EPA Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment Public Hearing

May 31, 2012

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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - REGION 10

Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment

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Seattle, Washington

1 REIDAR SOLBERG: This will be in
2 Norwegian.
3 So my name is Reidar Solber and I'm a second-
4 generation Bristol Bay fisherman. I fished Bristol Bay
5 for 52 years. I started with my dad in 1960 and fished
6 25 years with my brother. In the past twelve years, I've
7 fished with my son.
8 Bristol Bay has had many difficult struggles; one of
9 them being in 1972 with the high seas intercept fishery,
10 we had one twelve-hour period, and in 1973, there was no
11 fishery whatsoever.
12 With the help of the Federal Government and Senator
13 Magnuson and Senator Stevens, we were able to get the
14 200-mile limit into effect and preserve the fishery. And
15 with the management of Alaska Department of Fish and
16 Game, it magnified to runs as high as 60 million a year.
17 This was made possible because of the water quality and
18 the habitat in the region.
19 We're again looking to the Federal Government for
20 help to preserve the most powerful salmon-producing river
21 systems in the world. I will be passing the fishery on
22 to my son, with the hope that he will be able to pass it
23 on, as a third-generation fisherman, on to his son or
24 daughter in generations to come.
25 My thanks to the EPA for looking at the consequences

1 of digging a hole of this size in the headwaters of
2 Kvichak and Nushagak River systems. Water quality and
3 habitat is a driving force behind the incredible fishery.
4 I hope we can preserve it.
5 Thank you.
6 DOROTHY LARSON: Thank you. My name
7 is Dorothy Larson, and I come from Snag Point, which is
8 now Dillingham, Alaska. I am of (inaudible) and Filipino
9 descent. I am also a shareholder of the Bristol Bay
10 Native Corporation and a tribal member of the village of
11 Dillingham. I also serve on the Bristol Bay Native
12 Corporation board of directors as its vice chair. And
13 just to tell you a little bit about BBNC, we have three
14 million acres of land and 9,000 shareholders across the
15 United States and internationally.
16 I fished commercially for over 60 years, so I've got
17 a few years on Mr. Reidar here. And my sons and my
18 grandchildren and other family members are still involved
19 in the fishery as commercial and subsistence fishers.
20 They rely upon the economic benefits of the salmon, as
21 well as the cultural and subsistence value of the salmon
22 and other resources from the land and the sea.
23 Bristol Bay Native Corporation's mission statement
24 is very simple and direct: enrich our native way of
25 life. We are proud of our nativeness and we are proud of

1 our way of life and we want to maintain and enrich that
2 way of life.
3 Well, how do we do this? We do it by taking care of
4 our land and our resources from the sea, as well as the
5 land, from the abundance of the natural resources that
6 feed us throughout the year. It's not just during the
7 salmon season; it's throughout the year.
8 It also provides an economic base with the
9 commercial fishing and other economic interests we invest
10 in. We want to sustain our subsistence lifestyle, while
11 blending the western way of living, which we must adapt
12 to. We do not want to live in the past, but we can and
13 should have the opportunity to live in the way we are
14 accustomed to by providing a strong economic future for
15 the people of Bristol Bay, responsibly and without risk,
16 by ensuring the continued sustainability of our salmon.
17 BETSY DANIELS: Thanks, Dorothy. I'm
18 going to have to go to the next person. I'm so sorry.
19 Thank you.
20 Anne Mosness, and forgive me --
21 ANNE MOSNESS: It's Norwegian.
22 Mosness.
23 I appreciate that the EPA is looking at the culture
24 and heritage of the region. My family only had a few
25 decades up there, but we have great affection for the

1 people who live in that region, that immense landscape
2 that they live in that's ruggedly beautiful, and when you
3 leave the harbors and the diesel engines, there's just
4 timelessness and this quiet that I think is really rare
5 on our planet.
6 When my father first came to Alaska in 1929, he was
7 a gold miner, and he has a mine that's on old mining maps
8 up on the Bering Sea area. And when the government used
9 the gold miners' equipment to build the airstrip out in
10 Aleutian, that put my father basically out of business.
11 But he returned to Bristol Bay for four decades to
12 fish. And as he aged, I started fishing with him. I'm
13 almost as old as Reidar. Probably older. I started in
14 1973 up there.
15 My son started coming on the boat when he was ten,
16 and there was 70 years between the oldest and the
17 youngest on our fishing boat for four summers. And I
18 listened to my father tell my son the story of his life,
19 and I don't remember ever hearing the regret that we were
20 not a gold mining family, although when someone once
21 asked the value of the gold in the mine, it was
22 astoundingly high.
23 But I think my father realized that we were a part
24 of that great cycle of nature. We were harvesting this
25 fabulous fish that was being eaten by people all over the

1 world. We had a lot of pride in the family business. It
2 was not short-term wealth, which is what his gold mine
3 would have brought him.
4 So there's a statement in the book that says that
5 the destruction of the common food resource is not a sad
6 by-product of modern industrialization but a necessary
7 prerequisite for its success. And we have too many
8 things happening that are destroying the economy of the
9 fisheries, but I want folks to know that there's many of
10 us here working to keep the value up.
11 Thank you.
12 BOBBY ANDREW: Good afternoon, Dennis
13 and Rick. And before I start on behalf of the Tribal
14 Council of Ekwok, I want to thank Dennis and Tommy for
15 coming to Ekwok about six days after you announced the
16 assessment was going to be released. It gave two
17 different villages the opportunity to review the draft.
18 And on behalf of the two villages, I want to thank you.
19 In addition to that, the six tribes that were
20 involved in sending a letter to you, Dennis, as well as
21 to the EPA, we support the work that you have done.
22 And in addition, in review of the assessment -- or
23 the PowerPoint presentation you just made, I'd like to
24 see you take another look at the subsistence portion
25 where you have 342 pounds of food. I think it's a lot

1 more than that, what we fish for the season.
2 In addition, many of the tribes do support the
3 timeline that was given through July 23rd. It will be
4 giving you sufficient time to review, as well as the
5 tribes, and in addition to that, when the peer review is
6 done, we're going to have another opportunity.
7 Thank you.
8 JIM KLUG: My name is Jim Klug. I'm
9 the owner of a well-known travel business that sends
10 hundreds of anglers a year to sport-fish the waters of
11 Bristol Bay.
12 I'm here today not only as an independent business
13 owner concerned about the future of Bristol Bay, but also
14 as the current chairman of the American Fly Fishing Trade
15 Association, the trade group that represents the entire
16 fly fishing industry throughout America.
17 For the record, our industry is completely united in
18 its opposition to the development of the Pebble Mine
19 project, and we believe that Bristol Bay watershed, as
20 the home to the largest salmon runs in North America and
21 the world, is a one-of-a-kind resource that cannot be put
22 at risk.
23 The American Fly Fishing Trade Association agrees
24 with the EPA's scientific review findings that Pebble
25 Mine is a threat to Bristol Bay. A project that proposes

