

**COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN
FOR BRISTOL BAY**



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TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY

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Feds Turn Deaf Ear to Alaskans in Pebble EIS Process

Army Corps comment period inadequate for Pebble's scope and complexity. Alaskans call on Murkowski, Sullivan and Young to take action

Dillingham, AK - Federal regulators continue to ignore the requests of Bristol Bay Tribes, fishing organizations, State Legislators and the Alaska Delegation who have asked for an extension of the current comment period on the proposed Pebble Mine, the largest and most complex project to be contemplated in Alaska's history.

Alaskans have requested that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to extend its 90-day public comment period for Pebble's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Doing so would allow stakeholders to fully analyze the draft EIS's more-than 1,400 pages and consider carefully the potential impacts of the proposed mega-mine at the headwaters of Alaska's most prolific salmon runs. The [Army Corps denied extension requests from the people who live in Bristol Bay in Feb. 22, 2019, letters](#). Now, Alaska's congressional delegation must take action to ensure that Alaskans, particularly those in the Bristol Bay region with the most at stake, have adequate time to weigh in.

United Tribes of Bristol Bay's 15 member Tribal Governments have asked the Army Corps of Engineers to allow more time for public comment on Pebble's EIS, including hundreds of thousands of pages of supporting and cited reports.

"Our tribes are overwhelmingly against this mine going forward at all based on the sound science already in the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. Nonetheless, we have hired experts to review the draft EIS, and they are finding extensive gaps in the analysis. Based on what they have seen so far their conclusion is resoundingly that the Army Corps should start over with more information and a willingness to consider

the project's true range of impacts," said UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley. "It is up to our elected representatives from Alaska to demand that the process be fixed before decisions that will forever change the lives of those of us living in Bristol Bay are made based on an unscrupulous process."

"There has never been a mine this large in Alaska and there has never been one permitted this quickly," said Daniel Schindler, Professor of Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington. "The draft EIS makes many tenuous assumptions and glosses over important details about the ecosystems this mine could impact. We need time to thoughtfully analyze the EIS and assess its scientific adequacy for protecting these ecosystems and the people of this region. The Army Corps doesn't seem to understand how complex Bristol Bay's hydrology is, nor how important intact upland habitat is for salmon and rivers."

"We are being silenced, simple as that," said Everett Thompson a 5th generation Bristol Bay fisherman from Naknek. "To push this mine forward like this is irresponsible and I can't believe they are getting away with it. Both of our U.S. Senators have publicly said they think a 90-day comment period isn't long enough, but I haven't seen their words turn into actions. From where I'm sitting this whole thing looks rigged."

Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay, United Fishermen of Alaska, Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, United Tribes of Bristol Bay, Bristol Bay Native Association, 20 members of the Alaska State House, Pacific Seafood Processors Association, dozens of sport fishing lodges and other businesses as well as thousands of Alaskans have asked for more time.

The procedures for implementing NEPA state: **(a)Time extensions.** District commanders will consider and act on requests for time extensions to review and comment on an EIS based on timeliness of distribution of the document, prior agency involvement in the proposed action, and the action's scope and complexity. The 90 day comment period for pebble is inconsistent with comment periods of other large hardrock mining projects that are less complex and with less environmental impact than Pebble. For example, the recently permitted Rosemont copper mine in Arizona has a 245 comment period on its draft EIS.¹

Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay is a national coalition of fishermen working to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska and the 14,000 jobs, \$500 million in annual income, and \$1.5 billion in economic activity that Bristol Bay's wild salmon provide.

¹<https://www.hudbayminerals.com/English/Media-Centre/News-Releases/News-Release-Details/2019/Hudbay-Announces-Receipt-of-Section-404-Water-Permit-for-Rosemont/default.aspx>

The United Tribes of Bristol Bay is a tribal consortium representing 15 Bristol Bay tribal governments (that represent over 80 percent of the region's total population) working to protect the Yup'ik, Dena'ina, and Alutiiq ways of life in Bristol Bay.