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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trump Administration ignores agency scientists, finalizes elimination of EPA's proposed Bristol Bay protections

Naknek, AK — Today, in an announcement that casts a dark cloud over one of the biggest commercial fishing seasons in Bristol Bay, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed protections for wetlands and waterways threatened by the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay's pristine headwaters.

"I'm furious. This decision reeks of collusion and politics," said Bristol Bay resident and commercial fisherman Robin Samuelsen. "Even those who are extremely pro-development have raised concerns about the negative impacts of this mine on Bristol Bay. In the face of those concerns, it is shocking that what few protections remain for this region are being further eroded. It is clear that the Trump and Dunleavy administrations are corrupt as ever and colluding with the mining company directly. Those two will do all they can to push forward a dangerous project that threatens our way of life in Bristol Bay."

"Today's decision is far from the end on this issue. Our people will continue to push for Bristol Bay's permanent protection for as long as it takes, even generations - our fight is far from over and we are never going away."

In comment letters to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pebble project, both federal and state agencies reached the same conclusion: that the Pebble Mine cannot safely coexist with Bristol Bay's salmon

fishery. EPA Region 10 Administrator Chris Hladick wrote in [the EPA's July 1, 2019 comment letter](#) that, **“Region 10 finds that this project as described in the PN may have substantial and unacceptable adverse impacts on fisheries resources in the project area watersheds, which are aquatic resources of national importance.”**

“I just wrapped up one of the better seasons of my fishing career; Bristol Bay’s salmon fishery is stronger than ever,” added Alaska resident and Bristol Bay fisherman Alexis Kwachka. “The EPA’s decision to ignore its own science and risk Bristol Bay’s entire fishing industry is pure politics. This decision is simply wrong. The Pebble permitting process has been hijacked by an administration that’s willing to cut corners and dismiss the appalling shortcomings and gaps in Pebble’s mine plan. The EPA’s decision underscores that fishermen cannot trust the Army Corps or EPA politicians to look out for our jobs.”

“The integrity of this permitting process has been compromised and we need Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan to stand behind the EPA’s scientific experts who have unquestionably concluded that the Pebble project would negatively impact Bristol Bay’s fisheries. The process has been corrupted and we need the Alaska delegation to restore its integrity and ensure that this administration does not sacrifice our jobs and way of life.”

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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 half the world’s wild sockeye salmon provided by Bristol Bay’s sustainable fishery. Learn more at fishermenforbristolbay.org.