

September 19, 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 completing the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and issuing a proposed 404(c) determination under the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay's iconic salmon fishery from destructive mineral extraction. We have heard from fishermen in Alaska's Bristol Bay about the importance of protecting their fishery's habitat, and we fully support them in asking you to finalize the 404(c) protections as soon as possible.

Red's Best is a Boston-based seafood company that uses an innovative model to connect small boats from around the coast of Massachusetts with farmers' markets and institutional markets. Our pioneering software is designed to help support a thriving fishing industry. We believe that sustainability of our food supply requires commercial fishing to be profitable and for food to be affordable to the consumer.

As a former Alaska fisherman, I know first-hand the abundance and opportunity in Alaska fisheries. Bristol Bay's salmon resource accounts for 46% of the world's sockeye salmon supply, with an average annual harvest of 27 million fish. That's a resource that supports an estimated 14,000 jobs, starting with the fishermen who catch the fish, the welders and engine mechanics who get their boats ready, the processing workers who help get that catch to market, and the retail and restaurant employees who provide it to end consumers. Everyone along that supply chain stands to lose if industrial mining is allowed to degrade the Bristol Bay salmon resource.

We urge you to move forward with a 404(c) determination aimed to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska and its valuable salmon industry. Finalizing this determination is a necessary step to bestow on Bristol Bay the protection it needs from the type of large-scale developments that can devastate fisheries, either through catastrophic events or chronic habitat degradation over time.

The Bristol Bay salmon fishery is acknowledged across the world as a premier example of sustainable fisheries management. Mining like the proposed Pebble Mine has no place in this salmon watershed. We believe 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,

Jared Auerbach
Owner and CEO
Red's Best
13-15 Boston Fish Pier
Boston, MA 02210
617-830-1672