

COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN FOR BRISTOL BAY

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Bristol Bay Fishermen Celebrate EPA's Decision to Advance Protections for Bristol Bay

*Biden administration signals that it will restart Clean Water Act Section 404(c) process
to block the Pebble Mine*

Dillingham, Alaska -- Today, commercial fishermen celebrated alongside Bristol Bay Tribes and residents as the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) announced](#) that it would not defend the Trump administration's 2019 decision to withdraw proposed protections for Bristol Bay, Alaska. Instead, the EPA will ask the district court to vacate the previous decision and remand the case back to EPA to reinstate the previous Section 404(c) protections that EPA proposed in 2014.

If finalized, the EPA's proposed protections would block large-scale mining activity in Bristol Bay's headwaters, including the Pebble Mine which has threatened the Bristol Bay watershed for over two decades. EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan recognized the value of Bristol Bay and reinforced EPA's commitment to see it protected stating;

"The Bristol Bay Watershed is an Alaskan treasure that underscores the critical value of clean water in America. Today's announcement reinforces once again EPA's commitment to making science-based decisions to protect our natural environment. What's at stake is preventing pollution that would disproportionately impact Alaska Natives, and protecting a sustainable future for the most productive salmon fishery in North America."

"This is a pivotal moment for Bristol Bay fishermen. Our decades-long, locally-led effort to permanently protect Bristol Bay, our thriving commercial fishery, and our communities from the Pebble Mine is finally back on track," said Katherine Carscallen, Executive Director of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay. "While we are celebrating today, the last four years have taught us that Bristol Bay is not safe from the Pebble Mine until the EPA completes the Clean Water Act Section 404(c) process. The Biden administration has an opportunity and a responsibility to truly finish the job that the EPA started in 2014 and complete the 404(c) process so that Bristol Bay's fishermen, businesses, and communities can resume our lives free from the threat of the Pebble Mine."

“After over a decade of fighting to save our fishery and our jobs, we are thankful today for EPA’s renewed action to protect Bristol Bay and the 15,000 American jobs and small businesses like mine,” said John Fairbanks, a Washington-based Bristol Bay commercial fisherman. “As Bristol Bay just wrapped up an all time record breaking run, delivering 65 million salmon to our rivers, streams, fishing nets and onto tables all over the nation, we remain hopeful President Biden will see through his commitment to stand by the science and protect these irreplaceable salmon.”

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Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay is a national coalition of fishermen working to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska and the 15,000 jobs, \$500 million in annual income, and \$2.2 billion in economic activity that Bristol Bay’s wild salmon provide.