



“Conserving to preserve Maine’s heritage”

September 18, 2014

Water Docket # EPA-R10-OW-2014-0505
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code: 2822T
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

Thank you for moving forward with the 404(c) process for Bristol Bay, AK. We support your proposed recommendations to protect salmon and believe that industrial-scale mining has no place in the Bristol Bay watershed.

The Alewife Harvesters of Maine is a group of alewife harvesters, conservation commissioners, biologists, and concerned citizens who have joined together to conserve alewives and to preserve the river-fishing heritage of Maine. We do this by restoring fish passages to spawning grounds, cooperating with state and federal agencies, and educating the public and other stakeholders about alewives and their habitat.

Like salmon, alewives are anadromous fish that rely on clean, unimpeded rivers and streams for their reproductive cycle. Habitat destruction and damming of rivers up and down the East Coast has taken a toll on this once-rich food supply. In Maine, we are lucky that we have been able to continue our alewife fishery. It is an age-old tradition that connects us to our land. But other states have not been so lucky.

Members of the U.S. commercial fishing and seafood industries have seen what happens when fisheries and watersheds are not cared for. We have watched the decline of too many fisheries due to loss of habitat and we have seen that even billions of dollars cannot fully restore most of those fisheries following inappropriate development.

The Bristol Bay salmon fishery is acknowledged across the world as a premier example of sustainable fisheries management. We support the EPA’s proposed determination and believe the agency is more than justified in its decision to restrict dredge and fill material at the Pebble deposit. Furthermore, in light of the value of the Bristol Bay fishery, the sensitivity of its habitat, and the impossibility of guaranteeing against a catastrophic accident in open-pit mining, it is clear that large-scale mining activity poses unacceptable risks to the Bristol Bay watershed and should be prohibited. Please promptly issue a final 404(c) determination that will guarantee that large-scale mining will not have adverse impacts on the world’s largest sockeye salmon fishery and the jobs and communities that it sustains.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Pierce
Executive Director
Alewife Harvesters of Maine

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