To: Dunbar, Bill[dunbar.bill@epa.gov]
From: Shoren Brown, Bristol Bay United
Sent: Fri 1/17/2014 5:39:13 PM
Subject: Bristol Bay in the News: January 17, 2014

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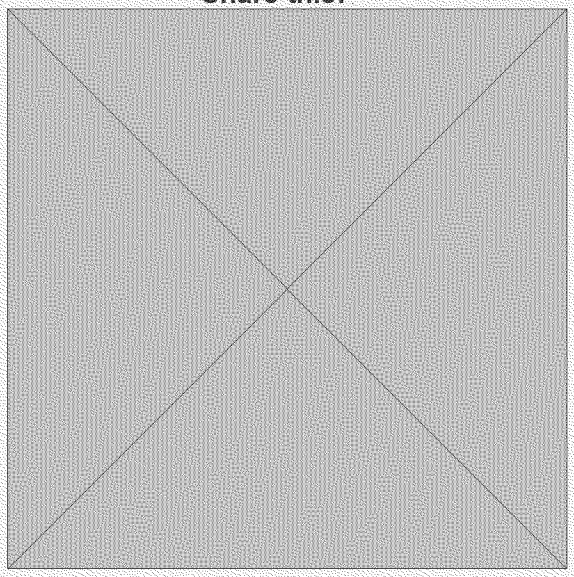

Bristol Bay in the News: January 17, 2014

On Wednesday, the Environmental Protection Agency released its long-anticipated final Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, which details the impacts large-scale hardrock mining would have on the Bristol Bay watershed. The Final Assessment was an exhaustive scientific study that was peer reviewed twice, relied on the company behind the proposed Pebble Mine's own documents, and received over 1 million public comments.

The headlines from the coverage puts into stark focus what's at stake in Bristol Bay: "EPA concludes Pebble mine poses significant risk to salmon;" "EPA says Bristol Bay mine poses big risks;" "EPA report predicts Pebble Mine could devastate Alaska salmon runs;" and "EPA report criticizes Alaska mine plan" among many others.

Indeed, the EPA's scientific document couldn't have been clearer about what the Pebble Mine could mean for Bristol Bay's $1.5 billion fishing economy and 14,000 jobs. Even without accident, the Pebble Mine would:

- **Cause the direct loss of up to 94 miles of salmon-supporting streams.**
- **Alter streamflows of up to 33 additional miles of salmon-supporting streams, likely affecting ecosystem structure and function.**
- **Destroy up to 5,350 acres of wetlands, ponds, and lakes in the Bristol Bay region.**
- **Create a transportation corridor to Cook Inlet crossing wetlands and approximately 64 streams and rivers in the Kvichak River watershed, 55 of which are known or likely to support salmon. Culvert failures, runoff, and spills of chemicals would put salmon spawning areas at risk.**
- **Require the collection, storage, treatment and management of extensive quantities of mine waste, leachates, and wastewater during mining and "long after mining concludes."**
- **Potentially lead to development at six additional mine sites in the region spanning an additional 14,000 acres and eliminate another 43 miles of streams.**

After the release of the Watershed Assessment, organizations spanning the unprecedented coalition that has come together to protect Bristol Bay released statements in support of the EPA's assessment, and to call for immediate action. Statements of support came from the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Trout Unlimited, Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay, Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska, The Center for American Progress,

The Natural Resource Defense Council, United Tribes of Bristol Bay, and many others within hours after the release of the assessment.
While the EPA's science findings conclude that mines like the Pebble mine will irrevocably damage the Bristol Bay fishery, the EPA has not yet decided what action to take in the watershed. Bristol Bay United and our allies are calling for the initiation of a Clean Water Act 404c process immediately.
You can find coverage of the EPA's Watershed Assessment, both in Alaska and across the Lower 48, below.