1 to spew up to ten billion tons of toxic mining waste that
2 would theoretically be stored behind massive earthen dams
3 up to 50 stories tall, all in a known earthquake zone, is
4 quite simply an environmental disaster that is waiting to
5 happen.
6 To construct and dig one of the world's largest
7 open-pit mines in the heart of such an ecologically
8 sensitive and economically significant area is the worst
9 possible nightmare for the Alaskan wilderness, for the
10 people who live and work throughout the area, and for the
11 countless businesses and jobs that are directly and
12 indirectly linked to the Bristol Bay region.
13 The foreknown consortium that wants to mine the
14 Pebble area would have you believe that opposition to
15 their project comes from the standard no mining, no
16 development, zero extraction attitudes of radical
17 environmentalism.
18 As a business owner and lifelong sportsman, I am
19 here to tell that you nothing could be further from the
20 truth. Watching these slides and reading the report,
21 when you see facts up there that say leakage of acidic
22 drainage likely, failure of road culverts likely --
23 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
24 JIM KLUG: -- pipelines failure to
25 release toxic --

1 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
2 JIM KLUG: Thank you.
3 DENNIS ANDREW, SR.: Good afternoon.
4 My name is Dennis Andrew, Senior. I'm from the village
5 of New Stuyahok, Alaska, on the Nushagak River. And if
6 the mine goes through there, we'll be first affected on
7 the Nushagak River.
8 But I'm the tribal chief, president. I also sit on
9 our (inaudible) board, plus I sit on Bristol Bay Native
10 Association, and plus CSC, Community School Committee for
11 our (inaudible) school.
12 And the population of New Stuyahok is 510, and 110
13 percent is subsistence users. We depend on our land
14 there; the water, the game, the berries. We depend on
15 it. It's just like our dinner table constantly.
16 As I speak right now, they're gathering. It's
17 started. Birds came up. (Inaudible) season is almost
18 wrapped up. Salmon are showing up. There's people from
19 the village that are already going down to Lewis Point to
20 our fish camp, waiting for our King Salmon that they
21 really depend on.
22 This Pebble Mine is very, very unacceptable. It's
23 not acceptable for biggest fishery in the world. Up and
24 down the Nushagak, a lot of villages and stuff, we depend
25 on subsistence, hundred and ten percent or more for

1 years, from way back from sailboat fishing days. Now
2 we're improving our salmon (inaudible), cooling our fish
3 down. Market is coming back up. We need that salmon to
4 continue so our grandchildren could --
5 BETSY DANIELS: Thanks, Dennis.
6 DENNIS ANDREW, SR.: Thank you.
7 JOEL WEBSTER: Hi, my name is Joel
8 Webster. I'm with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
9 Partnership. We're a national hunting and fishing
10 conservation organization that works in partnership with
11 other sporting organizations and rank and file hunters
12 and anglers.
13 And I came from Missoula, Montana, today because of
14 the importance of the Bristol Bay fishery not only for
15 Alaskans but for sportsmen across America. And, you
16 know, where I come from in Montana, western Montana, is
17 known as the tribal capitol of the west, but all the
18 serious anglers I know in Montana dream of fishing for
19 trophy rainbows and Dollys and salmon in the Bristol Bay
20 area of Alaska. And those who have been there know that
21 this resource is too special to be developed.
22 And Bristol Bay area is also important for big game.
23 This mine poses threats for bear, moose, and caribou
24 hunting. And not only would an industrialized habitat
25 harm this spot, but it paves the way for future

1 development that would result in a maze of roads that
2 would fragment important habitat and impact hunting for
3 generations to come.
4 And as pointed out by the Bristol Bay watershed
5 assessment, this mine would do serious harm for this
6 fishery, and it's time for the Obama administration to
7 basically use its authority under the Clean Water Act to
8 protect Bristol Bay.
9 Thank you.
10 JASON METROKIN: Thank you. My name
11 is Jason Metrokin. I'm a shareholder, as well as
12 president and CEO, to Bristol Bay Native Corporation. We
13 appreciate the EPA's efforts to ensure balanced science
14 that is at the forefront of decisions that will determine
15 the immediate and long-term viability of Bristol Bay.
16 Salmon is the lifeblood of our region. In 2009,
17 after several years of information gathering, BBNC took a
18 position to protect the fishery by opposing the Pebble
19 Mine project.
20 The risk associated with the project have estimated
21 as having nearly eleven billion tons of mine waste
22 located at the headwaters of the world's largest and
23 potentially last wild salmon run. This are far too great
24 a risk for us to accept. An overwhelming majority of our
25 shareholders, including residents of Bristol Bay, oppose

1 the project, as well. In fact, a study last fall
2 indicated the majority of voting Alaskans oppose this
3 project.
4 In almost any development project, there will be
5 opposition. To my knowledge, this is the first time
6 where the proponents are in the minority.
7 Is it prudent to say that we oppose this project
8 without having seen a final plan? The fact is, we were
9 told by developers from day one the project would be an
10 open-pit mine so large that it could be seen from the
11 moon.
12 We know where the deposit is located, the deposit
13 type, and its potential size. As an Alaskan, I must
14 admit I get leery when the Federal Government involves
15 itself in local decision-making, but the feds do have a
16 role in permitting oversight.
17 In this case, your role is to ensure that dredge and
18 fill material permits are regulated to prohibit discharge
19 into salmon spawning habitat that is toxic to aquatic
20 life and would require perpetual treatment. You have
21 that legal authority, and this draft study supports it.
22 They have said the EPA can't possibly understand the
23 breadth of development impacts over only one year of
24 study. Conversely, it's hard for me to fathom that
25 foreign companies claim --

