Spokane Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 100 • Wellpinit, WA 99040

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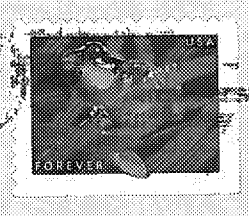

Chris Hladick, Region 10 Administrator
EPA
Park Place Building
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

98101-530065

Spokane Tribe of Indians
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July 20, 2020

Environmental Protection Agency

Region 10 Administrator Chris Hladick

Park Place Building
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Cc: Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Dan Sullivan
Representative Don Young

Re: Spokane Tribe of Indians Letter to EPA in support of veto of Pebble Mine 404 permit

Dear Administrator Hladick;

The Spokane Tribe of Indians writes with great concern for the inadequate environmental analysis of the Pebble Mine by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Pebble's plan to build a mine at the headwaters of Bristol Bay will have irreversible and devastating impacts to the pristine waters that support the world's greatest wild salmon runs and all they sustain. The EPA must step in and stop this toxic project.

Under their current plan, which is a small portion of the entire deposit, the Pebble mine would result in the direct loss of more than 2,000 acres of wetlands and 107 miles of streams in the Bristol Bay Watershed. Dewatering, fragmentation, perpetual storage of toxic waste – among many other destructive impacts – will drastically harm these essential waters and lands. Additionally, Pebble's plans for mitigating these impacts are inadequate, untested, and incomplete.

Throughout the NEPA permitting process, the Army Corps of Engineers failed in its responsibility to thoroughly study and review the cumulative impacts of the proposed Pebble mine on Bristol Bay's waters. The Corps' environmental review is missing critical data and fails to include a complete assessment of the existing aquatic resources at the mine site and along the transportation corridor. The Army Corps also failed to thoroughly investigate the project's direct and indirect environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts to the region. The agency has blatantly ignored significant criticisms from the EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State of Alaska, and other state, federal, and tribal cooperating agencies, and has disregarded public input and concerns throughout the process. The Corps even ignored Congress' directive to perform a more thorough analysis of the permit application, and instead chose to push this toxic project forward despite scientific evidence condemning its development.

As , we support Bristol Bay tribes in their efforts to protect their watershed's environmental health that has sustained their indigenous way of life, their livelihoods, and their communities sustainability since time immemorial. It is the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect the Bristol Bay watershed from the unacceptable adverse effects that the Pebble Project will have on the water, fisheries, wildlife, and cultures. The impacts are clear. Pebble is too risky for Bristol Bay. EPA not only has the authority but more importantly the responsibility to stop this project from being permitted.

Bristol Bay Tribes first petitioned the EPA to prohibit mines like Pebble in the region more than a decade ago, and in the years that have passed, the science, history, and facts prove how detrimental this project would be to the Bristol Bay region. A politically motivated permitting process should not determine the future for Bristol Bay's people, salmon, and way of life. It is time to use your authority under the Clean Water Act Section 4040(c).

Do the right thing: veto Pebble's permit and protect Bristol Bay.

Sincerely,

Carol Evans

Chairwoman
Spokane Tribal Business Council