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### **EXPERTS CONFIRM PEBBLE REVIEW PROCESS IS BROKEN**

*New tool highlights urgency for oversight action as data gaps and agency recommendations cannot be remedied in current, unrealistic permitting timeline*

**DILLINGHAM, AK** - A new tool collating expert comments on Pebble's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) shows a clear consensus from the scientific community: Pebble's plan is incomplete. The comprehensive document highlights scientific shortcomings of Pebble's plan that are impossible to address on the timeline set forth by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which currently plans to release its final EIS in spring, before additional fieldwork could be completed.

Comments from state and federal agencies, as well as independent experts, detail severe deficiencies in the legally required review process being undertaken by the USACE, and call for significantly more work to be done before permit decisions are made.

These comments are available for review through the [new tool](#) that puts the experts' opinions on the DEIS into a publicly-available document that is easy to navigate. The tool is searchable and categorized, enabling the lay person to quickly synthesize expert opinions. This tool fills a gap where the USACE has failed to adequately engage the public or make the review process transparent.

Expert concerns found in the tool include:

- The **Department of the Interior** said the DEIS is so deficient that it "precludes meaningful analysis" and calls for a complete do-over of the DEIS. ([Expert reviews](#), page 227)
- The **National Marine Fisheries Service** said Pebble's salmon work is "limited, sparse, lack[s] scientific rigor, and do[es] not fully assess all salmon life stages," and calls for an

independent third party review of Pebble's fish work, as well as additional salmon fieldwork. ([Expert reviews](#), page 576)

- The **State of Alaska** said "further work is necessary to ensure potential effects to the human environment from each alternative are adequately evaluated and described in the (final EIS)", and calls for a wide assortment of additional studies. ([Expert reviews](#), page 440)
- The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** said "we recommend that a permit not be issued for the project as currently proposed." USFWS also recommended significant additional study, and said "We recommend more robust analysis be conducted to thoroughly identify, analyze, and reduce risks to these resources." ([Expert reviews](#), page 370)

Together, the expert comments call for considerably more work to be done before a final EIS is produced or a permit decision is made. To date, there are no public plans to do this work. Instead, the USACE insists that it will be ready to make a final permit decision in the spring of 2020.

The USACE's reluctance to require the work necessary is in direct contrast to Senator Murkowski's recent remarks on the matter when she stated, "I will use my seat on the Appropriations Committee to make sure that the EPA and the Corps hear clearly that they must address these, and if they fail to do so then a permit should not be issued."

"Multiple federal and state agencies have criticized the DEIS for inadequately addressing the impacts the proposed Pebble mine would have on Bristol Bay and its fisheries. It is disingenuous for the Pebble Limited Partnership to suggest otherwise. The deficiencies and red flags raised in the voluminous comments on the Draft EIS exemplify why the Army Corps permitting process is fundamentally broken – and why Alaskans continue to oppose the proposed Pebble mine. Unfortunately, PLP has shown no signs of changing its approach to the Alaskans who stand to lose the most from its mine proposal," said **Jason Metrokin, President and CEO of Bristol Bay Native Corporation**.

"For what is at stake in Bristol Bay, Army Corps should be giving Pebble's permit the highest rigor of review, but instead we see them cutting corners to grant Pebble a permit as quickly as possible," said **Katherine Carscallen of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay**. "This tool gives the public a chance to slice through Pebble's rhetoric and in minutes access the recommendations state and federal agencies have made to ensure Bristol Bay's people and salmon are not traded for short term corporate profit."

"For more than a century, Bristol Bay fishermen have relied on sustainable management driven by state and federal fisheries scientists. The Army Corps should do the same and call for the additional work requested by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game - but they're not. Instead, the agency is ignoring sound science, and rushing ahead on a permitting timeline requested by a foreign mining company that doesn't care about our fishery," said **Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation CEO Norm Van Vector**. "We need our elected leaders to step in and stop this process. Anything less is an insult to the fishermen, scientists and community members who have worked hand in hand to protect and advance salmon-based cultures and economy in Bristol Bay."

"It is no surprise in Bristol Bay that the Pebble Limited Partnership continues to try and mislead the public, Pebble has survived on lies for over a decade. What's disturbing is the Army Corps is not upholding real standards in the permitting process and instead is paving the way for Pebble's permit regardless of the universal condemnation of their process to date," said **United Tribes of**

**Bristol Bay Executive Director Alannah Hurley.** “The fact our organizations even needed to create a system for this information to be understood and utilized by the public is a shining example of how the Army Corps doesn’t value adequate public and scientific engagement in the process. It highlights just how broken this process really is. It’s time for our leaders to hold the Corps accountable and stop this process from moving forward.”

“This tool makes it easy to see just how flawed the DEIS is. The expert comments call for extensive additional study of Pebble’s plan and the impacts it would have on Bristol Bay’s fish, people and the environment, including both data analysis and collection in a wide-range of fields,” said **Bristol Bay Native Association President/CEO Ralph Andersen.** “But the Army Corps’ insistence on barreling toward a permit decision in 2020 makes it clear that this work will not be done, and the FEIS will be fatally flawed. This process must be stopped before that happens. There’s no legitimate public interest served by a fast-tracked permitting process, and the people of Bristol Bay deserve better.”

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**Bristol Bay Native Corporation** is a responsible Alaska Native corporation dedicated to the mission of “Enriching Our Native Way of Life.” Established through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, BBNC works to protect the land in Bristol Bay, celebrate the legacy of its people, and enhance the lives of its shareholders.

**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.

**Bristol Bay Native Association** represents 31 Bristol Bay tribes & is the regional nonprofit tribal consortium providing social, economic, and educational opportunities to tribal members.

**Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation** represents 17 CDQ communities & exists to promote economic growth and opportunities for Bristol Bay residents through sustainable use of the Bering Sea fisheries.

**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 way of life in Bristol Bay.

**Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association** is a fisherman-funded, non-profit organization whose mission is to increase the value of the Bristol Bay commercial fishery through education, quality outreach, and marketing activities.