1 BETSY DANIELS: Thanks, Jason.
2 GASPAR PERRICONE: My name is Gaspar
3 Perricone, and I am the codirector of Bull Moose
4 Sportsman's Alliance based out of Denver, Colorado. We
5 are a national sportsman organization, dedicated to the
6 traditions/opportunities of hunters and anglers
7 throughout the United States.
8 It seems that all too often, we approach the
9 (inaudible) between development and the protection of our
10 national resources, our land, water and wildlife, as
11 (inaudible). And I think in many situations, that
12 decision is a false dichotomy.
13 There's numerous examples of where wildlife and
14 development coexist in a very symbiotic fashion. I'm
15 here today to say, however, though, the Bristol Bay
16 fishery and the proposed Pebble Mine is not one of those
17 areas that can coexist in a manner in which both will
18 flourish.
19 Bristol Bay is obviously one of the largest salmon
20 fisheries in the world. It has been prized by hunters
21 and anglers for over a century and is a truly unique
22 treasure that's part of our American heritage, and it
23 would be a shame to see that go.
24 Unfortunately, the proposed Pebble Mine would put
25 this one-of-a-kind fishery at incredible risk,

1 threatening not only the native Alaskans that depend on
2 the livelihood -- depend on it for their livelihood, but
3 also a keystone of the Alaska economy.
4 The fact of the matter is that the EPA's watershed
5 assessment clearly demonstrates that any type of such a
6 development will have a serious impact on the largest
7 Sockeye salmon fishery in the world. Certainly it isn't
8 something that I think is worth bargaining with.
9 So as a result of this release, we as sportsmen and
10 the sportsmen community have come together for a single
11 ask for EPA and Obama administration, and that ask is
12 respectfully this: that you guys implement commonsense
13 solutions that would regulate the proposal of the Bristol
14 Bay mine and utilize your authority under 404(c) of the
15 Clean Water Act.
16 And let me conclude by saying this: if fidelity to
17 land, water, and wildlife is the statutory mission of
18 this agency, then I think surely the guiding philosophy
19 and the guiding thought has got to be that of a faithful
20 devotion to that unwritten statute that we hand down the
21 state of our natural world to our grandchildren improved
22 and not impaired in value.
23 PETER ANDREW: Good afternoon. I
24 don't know if it's on.
25 Good afternoon, Dennis. Thank you for the

1 opportunity here on behalf of the shareholders of BBNC.
2 My name is Peter Andrew and I'm a director of BBNC; also
3 a director of one of the local utilities in Dillingham.
4 I thank you for the assessment. Thank you. And it
5 correlates with everything that our people in Bristol Bay
6 feel that would happen to our folks and to our rivers and
7 to our fish. I will be asking the EPA to please do the
8 404(c) on behalf of all the fish, on behalf of the
9 people, on behalf of our culture, on behalf of the people
10 that are not here yet; our kids' kids and their kids.
11 We've had a wonderful commercial fishery that has
12 been happening for at least 135 years, and we've also, my
13 people, have depended on resource for over 10,000 years.
14 So I thank you for your time. We'll probably have
15 some more time later. So thank you.
16 ROB MASONIS: Good afternoon. My name
17 is Rob Masonis. I'm the vice president for Western
18 Conservation at Trout Unlimited.
19 TU is a national conservation organization of
20 concerned anglers who are dedicated to the conservation
21 of North America's salmon and trout and the watersheds
22 where they are found. There are over 150,000 members
23 across the country, including in Alaska, and over 4,000
24 in Washington State. Our members travel to Bristol Bay
25 to fish and enjoy the spectacular experience of Bristol

1 Bay's (inaudible).
2 Trout Unlimited commends EPA for the draft watershed
3 assessment, which is a solid scientific analysis that is
4 corroborated by the independent scientific analysis the
5 TU and the Wild Salmon Center released in February. Both
6 analyses show clearly the large-scale mining would
7 destroy salmon travel habitat, water quality, and present
8 a significant risk of catastrophic destruction to Bristol
9 Bay's prolific salmon and trout populations.
10 This population fuel the vibrant sustainable fishing
11 economies of Bristol Bay, which are worth hundreds of
12 millions of dollars annually and provide over 14,000
13 jobs. Because of this great threat, TU has played a lead
14 role in organizing 500 hunting and fishing groups and
15 businesses across the U.S. to put in writing their
16 opposition to large-scale mining in Bristol Bay.
17 Trout Unlimited is not (inaudible) development.
18 With the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, we've developed
19 a detailed proposal that identifies the conditions under
20 which responsible development could occur that does not
21 put Bristol Bay salmon and its salmon-fueled economy at
22 risk. We provided that document to EPA.
23 In closing, if ever there was a case in which EPA
24 should exercise its clear authority under the Clean Water
25 Act to prevent harmful development, this is it. By

1 acting now to prohibit large-scale mining in Bristol Bay,
2 EPA will protect the environment and a thriving salmon-
3 based economy, while providing (inaudible) to all
4 interests and saving large sums of private and taxpayer
5 money that would be required to process other
6 applications that would ultimately be denied.
7 BETSY DANIELS: Thanks, Rob.
8 ROB MASONIS: This is good leadership
9 and good government.
10 Thank you.
11 GEORGE KEEFE: My name is George
12 Keefe. I live in Edmonds, Washington, and I'm a
13 backpacker and a retired CPA.
14 I am thrilled by the pristine beauty of the
15 Northwest. Next month, I'm going backpacking along the
16 Olympia Peninsula's Elwha River to celebrate the largest
17 dam removal project in the U.S. That is a triumph for
18 native people and for the environment and for all who
19 want their children and grandchildren to have the same
20 thrills.
21 I am very concerned that the triumph on the Elwha
22 River may be jeopardized by the world's largest earthen
23 steel and concrete dam proposed near Bristol Bay. The
24 tailings dam of 740 feet high, 4.3 miles in length, if
25 built, would be three times larger than the Three Gorges

1 Dam in China, which is built of steel and concrete, not
2 mere earth.
3 A tailings dam must last forever. Seismic mapping
4 is incomplete in the Pebble Mine region. Two U.S.
5 Geologic Survey publications differ in where they map the
6 fault, but both suggest the Castle Mountain/Lake Clark
7 fault may run within five miles of Pebble Mine. However,
8 the mine developer claims the fault is 18 miles away and
9 the structures are currently designed to withstand an
10 earthquake at that distance.
11 If the fault runs five miles from the mine, the
12 force can be three times greater from the same
13 earthquake. Even the late Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska,
14 usually a strong proponent of resource extraction
15 projects, declared in 2007 his opposition to the Pebble
16 Mine proposal.
17 I urge the EPA to use its power under Section 404(c)
18 of the Clean Water Act to prohibit development of the
19 Pebble Mine as currently proposed.
20 RICARDO RUBY: Well, it had to happen,
21 I have a very different voice.
22 You don't realize it, but all this white hair is a
23 steel (inaudible), so I can stand some (inaudible).
24 I am puzzled that this event is happening now,
25 because the area was identified by the geologic survey

