham that is the Pebble permitting process is a good step to treat the tribal people of Bristol Bay with the respect we not only deserve but are legally entitled to.

*Delores Larson is a subsistence provider, wife and mother of three from the Native Village of Koliganek, on the Nushagak River in Alaska’s Bristol Bay region. She is the Community Engagement Director for United Tribes of Bristol Bay. This opinion piece was published by Indian Country Today.*

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