NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #NGF-09-005

TITLE: Opposing the Development of the Proposed Pebble Deposit Mining District and Proposed Donlin Creek Mine

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, hardrock mining has resulted in significant damaging impacts to Tribal cultural and natural resources throughout Western United States, and the EPA estimates that hardrock mining has polluted 40 % of the headwaters of western watersheds; and

WHEREAS, Alaska indigenous peoples have long used the lands, which will continue to be used by future generations, in and around the proposed Pebble Gold-Copper Mining District and Donlin Creek Mine to sustain our hunting, fishing, and gathering subsistence lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, if these mines are developed there is a strong likelihood (probability) that there will be a detrimental impact on the water and air quality, fish, and wildlife resources and spawning grounds, and health of residents and subsistence hunters living or using the land adjacent to these mining activities; and

WHEREAS, the Bristol Bay watershed supports the largest remaining wild sockeye salmon fishery in the world -- the backbone of the regional economy; and

WHEREAS, the Native communities in the Kuskokwim Watershed have been culturally dependant on the salmon fishery for eons; and

WHEREAS, The environmental impacts that would be caused by each of these proposed mines constitute a threat to the ability of Alaska indigenous peoples to carry on their traditional mean of subsistence and as such would violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including articles 1 and 27) and the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (especially articles 25, 26, and 29).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Congress of American Indians opposes the development of the Pebble Mine and the Donlin Creek Mine and will engage in efforts to prevent its development on the domestic and international levels, including urging the EPA establish regulations regarding the production of mercury from mining operations and bringing the matter before the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples and other international forums; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2009 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at Conference Center Niagara Falls in Niagara Falls, New York on June 14-17, 2009, with a quorum present.

President

ATTEST:

W. Ron Allen

Recording Secretary