



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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Water Docket
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 2822T
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Docket ID # EPA-R10-OW-2014-0505

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The Wildlife Society is writing to express our support for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Proposed Determination to restrict development of the Pebble Mine deposit in the Bristol Bay region, Alaska. The scientific watershed assessment prepared by EPA accurately demonstrates that allowing unrestricted large scale mining in the Bristol Bay region will substantially impact natural ecosystems, place important fish and wildlife populations at risk, and greatly and irreparably damage one of the world's best hunting and fishing destinations.

We urge the EPA to move forward with the Proposed Determination—with the documented science in hand—to conserve this area under section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act. We also urge EPA to consider the outstanding fish and wildlife populations that this area supports along with the associated recreational values of the Bristol Bay region, as Section 404(c) allows it as a key factor for a determination.

This area supports important populations of waterfowl, ptarmigan, brown bear, moose, caribou and 46% of the world's sockeye salmon. The pristine habitat provided in the Bristol Bay region is critical for sustaining healthy wildlife and fish populations, important for the natural ecosystem and the local economy. Sport fishing, hunting, and eco-tourism that depend on fish and wildlife generate more than \$160 million in local economic activity, creating nearly 2,500 local, sustainable jobs.

Pebble Mine jeopardizes Bristol Bay's unmatched bounty of fish and wildlife resources and its nature-based economy. The deposition of dredge and fill materials into Bristol Bay waters, leaching of copper, stream acidification, and impacts of related infrastructure development would severely impact dozens of miles of streams, and thousands of acres of lakes, ponds and wetlands in the region – negatively impacting both fish and wildlife populations, and in turn the local economies that depend on them. The mine would create only about 1,000 temporary mining jobs while threatening the thousands of jobs supported by fish and wildlife populations, which can last indefinitely through proper management.

An EPA decision to protect Bristol Bay from the severe impacts of the Pebble Mine, including fish and wildlife populations and their associated recreational opportunities is essential. We urge the EPA to move forward with a final 404(c) determination to implement sensible restrictions on mining activities to avoid imperiling this extraordinary and irreplaceable ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Jon Haufler, President
The Wildlife Society