

**FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN
BRISTOL BAY**



united
TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY

May 3rd, 2019
For Immediate Release

Contact:

Tyson Fick, 907-321-9848 tyson@salmonstate.org Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay
Brian Kraft, 907-227-8719 bkraft@alaskasportsmanslodge.com Alaska Sportsman's Lodge
Alannah Hurley 907-843-1633 ahurley@utbb.org United Tribes of Bristol Bay

Comment Period Extension Does Nothing to Remedy Fundamental Flaws in Pebble EIS

Tribal Leaders, Sport Fishermen, and Commercial Fishermen Call for Permitting Suspension

Dillingham, Alaska: Today the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced a 30 day extension to the public comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. The comment period extension was recently requested by Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski and will now end on June 29, 2019.

Local tribes, Alaska Native corporations, fishing groups from Bristol Bay, and 20 members of the Alaska Legislature initially requested the comment period be extended to at least 270 days. Their requests were quickly rejected by the Army Corps which said that it had “not received any compelling reason to extend.”

“Thirty days is so little as to be essentially meaningless. The DEIS is infested with inaccuracies and inadequacies. Real leadership would have been a call to go back to drawing board and stop this sham of a process,” said Brian Kraft of Katmai Service Providers and Owner of Alaska Sportsman's Lodge. “30 days does nothing to change the fact that pebble's 20-year mine plan is a lie, and that Pebble's application is incomplete and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is merely a skeleton of a review. The DEIS is missing both critical baseline data, and the true magnitude of the duration and range of impacts Pebble would have on our fishery. Giving us 30 extra days to review the document will not make up for these gaps.”

“An extra 30 days does nothing to change the fact that Pebble's federal permitting process is fundamentally flawed, including a Draft EIS with unacceptable information gaps. There is not enough real substance in the Draft EIS to warrant this process moving forward any further, which is why Bristol Bay's commercial fishermen continue to request that the Army Corps suspend this process until our questions and concerns are addressed,” said Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay representative and local resident Holly Wysocki. “We risk our lives fishing each summer in Bristol Bay; the least we deserve is a fair and rigorous permitting process.”

“If the Army Corps was actually serious about including Bristol Bay’s fishing industry in the EIS process, then they would have granted the request for a 270 day comment period instead of ending it during the busiest month of the year. Anyone who understands Alaska knows that June is when Bristol Bay’s fishermen, seafood processors, and local residents are focused on getting our boats, nets, and plants ready for the return of 40 million sockeye salmon. We are all slammed.” Ben Blakey, President of Northline Seafoods.

“A thirty-day extension is yet another example in this corrupt ‘process’ that shows Murkowski and the USACE are committed to green lighting Pebble Mine’s permit at the expense of Alaskans, fishermen, and the last great sockeye salmon fishery in the world,” said United Tribes of Bristol Bay Executive Director Alannah Hurley. “The science has already proven this mine cannot safely coexist with salmon. It’s time to stop this process until our leaders are committed to the fair, rigorous and scientific process to evaluate this mine that they have been touting all along. This extension is inadequate and like this entire ‘process’, does not meet the needs of our tribes and rural communities.”

###