1 50, 60 years ago as the largest and most valuable
2 mineralized zone in the United States -- excuse me -- in
3 the North American continent.
4 The State of Alaska has ordered twice to declare the
5 Pebble area a mining zone. Senator Stevens changed his
6 mind. He spoke against it and (inaudible) better and was
7 in favor of it.
8 I think a very significant element for the EPA to
9 consider and everybody to consider is that your study
10 encompasses an enormous area, and the Pebble property is
11 just a fraction of that. There are mining claims outside
12 the Pebble area, and they could multiply things
13 dramatically.
14 The feeling of the company, of which I'm an investor
15 and also a long-term member, Trout Unlimited --
16 BETSY DANIELS: Okay, thanks Ricardo.
17 You can submit your full comments online.
18 RICARDO RUBY: (Inaudible) the
19 company, (inaudible) bar has been set so high, nobody
20 else will be able to do it.
21 BETSY DANIELS: Okay. Thank you.
22 CARL BEVIS: I'm Carl Bevis. Just
23 more a comment along kind of, I guess, a systems line and
24 probability.
25 When you look at the failure rates, the failure

1 rates of some of the systems associated with this
2 relative to, say, public transportation, if public
3 transportation had failure rates on this order, you would
4 never get on it. You would never get on the bus or you
5 wouldn't get in your car, let alone get in an airplane.
6 So until such time that failure rates of such
7 enormous systems and structures can be shown to be on the
8 order of magnitudes of public transportation, where human
9 life is definitely at risk, it shouldn't be even be
10 considered.
11 That's all.
12 LARRY BARRETT: Good morning -- or
13 good afternoon, actually.
14 My name is Larry Barrett. I'm the director of
15 operations for Far Bank Enterprises, which is a holding
16 company that owns and operates three popular fly fishing
17 brands; RIO, Redington, and Sage.
18 In aggregate, Far Bank employs 250 people and we
19 manufacture fly rods across the Sound on Bainbridge
20 Island and fly line in Idaho Falls, Idaho. We immensely
21 enjoy the fact that we are able to make our products in
22 the United States, and we realize the direct connection
23 to healthy fisheries and our economy and jobs.
24 We care about Bristol Bay in a number of ways.
25 First, our customers care. Many of them have been able

1 to enjoy their (inaudible) sports fishing there. And for
2 those who haven't been, it is a destination that many
3 anglers yearn to go from all over the globe.
4 Most important to us is about 20 percent of the fly
5 rods that we produce on Bainbridge Island and 10 percent
6 of the fly lines that we manufacture make a trip to
7 Bristol Bay.
8 After reviewing the EPA's watershed assessment, we
9 know that salmon streams and habitat will be destroyed.
10 Isn't that enough for us to say no to Pebble Mine?
11 If the Pebble Mine is constructed, my business in
12 the lower 48 and others will be negatively impacted and
13 jobs will be lost.
14 I want to urge our leaders and EPA to protect this
15 one-of-a-kind resource that drives economic value well
16 beyond Alaska. Please keep to the timeline and maintain
17 the July 23rd deadline for public comment. Timely
18 progress towards finalizing the assessment is critical.
19 Thank you.
20 KIM WILLIAMS: Thank you.
21 I'm the executive director of Nunamta Aulukestai,
22 which is a Yupik word that means "Caretakers of Our
23 Land." We have a membership of ten village corporations
24 in Bristol Bay and nine tribal governments. I am also
25 the third chief of the (inaudible) Tribal Council, and

1 more importantly, I'm a mother of six.
2 I want to thank the EPA for doing the watershed
3 assessment. I sat in on the EPA technical team for my
4 tribe and watched them participate with EPA's team as
5 they interacted with state, federal, and tribal
6 officials.
7 My tribe is also on record requesting action under
8 the Clean Water Act, Section 404(c) that prevents large-
9 scale mining in the watershed. We request that you
10 finalize this watershed assessment and move into a 404(c)
11 process.
12 But you want comments on the draft, so I want to
13 give you my comments. And I may have more as I continue
14 reading this Volume 1 and the executive summary.
15 In Section 8, on the integrated risk
16 characterization chapter, tailings dam failure, I guess
17 the question that I have is, you put 28 percent, 30
18 percent impact at the Koktuli River and 10 to 20 percent
19 loss in the Mulchatna, but as the mine life continues --
20 or the mine scenario continues, as you have hydrology
21 (inaudible) to other streams, I think your number is
22 slightly low. It should be a little bit higher, and so I
23 ask that you take a look at that section.
24 Another section on the report, Section 2, Alaska
25 native cultures, where you list 14 communities in 2.2.5,

1 I counted 16 communities. And some in Bristol Bay will
2 say Dillingham, of which I live in, is not a part of the
3 watershed, but I am here to tell you, my council believes
4 we are part of this watershed, and we are not going away
5 in giving you our comments.
6 The other final comment that I want to make is, in
7 Bristol Bay, we are very polarized on this issue. And
8 for us, when we have people going out and telling our
9 elders to sign petitions and to extend comments and
10 telling them that they can't throw their fish guts in the
11 water, we believe that that needs to be stopped -- or EPA
12 needs to take that into consideration when you get any
13 kind of a questionnaire coming to you.
14 ELAINE PACKARD: I chair the Water and
15 Salmon Committee for the Washington State chapter of the
16 Sierra Club. And one of our primary concerns is to
17 protect our iconic salmon, their habitat, and the Bristol
18 Bay residents who rely on the salmon for their livelihood
19 and cultural heritage.
20 Because of this, we are an ally in opposing the
21 proposed mine. We strongly support EPA's protection
22 under 404(c).
23 I will say that I have never been fortunate enough
24 to physically go to Bristol Bay, but I recently showed
25 the documentary "Red Gold" for Sierra Club members and it

