



April 7th, 2019

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Tyson Fick, 907-321-9848 tyson@salmonstate.org Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay

Nelli Williams, 907-230-7121 NWilliams@tu.org Trout Unlimited Alaska

Alannah Hurley 907-843-1633 ahurley@utbb.org United Tribes of Bristol Bay

**ARMY CORPS PRESENTATION LEAVES ALASKA LEGISLATORS WITH MORE
QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS ON PEBBLE MINE PERMIT**

*Alaska representatives pose tough questions on scoping, comment extension denial, and financial
feasibility of “Small” mine*

Juneau, AK, - In a hearing cut short yesterday by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Alaska House Resources Committee heard about the Pebble project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) from Corps staff, Sheila Newman and David Hobbie. The presentation by the Corps of Engineers followed a series of hearings examining the project plan and federal government’s analysis.

Alaskans have long been promised the highest possible bar in assessing this mine given the world-class salmon resources at stake. Notably, Senator Lisa Murkowski, the Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee said, “With the company now having filed its application, I expect that a fair, rigorous, and transparent process will soon begin so that Alaskans can understand the impacts and risks, as well as the potential benefits associated with this project.” Yet, in the hearing yesterday, Corps responses to legislators questions only reinforced the widespread concerns by Alaskans that the current DEIS is not providing the rigorous or credible process promised.

“Bristol Bay is world-class and the Pebble Mine should undergo the highest standards of review. What we have in front of us right now is a document that fails to meet basic standards. The Corps is ignoring Alaskans and the concerns of well-respected scientists and rushing through this in a way that is a disservice to Alaskans and the thousands of businesses that depend on Bristol Bay’s fisheries, said Nelli Williams, Trout Unlimited’s Alaska Director.

One example is when asked about land access, the Corps' David Hobbie affirmed that if access is denied by a landowner then it should not be considered as a practicable alternative in the EIS. However, earlier this week Jason Metrokin CEO of Bristol Bay Native Corporation testified before the same committee that BBNC is unwilling to grant Pebble access to their land.

"I'm very disappointed with the evasive and incomplete responses I heard from the Army Corps about the obvious shortcomings in this draft EIS today" said Alannah Hurley, Executive Director of United Tribes of Bristol Bay. "They seemed to be talking out of both sides of their mouths. To say they don't consider land ownership when reviewing alternatives but they must consider the 21 public interest factors which clearly lists 'consideration of property ownership' is total doublespeak. According to their own testimony on this point, all of the proposed action alternatives in the EIS should be determined unviable."

The Pebble deposit lies in a location that, if mined, will impact critical salmon habitat and water quality in two major river systems that support one of Alaska's most prized commercial and recreational fisheries. Salmon are also a cornerstone of Yupik and Deni'ana cultures which have lived off of the land and salmon in Bristol Bay since time immemorial.

Alaskans have until May 30th to provide input on the DEIS for the proposed Pebble Mine.

You can watch Friday's hearing here:

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Meeting/Detail?Meeting=HRES%202019-04-05%2013:00:00>

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