Shoren Brown
Executive Director, Bristol Bay United

Alaska Coverage

EPA concludes Pebble mine poses significant risk to salmon
By Lisa Demer
Anchorage Daily News
January 15, 2014
Under section 404(c), EPA can prohibit an area from being used for dredged or fill material if it will have "an unacceptable adverse effect on municipal water supplies, shellfish beds and fishery areas (including spawning and breeding areas, wildlife, or recreational areas." Around the country, the EPA has only blocked 13 projects under that provision, nine of them in the 1980s. Just once did it veto a project that had yet to seek its dredge and fill permit and in that case, owners of two adjoining properties were seeking permits for the same type of wetlands work. The Florida landowners were stopped from using bulldozers to prepare wetlands for agriculture in that 1988 case.
Instead of a quick veto, EPA did the study, operating under a different section of law.
"With today's release, science has weighed-in: Bristol Bay, its existing jobs and way of life could be irreparably damaged by a large-scale mine that is the size and scope of the Pebble project--and therefore, our fish, our people and our cultures must be protected," Jason Metrokin, Bristol Bay Native Corp. president and chief executive, said in a written statement… click here to read full article.

EPA says Bristol Bay mine poses big risks
By Lauren Maxwell
KTVA Alaska
January 15, 2014
ANCHORAGE – Is the risk of a large-scale mining project too great for Bristol Bay?
Some say that question has been answered by a report released Wednesday by the Environmental Protection Agency.
The EPA looked at the possible impacts of developing a large gold and copper mine in the Bristol Bay Watershed and found many areas for concern. And while the EPA never mentions the Pebble Mine Project by name, it does say the report is based on information that was submitted by Northern Dynasty, the company that wants to develop the mine.
It took three years to put the report together from start to finish. It concludes that a project like Pebble poses serious risks for both salmon and native cultures in Bristol Bay… click here to watch.

EPA: Mining Could Devastate Alaska's Bristol Bay Region
KTUU Alaska
January 15, 2014
In a Wednesday statement responding to the EPA report, Sen. Mark Begich says he will spend the next few days reviewing its findings.
"I have always said I will let science be my guide, and my decision whether to support the Pebble project will be based on this report," Begich said. "The stakes are high for Alaska -- I have heard from thousands of Alaskans on this issue -- and that is why I will be thoroughly reviewing the final watershed assessment and continuing to rely on science for any final decision."
A statement from Jason Metrokin, the president and CEO of Pebble Mine opponent Bristol Bay Native Corp., hailed Alaska Natives' role in calling for the EPA's review, while calling for the agency to take action against the proposed project… click here to watch.

EPA Releases Watershed Assessment For Bristol Bay
By Dave Bendinger
KDLG/Alaska Public Radio Network
January 15, 2014
Bob Waldrop: "The assessment is absolutely clear, and now is unimpeachable: mining in critical salmon

habitat will severely impact salmon in Bristol Bay."
Bob Waldrop is the executive director for the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association which represents all of the driftnet fishermen in the Bay.
The groups who've aligned themselves against the Pebble Mine have not always been allies, and certainly have not always seen eye-to-eye with the federal government. But the Bristol Bay tribes who requested the EPA to issue a 404c veto of the mine back in 2010 say they've appreciated the agency's partnership… click here to read full article/listen.

EPA report predicts Pebble Mine could devastate Alaska salmon runs
By Suzanna Caldwell
The Alaska Dispatch
January 15, 2014
It's the latest blow in recent weeks in the ongoing quest to develop Pebble Mine. The massive open-pit mine project would be one of the largest in North America. Located in Southwest Alaska near Lake Iliamna, the prospect has an estimated 80.6 billion pounds of copper, 107.4 million ounces of gold and 6.6 billion pounds of molybdenum. While proponents of the mine have argued it would bring jobs to a region starved by them, the mine has met fierce opposition from environmental groups who have argued the environmental impacts would be devastating.
Last month, Rio Tinto, the London-based mining group that owns 19 percent of the Northern Dynasty's shares, said it was considering pulling out of the project upon further review. Another key player, Anglo American, announced in September of 2013 that it would take a $300 million hit to pull out of the project, in which it had a 50 percent share… click here to read full article.