1 was a -- I heard both sides in this documentary, the pro
2 and the people against the mine. And everyone who was
3 watching that film came away very moved by the beauty of
4 the area and very committed to preserving what exists
5 right now.
6 Thank you.
7 CHRISTINA SALMON: My name is
8 Christina Salmon. I am the granddaughter and John and
9 Mary Olympic. I was born and raised in Igiugig, Alaska.
10 I currently serve on the Igiugig Village Council and the
11 Igiugig Native Corporation.
12 As I stand here in front of you today, my mind isn't
13 really here. It's at home with my children that I've
14 left for the fourth time this month on Pebble-related
15 causes. It's on my subsistence net I was supposed to
16 mend. It's on getting fish ready (inaudible), the birch
17 trees we were supposed to cut, it's on my cabin and boat
18 rentals, it's on my clients I get in seven days for the
19 sport fishing opener. It's on my school board meeting
20 I'll be missing. It's on canning jars, bug spray for the
21 baby, and another toy I'd better get for the quilt trip
22 present.
23 Standing here in front of you today, talking about a
24 mining giant threatening my entire way of life wasn't
25 what I ever could have planned for, but I do know that

1 being here is where I need to be.
2 We weren't raised with a lot of money. We would
3 technically be labeled by the western society as poor,
4 but never once growing up did that thought ever cross our
5 innocent little minds. We had food in the freezer, we
6 had hand-me-down clothes, and we had the basics for
7 survival. And we were the happiest, dirtiest, most care-
8 free kids you've ever met.
9 So don't be fooled into thinking that we are poor
10 people who can't exist without Pebble. We have managed
11 just fine for the past 10,000 years without them.
12 In your assessment, you mention ten potential dam
13 failures under the mine scenario. To those of us who
14 have lived there for over 10,000 years, each and every
15 one of those "maybes" is not a risk we are willing to
16 take for future generations and the survival of our
17 culture.
18 I'd like to thank you for taking the time to listen
19 to me today. I'd also like to commend EPA on their
20 dedication, unbiased research, and constant open
21 conversations with people with Bristol Bay.
22 Thank you.
23 TYLER EDGAR: Hi, my name is Tyler
24 Edgar and I am here today representing the National
25 Council of Churches. The National Council of Churches

1 (inaudible) 30,000 Christian denominations and more than
2 40 million people around the U.S.
3 First, I bring greetings from his grace, the Right
4 Reverend Benjamin, archbishop of the Diocese of Alaska
5 for the Orthodox Church in America. He'd hoped to be
6 here today but was unable to adjust his travel
7 accordingly.
8 Archbishop Benjamin (inaudible) seminary in Kodiak,
9 Alaska for (inaudible), and has worked closely with the
10 Alaska native community around Bristol Bay, many of who
11 are orthodox. The NCC and its member community are
12 grateful for the work of the EPA to better understand the
13 science and processes that have allowed Bristol Bay to
14 become the most prolific and diverse Sockeye salmon
15 fishery in the world and home to one of the last salmon
16 subsistence cultures.
17 The scientific evidence you have provided reaffirms
18 that protecting Bristol Bay is in keeping with our
19 Christian call to protect creation and seek justice for
20 the most vulnerable and for our neighbors.
21 Your assessment provides conclusive evidence that
22 the proposed Pebble Mine and other large-scale mining in
23 its least intrusive form will devastate significant
24 portions of salmon habitat, significant portions of God's
25 creation that provides jobs and livelihoods for

1 thousands.
2 In light of your scientific findings, we urge you to
3 do all that you can to protect Bristol Bay in a quick and
4 timely fashion, using the authority provided to you by
5 the Clean Water Act.
6 I ask Archbishop Benjamin if he had a message he
7 wanted me to share with you. He sent me this: The
8 choices we make today with regard to Pebble will impact
9 generations. We will be blessed or cursed by them. We
10 must do all that we can to protect this beautiful and
11 bountiful part of God's earth.
12 Thanks so much for the opportunity to share
13 comments.
14 BRUCE HAM: I thank you for the
15 opportunity. Dennis, thank you for the science. I would
16 like to suggest that along with the science, that you
17 append the report with a historical understanding of how
18 we've remediated our fishing problems here in the lower
19 48 states.
20 I am a surgeon by trade. I do high-risk surgery and
21 I have to manage benefits and risks every day. And I am
22 also a grandfather, and I also have a Horizon. I love to
23 fish. I've been a former whitewater guide, and I would
24 like my children to be able to enjoy the rivers of
25 Bristol Bay that I have had an opportunity to enjoy, and

1 I would like to see that for a longer horizon than a
2 mine.
3 And just a few disclosures. I'm probably one of
4 the few people here that actually owns mining claims
5 (inaudible) Oregon. I grew up in northeastern Oregon,
6 and in northeastern Oregon, we used to have many streams
7 with lots of salmon, lots of steelhead, and now you can
8 count on one hand the number of reds in the Lostine
9 River; maybe more than a couple of hands the number of
10 reds in the (inaudible) River. And these are areas that
11 have had relatively low impact.
12 I don't think that historically we've done a good
13 job of protecting ourselves by government, and I would
14 hope that we could actually put some kind of it into the
15 report that looks at this from a historical perspective.
16 That's what we've been able to do.
17 And I appreciate the opportunity to offer you that
18 suggestion.
19 ROBERT METZGER: Hi, I'm Robert
20 Metzger. I'm a member of the Bellevue/Issaquah,
21 Washington Trout Unlimited.
22 I am here to speak against the proposed Pebble Mine.
23 In my life, I have lived in the mountains of Montana and
24 Colorado for 16 years and have seen firsthand the damage
25 to the environment operating mines have and are still

1 doing (inaudible).
2 Alaska is our last mostly untouched land, and the
3 Pebble Mine would do irreversible damage to another
4 beautiful state and harming ancient way of life in the
5 Alaska Native American that depends on the clean
6 watershed that Pebble Mine would destroy.
7 Please don't allow the Pebble Mine to open.
8 MICHAEL McDONALD: Hi. I'd first like
9 to start off by saying I find it very ironic that the
10 very first hearing about a proposed mine in Alaska is in
11 Seattle, Washington. I just find it a little fishy.
12 But I'd like to go on from there and say, this is a
13 very valuable mineral deposit, and as we continue to
14 develop our country, we're going to demand these
15 resources, especially as we continue to explore new
16 opportunities of renewal land resources.
17 Wind turbines take a tremendous amount of copper.
18 If we want to keep continuing down the road of exploring
19 those technologies, I think that this would be something
20 we should definitely look into, especially with the track
21 record that other countries have with their environmental
22 track record.
23 I think, you know, as Americans, we hold that very
24 near and dear to our heart, and with all the rules and
25 regulations in place, that this can be done in a safe and

