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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bristol Bay fishermen will go fishing for the first time with a Pebble permit application on the table:

Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay coalition ramps up outreach to protect Alaska's largest and most valuable wild salmon fishery

Naknek, AK - As commercial fishermen, seafood processors, and thousands of others migrate to Bristol Bay for the 2018 salmon fishing season, the Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay (CFBB) coalition is calling for an immediate suspension of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' review of the Pebble Limited Partnership's permit application, which was submitted in December 2017. In [a letter](#) to Alaska's Congressional Delegation, CFBB called the Army Corps' public process "flawed from the outset" and "a deep disservice" to Alaskans and Alaska's long-standing history of responsible resource management.

Created in 2011 by fishermen concerned with the proposed Pebble Mine, CFBB represents tens of thousands of commercial fishermen with over 100 business and organization partners around the country that support protection of Bristol Bay. Many of these partners requested that the Environmental Protection Agency take proactive measures under the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay's salmon fishery from large-scale mining activities.

[In its letter](#) to Alaska's leaders, CFBB raised issue with the Pebble Partnership's most recent changes to its mine plans: "Changing their mine plans in the midst of the EIS scoping comment period denies Alaskans and Alaska's agencies the chance to fully evaluate and comment on Pebble's proposed plan and potential impacts. Alaskans are being asked to shoot at a moving target while wearing a blindfold. There is nothing fair or transparent about that."

In light of the Army Corps' rushed permitting timeline and Bristol Bay's lack of federal protections, CFBB will be ramping up its outreach efforts in time for the 2018 salmon fishing season.

“It’s incredibly concerning that Pebble’s inadequate and incomplete permit application has been allowed to move forward,” said Bristol Bay commercial fisherman and CFBB representative Mark Niver. “The Pebble Mine is irresponsible and risky; even First Quantum Minerals doesn’t want to be part of it. Bristol Bay’s fishermen are looking to Alaska’s leaders to protect our families and livelihoods from the Pebble Mine. We just want to go fishing and not have to worry about this massive threat hanging over our heads.”

CFBB and local Bristol Bay partners will be distributing information about the Pebble Mine at both the Naknek and Dillingham boatyards before the fishing season. CFBB will also present an update during the Bristol Bay Expo on June 9th at 2:30pm. More information about CFBB can be found at FishermenforBristolBay.org and on the CFBB Facebook page (www.facebook.com/FishermenforBristolBay/).

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Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay is a coalition of over 100 fishing organizations and thousands of individual fishermen around the country working to protect the 14,000 jobs, more than \$500 million in annual income, and over half the world’s wild sockeye salmon provided by Bristol Bay’s sustainable fishery. Learn more at fishermenforbristolbay.org.

COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN FOR BRISTOL BAY

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Dan Sullivan
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman Don Young
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

June 8, 2018

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young,

On behalf of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay - a coalition that represents thousands of commercial fishermen throughout Alaska - we are writing out of grave concern about the future of Alaska's renewable jobs and coastal communities. The proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay poses one of the single largest threats to Alaska's seafood industry and economy - not to mention a way of life that has existed thousands of years. We respectfully request that you support a suspension of the Army Corps of Engineers' National Environmental Policy Act review of the Pebble Limited Partnership's permit application, as it was prematurely submitted without the substantive data needed to adequately assess Pebble's potential impacts on Alaska's most valuable salmon fishery. The Army Corps' current Pebble NEPA review process is a deep disservice to Alaskans, our state's history of responsible resource development, and to your own pledge that Pebble undergo a rigorous and science-based review.

The public process for Pebble's EIS has been flawed since the outset. We are grateful for your leadership and help to extend Pebble's scoping comment period from 30 to 90 days but remain deeply concerned by the fact that the Army Corps has done nothing but provide the absolute minimum level of public participation possible. All the public hearings during the scoping comment period should have been conducted in the same format and should have given *all* Alaskans a fair and equal opportunity to weigh in and learn more regardless of their address, culture, livelihood, or disposition. Instead, the scoping comment period was tailored to amplify the voice and preferences of the applicant, and the voices of Alaskans were censored and compromised. That is a disturbing precedent to set and it undermines the 90-day comment period that you championed.

As fishermen and members of the fishing industry, we are held to a very high standard when it comes to federal and state permits, regulations, and resource management. We appreciate Alaska's high standards and are proud to uphold them. The Pebble Partnership should be held to the same standards. Their permit application to the Army Corps is incomplete and lacks the basic environmental and economic baseline data and information needed to adequately and accurately assess Pebble's proposed impacts on Alaska's largest and most valuable wild salmon fishery. It is especially alarming that Pebble's permit application would be allowed to move forward without an economic feasibility study; Pebble is the first Alaskan mining project since 2004 to not have done an economic feasibility study before scoping. An economic feasibility study not only makes good business sense, but it also helps protect government agencies and American taxpayers from wasting their time and resources reviewing an infeasible project. First Quantum Minerals' recent decision to terminate its option agreement with the Pebble Partnership only underscores this fact.

For years the Pebble Partnership has asked Alaskans to trust them and give them a chance to share their mine plan. In December of 2017, the Pebble Partnership released its new "small" mine plan. In mid-May, a few short months after submitting their application, Pebble changed their mining plans, and sent a memo to the Army Corps modifying what they had proposed, including an increase in mined materials by 25%. Changing their mine plans during the EIS scoping comment period denies Alaskans and Alaska's agencies the chance to fully evaluate and comment on Pebble's proposed plan and potential impacts and demonstrates that Pebble is unprepared to responsibly develop in the Bristol Bay watershed. The USACE is bending over backwards to get Pebble what they want and continues to disregard NEPA protocol and the concerns of Alaskans and yourselves by doing so. Alaskans are being asked to shoot at a moving target while wearing a blindfold. There is nothing fair or transparent about that.

With the fishing season right around the corner, many of us are preparing to head out on the water and leave our families for the summer. While fishing comes with many sacrifices, we are proud to harvest Alaska's prized wild seafood and will do whatever it takes to continue fishing. We look to you to ensure that our livelihoods are not jeopardized by outside interests seeking to exploit Alaska's resources at the expense of Alaskans. If the Pebble Partnership is serious about building the Pebble Mine in a way that does not impact Bristol Bay's world-class fisheries, then they will appreciate the need for a thorough, transparent, science-based permitting process - however long that takes. Please support the suspension of Pebble's EIS until the above concerns are addressed. To allow the Army Corps to move forward with Pebble's EIS under the current circumstances is a direct threat to Alaska's largest private sector employer: fishing.

Thank you for your time and attention.
Sincerely,

Mark Niver, Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay F/V Surrender
Chip Treinen, Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay F/V Balrog

Cc: Governor Bill Walker, Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott, Shane McCoy (U.S. ACOE)