Lower 48 Coverage

EPA: Mining poses risks to Bristol Bay salmon
By Becky Bohrer
Associated Press, in *San Francisco Chronicle*, many others
January 15, 2014
The report also found that polluted water from the mine site could get into streams through runoff or uncollected leachate, even with the use of modern mining practices. It noted culvert blockages or other failures could impede fish passage and failure of a tailings dam, where mining waste is stored, could be catastrophic though the probability of such a failure was considered quite low.
Supporters of the EPA process hoped it would lead the agency to block or limit the project, action they urged again Wednesday; opponents saw it as an example of government overreach and feared it would lead to a pre-emptive veto.
Jason Metrokin, president and CEO of Bristol Bay Native Corp., said the corporation supports "responsible development where it can be done without causing unacceptable risks to the people, cultures and fishing economy of our region. The proposed Pebble mine is not such a project."… click here to read full article.

A big test for Obama on the environment
By Ryan Cooper
The Washington Post
January 15, 2014
Today, we'll get a key test of the administration's determination.
A gigantic mine is being planned for the Bristol Bay region in Alaska on huge deposits of gold, copper, and molybdenum, the poisonous byproducts of which could devastate the region's environment and economy, and today the EPA released its assessment of the mine's impact. The assessment is purely scientific; now the agency has to make a policy decision about whether to permit the mine.
The choice EPA makes will be a key indicator of the EPA's willingness to endure the backlash that will certainly ensue if they take strong action on climate change… click here to read full article.

EPA report criticizes Alaska mine plan
By Maria L. La Ganga
Los Angeles Times
January 15, 2014
Shoren Brown, executive director of Bristol Bay United, called the report "a smoking gun for the Pebble Mine." The group is a coalition of sport and commercial fishing interests and Alaska Native corporations. "The science that we've been waiting for, for three years, is now absolutely in," Brown said. "The only question is what this agency and administration are going to do now that we have thousands of pages of

documentation that says this mine will cause huge impacts to the world's greatest wild salmon fishery." Jason Metrokin, chief executive of the Bristol Bay Native Corp., becomes well nigh poetic when he talks about the region. "God's country" is how he describes it — home to moose and caribou, mountains and one of the nation's largest lakes… click here to read full article.

EPA: Huge Alaska mine 'poses risks' to Bristol Bay salmon
By Joel Connelly
The Seattle Post-Intelligencer
January 15, 2014
An enormous open-pit copper and gold mine, proposed near headwaters of two salmon-rich rivers, "poses risks" to Bristol Bay's half-billion-dollar sockeye salmon fishery, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said in a final assessment of the proposed project.
Aerial view of site for giant proposed Pebble Mine near Bristol Bay in Alaska. Frying Pan Lake, pictured here, would disappear beneath a giant pile of tailings.
The proposed Pebble Mine has sent ripples of protest from native villages in Bristol Bay, to Puget Sound area fishing boat owners, to New York hedge fund managers who have urged divestment in the controversial project.
"EPA's assessment is clear: The proposed Pebble Mine poses a direct threat to Bristol Bay salmon and the Pacific Northwest jobs that depend on them," said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash… click here to read for full article.

EPA Says Northern Dynasty Pebble Project May Harm Alaska Salmon
By Liezel Hill
Bloomberg Businessweek
January 15, 2014
Annual commercial sockeye harvests averaged 25.7 million fish between 1990 and 2009, according to the study. Bristol Bay's salmon population includes all five species found in North America.
Today's report, which makes no recommendations on whether or not to allow the Pebble mine to go forward, follows drafts released in 2012 and 2013.
"There are some places where mining cannot be done without forever damaging landscapes, wildlife, businesses, and communities," Michael J. Kowalski, chairman and CEO of Tiffany & Co. and an opponent of the project, said in a statement. "Bristol Bay is one such place."… click here to read full article.

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www.bristolbayunited.com

P.O. Box 201924 | Anchorage, AK 99510 US
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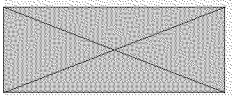

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