1 efficient manner.
2 Thank you very much.
3 MICHAEL O'LEARY: Hi. My name is
4 Michael O'Leary. I just want to thank the administration
5 and staff of the EPA for putting this report together. I
6 had a quick chance to review it this afternoon and
7 appreciate what's in it.
8 I'm going to make a personal biographical story as
9 to why I'm here today, and then I'm also going to connect
10 that to Pages 20 through 25 of the report.
11 35 years ago, my father and grandfather taught me
12 how to fish in the tributaries above the coastal fork of
13 the Willamette River.
14 In 1990, Oregon State University researchers started
15 to connect the idea that fish tissue that was sampled out
16 of that area had elevated levels of arsenic and mercury.
17 A very short period of time later, it was tied
18 specifically up to the Black Butte mine, which, in 2010,
19 was finally declared as an EPA Superfund site, as the
20 owners had abandoned it. Tailings were washed out
21 downstream and were collected.
22 In the year 2000, my grandfather passed away with
23 many years of onset of neurological conditions which were
24 diagnosed as a combination of Alzheimer's and
25 Parkinson's, which are also indicative of periods of

1 exposure to mercury -- or associated with that.
2 In the assessment, you describe a great number of
3 potential impacts that are catastrophic -- tailings ponds
4 washing down the stream, pipelines, failing -- at
5 predictable rates, for predictable reasons. It's
6 unacceptable, in my opinion, to put such a beautiful area
7 at risk with such -- risks of such elevated levels.
8 Please protect Bristol Bay. Please say no to the
9 Pebble Mine. Thank you very much.
10 SEAN MAGEE: Thank you. My name is
11 Sean McGee. I'm here today on behalf of Northern Dynasty
12 Minerals, 50 percent owner of the Pebble project. I'm
13 also here representing our shareholders, some three-
14 quarters of which are residents of the United States.
15 I'd like to begin by saying that when we first
16 learned the EPA was going to conduct a watershed
17 assessment, we welcomed it. We welcomed it because in
18 initiating the study, the EPA had rejected the notion of
19 issuing a preemptive veto of the project, because there
20 simply wasn't enough information to do so. We agreed
21 with that conclusion then and we agree with it today.
22 However, we felt that the watershed assessment also
23 presented a unique opportunity to inject some science
24 into this discussion; one that's been characterized by
25 extremely volatile, politicized, and emotional debate.

1 Unfortunately, that hasn't happened. The draft
2 Bristol Bay watershed assessment study is a fundamentally
3 flawed document that reflects more on the state of
4 politics and advocacy than on science, and that's a
5 terrible shame.
6 We're hopeful that the final report will present a
7 more objective and informed review. If not, the EPA will
8 have only succeeded in exacerbating the flames of
9 controversy around Pebble, one that has pitted families
10 against one another, communities against one another, and
11 sectors against one another.
12 Why do we believe the Bristol Bay watershed
13 assessment is flawed? Principally because it is
14 premature. By the EPA's own admission, it has evaluated
15 the ultimate hypothetical project, a project has that not
16 been defined and for which key environmental litigation
17 strategies have not been presented.
18 You don't have to be a scientist to understand that
19 you cannot assess what you do not know. That's why every
20 resource development project in this country is assessed
21 by federal and state regulators after a proponent has
22 finished his studies and presented them.
23 Am I running out of time?
24 BETSY DANIELS: Ten seconds.
25 SEAN MAGEE: We are at a point of

1 taking a comprehensive review and we will present our
2 science in weeks to come. We're hopeful that the final
3 report will shed light on this issue.
4 We're very concerned --
5 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
6 SEAN MAGEE: Thank you for your time.
7 TREFON ANGASAN: Thank you. Thank you
8 for the opportunity to speak today. I represent the
9 Alaska Peninsula Corporation, which is a merger of five
10 village corporations in the Bristol Bay region.
11 I appreciate BBNC coming here today, but I would
12 like to say that they don't speak for the Alaska
13 Peninsula Corporation. We have stated that in the past
14 and will continue to state that.
15 The only reason why we're here today is because we
16 are very concerned that the timelines that you have
17 submitted for public comment are not in sync with the
18 needs that are apparent in Bristol Bay at this point.
19 We know that -- we've heard Dennis talk, Dennis from
20 New Stuyahok, talk about how the salmon and herring is
21 winding up. His people are gathering to go down river,
22 and I appreciate that. I appreciate, you know, the
23 native way of life, and that's always been something that
24 we all aspire to maintaining.
25 But I think that we, as a land representative of an

1 organization that owns 400,000 acres of surface land in
2 the Bristol Bay region, 200,000 of those acres that are
3 adjacent to Pebble prospect, we're very concerned that we
4 don't know enough about what the impact is going to be on
5 the holdings of the Alaska Peninsula Corporation.
6 We take no position on Pebble. I mean, Pebble has
7 to meet a whole higher threshold, a standard, that we
8 aren't familiar with at this point because this is a new
9 environment for us -- am I done?
10 BETSY DANIELS: Yes, thank you.
11 TREFON ANGASAN: Thank you.
12 RON ARNOLD: My name is Ron Arnold.
13 You'll have to pardon my voice. I'm recovering from a
14 surgery that wasn't on my voice, but it bungled it up
15 anyway.
16 I'm the executive vice president of a nonprofit
17 group in Bellevue, Washington, just across the lake,
18 called The Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise. We
19 attempt to do what the name says, very simply.
20 One of the comments that we have, and the only one
21 here today, is that we feel that this report -- and you
22 asked for comments about the science -- the science is
23 supposed to be impartial. And a risk/benefit assessment,
24 which your study is, is only half done. We've seen the
25 risks, but I don't recall anything about the benefits. I

1 may have missed something, but I don't think so. This is
2 about the five hundredth one of these hearings that I've
3 been at on various things in my unfortunately long
4 career.
5 I would hope that EPA will finish this report by
6 turning out a benefits section that is as extensive and
7 hypothetical as the present one.
8 Thank you.
9 MARY ANN PEASE: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Mary Ann Pease. I am a 25-year Alaska resident.
11 I am married to a lifelong native Alaskan and have two
12 sons, ages 21 and 9. Both of our sons were born and
13 raised in Alaska and we all reside there today.
14 I am personally astounded that EPA has chosen
15 Seattle as the starting point for hearings on the draft
16 watershed assessment for an Alaskan project, an Alaskan
17 issue. When I heard that this was taking place in
18 Seattle, I insisted on staying an extra day on a business
19 trip to point this out.
20 The Pebble project, if allowed to go through a
21 rigorous permitting process, is a project based in Alaska
22 that positively impacts our economic future, jobs,
23 revenues to our state, and represents responsible
24 resource development.
25 The draft Bristol Bay watershed assessment process

