

# COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN FOR BRISTOL BAY

## For Immediate Release

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### **Commercial Fishermen Dismayed with Legislature's Confirmation of Pro-Pebble Advocate to Head Key Water Quality Watchdog Agency**

*Jason Brune Approved as Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner*

Juneau, TODAY - Legislators voted to confirm Jason Brune as Commissioner for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). By voting him in, those legislators ignored the voices of thousands of Alaskans who weighed in during public testimony. By voting to confirm a former Pebble Limited Partnership spokesperson to head DEC the legislature has verified that the large-mine permitting process for Pebble has been corrupted and cannot be trusted at the state level.

During the legislative confirmation hearing process, over **1,926 Alaskans** testified and sent emails opposing the appointment of Jason Brune, primarily due to his intimate ties to the Pebble project.

"In Alaska we have long been promised that our fisheries will be protected by a strong and rigorous permitting process. Governor Dunleavy himself recently made assurances we have a trustworthy process" said Everett Thompson a 4th generation fisherman in Naknek. "This appointment flies in the face of the process we've long been promised. One need look no further than Mr. Brune's Twitter feed to see his staunch advocacy for pebble, mining in general, and his disdain for commercial fishing. I'm sure he and Tom Collier will have plenty to talk about the next time they have dinner together at the Governor's Mansion."

Brune's appointment has tremendous benefit for pebble. Not only does DEC regulate discharges and enforce water quality protection standards, they are ultimately the one state agency to have veto authority over Federal 404 permitting. Pebble applied in November 2018 for their 404 permit which is now being considered by the US Army Corps of Engineers. This clean water act provision known as the 401 certification is designed to protect states rights and ensure that Federal decisions comply with state standards.

“Alaskans deserve a process we can trust and with Jason Brune at the helm of DEC we will never have that. With today’s vote, Alaska legislators have denied Alaskans their right to a fair and science-based process that protects our interests and can be trusted.” Said Meghan Gervais, a longtime Bristol Bay Fisherman in Homer. “The Dunleavy Administration is clearly working against commercial fishing communities all over the state. Whether it is with appointments like this, grabbing fish tax money from local communities, proposals to kill the State Ferry System, or dismantling clean water protections. While we thank the 24 state legislators who support clean water and healthy fisheries, it was ultimately disappointing to see his nomination go forward.”