1 and any potential 404(c) actions which may result from it
2 are of concern at this time because not only is the
3 process rushed and premature, but there is not even a
4 single permit application regarding development of Pebble
5 in front of the state or federal governments, nor has the
6 NEPA process been initiated.
7 The design for Pebble, including the very important
8 environmental mitigation strategies, have not been
9 finalized. A preemptive veto of the Pebble project is no
10 different than a preemptive approval.
11 The watershed assessment and potential 404 actions
12 conflict with federal and state laws and represents
13 another unwarranted federal infringement on management of
14 Alaska's lands.
15 The watershed assessment and potential 404(c)
16 actions discourage investment in Alaska resources and
17 takes a just-say-no approach to new economic development,
18 jobs, and our state's future viability for revenue stream
19 diversification.
20 Should the EPA be successful in this effort, it
21 could become a mechanism to squelch large-scale projects
22 in all sectors; projects that are now quite needed for
23 private sector job creation and economic vitality.
24 Unfortunately, the outcome of this meeting and this
25 assessment feels predetermined.

1 BETSY DANIELS: Thanks, Mary Ann.
2 MARY ANN PEASE: Thank you. That is a
3 conclusion looking for a study.
4 LISA REIMERS: I request that you
5 extend the comment period at least 120 days to give this
6 300-plus page report time to be digested by many people.
7 This report was released less than 12 days ago, and it is
8 still pretty much on my computer as we speak, since it's
9 so long.
10 The impacts we've heard a lot about today on the
11 404(c) from the Clean Water Act, I don't know if
12 everybody understands the long-term impact for
13 development; not just for the Pebble Mine but all
14 developments everywhere in all states.
15 This opens up the potential for the largest land
16 grab in the Federal Government we've ever seen. Or
17 should I say, the EPA is opening this and not elected
18 bodies of officials. This is coming from an agency and
19 not our elected officials.
20 Thank you.
21 MICHAEL McDONALD: Hey, Dennis, when
22 you opened this thing up, your opening statement was an
23 apology for the short notice on for this meeting. To
24 echo what was mentioned earlier, I think it's very
25 important you open the window for this hearing period.

1 You stated the people were loading up in the fleet
2 to head up to Alaska to fish. I've heard multiple people
3 talk about their people getting ready to go out and fish,
4 and yet we're going to shut this thing down on July 23rd,
5 I think you said?
6 I think you ought to consider opening that window so
7 that those that are out there fishing don't have to make
8 the choice between working for a living or coming to a
9 hearing like this.
10 Thank you.
11 LISA REIMERS: Dennis, when you opened
12 up the meeting, you failed to mention there are other
13 leaders that are closest to the Pebble project, me being
14 one of them.
15 My name is Lisa Reimers. I'm from Iliamna, Alaska,
16 15 miles away from the proposed Pebble project. I'm here
17 representing a landholder, Iliamna Natives Limited, which
18 owns 90,000 acres, and also the Government Tribal
19 Council, Iliamna Village Council.
20 And a lot of the tribes that are there in the area
21 the own the surface land have not come out opposed to the
22 Pebble project. And so I think that you need to take
23 into consideration they would like this time extended.
24 And what I find very odd is that we're here in
25 Seattle, and a lot of the commercial fisherman from

1 Seattle, Oregon, are dictating our lives and they're not
2 thinking about the human factor. There are people that
3 live in these villages that need jobs. How would they
4 like it if we came down and dictated in their lands and
5 their waters?
6 This is very emotional for me because at the end of
7 the day, our people are up there trying to figure out how
8 to survive. We don't depend on commercial fishing,
9 subsistence. It's a choice. We still need a cash
10 economy, and we'd like you to extend the time period.
11 Thank you.
12 MICHAEL SCHUT: Hi. My name is
13 Michael Schut. I'm actually from Seattle, as well. I am
14 the Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer for the
15 Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church has 2.4 million
16 members and more than 7,000 congregations around the
17 United States.
18 First and foremost, I bring greetings from Bishop
19 Rickel, the Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia,
20 which includes Seattle and Western Washington. Bishop
21 Rickel could not be here today but sends his gratitude
22 for the work of the EPA.
23 The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church,
24 Katharine Jefferts Schori, is both a scientist and a
25 priest and believes that both science and religion are

1 critical to our understanding of the world and our goals
2 in it.
3 Bishop Jefferts Schori frequently talks about
4 science and religion providing two ways of knowing/
5 understanding the beauty of creation, and she notes that
6 we have better depth perception when we use both.
7 The scientific assessment conducted by the EPA
8 provides that depth perception that we in the faith
9 community did not have before when it comes to Bristol
10 Bay.
11 As Bishop Rickel and four others noted in the letter
12 to the EPA last year, Bristol Bay is a place of rare
13 beauty and abundance that can only be found in this part
14 of God's creation. Alaska natives have sustainably
15 coexisted with creation for thousands of years.
16 Our faith tells us Bristol Bay is important,
17 important as a part of God's creation, important to
18 Alaska native culture, and important if we are to live
19 out our call as Christians to keep, protect, and care for
20 God's earth and the neighbors.
21 The EPA's assessment is in keeping with biblical
22 teaching that reflect the beauty and bounty of God's
23 earth. However, and maybe more importantly, the
24 scientific assessment also provides us with knowledge of
25 the mechanisms and systems that make Bristol Bay the

1 place that it is, the place that we believe is worthy of
2 protection.
3 We urge you to use Section 404 of the Clean Water
4 Act, as you travel around Bristol Bay, to preempt,
5 provide protection from inappropriate development in this
6 watershed.
7 Thank you for this opportunity.
8 BOB WALDROP: Thank you very much for
9 holding the hearing. We appreciate it very much.
10 I'm Bob Waldrop. I'm the executive director of the
11 Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association.
12 That's an association of about 1850 permit holders in the
13 drift net fishery of Bristol Bay.
14 Our association was among the first to seek your
15 interest in this issue, and we are sincerely grateful for
16 the work and the science embedded in the draft watershed
17 assessment.
18 The draft validates initial concerns on many levels
19 and on so many points, that they are almost impossible
20 for me to summarize right now. So I'll have to do that
21 in my written comments.
22 In Bristol Bay, the nation's waters include some of
23 the best remaining salmon habitat in the world.
24 Significantly, this is also good habitat for jobs and
25 economic development, supporting an estimated 14,000 jobs

1 in Bristol Bay. Holders of 2700 of those jobs reside
2 here in Washington State. So this truly is a national
3 issue by that measure.
4 The natural environment of Bristol Bay is the
5 general topic addressed by the draft watershed
6 assessment, but in Bristol Bay, the natural and the
7 cultural and seafood business environment are the same.
8 You protect one, you protect the other.
9 Good stewardship of the natural environment is
10 necessary to maintaining the existing and thriving
11 fishery.
12 Some say the EPA is the problem. It's not so, I
13 don't believe. The problem stems from the plans to dig
14 American's largest hard rock mine amidst the largest
15 Sockeye salmon fishery in the world.
16 It's our opinion that the science-based EPA process
17 is not the problem but, instead, defines a route to an
18 answer. We urge you to continue along the path started
19 with the watershed assessment and continue to follow the
20 trail laid down by good science and good thoughts.
21 Good science, such as expressed in the watershed
22 assessment, is one of the major reasons we have a healthy
23 salmon fishery in Bristol Bay. Our fisherman have
24 confidence that science will play a dominant role in
25 protecting the businesses and the enterprises.

1 Thank you very much.
2 MARK WASHBURN: Hello. My name is
3 Mark Washburn, and I am a journeyman electrician and I
4 work around the Washington area and I've also worked in
5 Oregon.
6 As an electrician, I have greatly seen the effects
7 of copper and other natural resources and their prices in
8 the construction industry, and I'm glad someone from the
9 construction industry can talk about this, because having
10 a mine of this magnitude, mining for copper, will really
11 affect the amount of jobs incoming into our industry.
12 Also, I think the EPA should try and work with the
13 Pebble Mining companies to develop instead of just trying
14 to stonewall them and stop the whole process. It seems
15 really premature and -- yes, that's all I have to say.
16 ABE WILLIAMS: Thank you. My name is
17 Abe Williams. I am from Alaska. I was born and raised
18 in King Salmon. I'm the president of a native
19 corporation there called Paug Vik. I'm also the
20 executive director of Nuna Resources.
21 As I look around the room here, I see some of my
22 fellow commercial fisherman that I fish nearby in Bristol
23 Bay, as well. I've fished there since the young age of
24 nine. Had I known this was going to be an anti-Pebble
25 pep rally, I might have razzled up the guys that were at

1 the Microsoft office and brought them over here.
2 But I really would like EPA to focus on putting
3 accurate science into the watershed assessment. And when
4 I read through the executive summary here, it really
5 frightens me that they have taken the steps that we see
6 out there currently in our communities right now that
7 have -- they just monger fear to folks to completely
8 oppose projects like this.
9 And our region is economically challenged, to the
10 point where our people is moving away, our native
11 cultures are moving away. And when your folks in the
12 native communities move away, that is when a culture
13 dies. Okay?
14 And we have this problem currently. We have schools
15 shutting down. We have things taking place that is
16 necessarily bad for our area. So I really want
17 sideboards put back into this process and I want due
18 process to take place here. It's very important, not
19 only for projects in Alaska but projects here in Seattle
20 and abroad the U.S.
21 I cannot stress enough how important it is to get
22 accurate science here. We're commenting on a watershed
23 assessment that is due peer review here. That peer
24 review should have taken place long ago, and then we
25 should be commenting on the materials that came from the

1 peer review.
2 It's insulting to Alaskans when this happens.
3 JONATHAN YOUNG: Hi. My name is
4 Jonathan.
5 I'm under the impression that the report is not done
6 because it hasn't been peer-reviewed. Is the report
7 going to change when it becomes peer-reviewed? And if it
8 changes, will we again have a chance to comment on it?
9 I would like to talk about it again after you peer-
10 review it.
11 Thank you.
12 MARK RUTHERFORD: Mark Rutherford
13 here. I'm the owner of Wild River Guide Company, an
14 established fly fishing business in Bristol Bay. I
15 appreciate the opportunity to comment to Dennis and Rick
16 and all the EPA.
17 I've carefully read the findings and believe the
18 overall EPA assessment accurately depicts the effects of
19 a large open-pit mine development in Bristol Bay. I've
20 considered the findings in relation to my experience in
21 the past three decades, where I've surveyed many dozens
22 of mines in Alaska and the Yukon territory and subarctic
23 (inaudible) tundra, and wetland habitats similar to the
24 mine site.
25 I concur with the EPA's findings that there's a high

1 likelihood of mine contaminants reaching salmon-bearing
2 streams/rivers/lakes during development and the post-
3 development in-perpetuity phases.
4 I think you've provided good analysis and
5 documentation for your findings. However, I offer my
6 opinion that the EPA findings significantly underestimate
7 degradation of the mine development on freshwater
8 resources by as much as an order of magnitude. The EPA
9 did not adequately address pipeline construction and
10 management, electrical grid construction, and road
11 construction.
12 My family and I depend upon the Bristol Bay salmon
13 for our livelihood. For more than 30 years, we've
14 depended upon salmon for our personal subsistence,
15 commercial harvest, and today for the sport fish guiding
16 business we own.
17 I want to comment on road and culvert failures in
18 particular. I'm very experienced with road construction
19 across the forest lands, road construction across tundra
20 lands, and roads through wetlands and waterways,
21 including (inaudible) roads.
22 Undertaking road construction across salmonid
23 streams or recharged wetlands in Bristol Bay is
24 extraordinarily shortsighted. I question the scientific
25 data used, which models a 33 to 60 percent chance of

1 culvert failure. In my opinion, it is closer to a
2 hundred percent.
3 Thank you.
4 JASON BRUNE: For the record, my name
5 is Jason Brune from Anchorage, Alaska. I serve as the
6 government relations and public affairs manager for
7 Anglo American U.S., a proud partner of the Pebble
8 Partnership.
9 Anglo American is one of the largest mining
10 companies in the world. In every location in which we
11 operate, we strive to generate lasting benefits. We have
12 a strong commitment to safety, operational excellence,
13 and sustainable development.
14 Anglo American's shareholder base is approximately
15 20 percent American, and our CEO, Cynthia Carol, is an
16 American woman who has previously worked as a geologist
17 in Alaska.
18 Anglo American's only major investment in the U.S.
19 today is at Pebble, and at year's end, we will have
20 invested over half a billion dollars on this project.
21 Anglo American is proud to stand with our partner in
22 the Pebble Limited Partnership, Northern Dynasty, today
23 in expressing our significant concerns about the Bristol
24 Bay watershed assessment.
25 I am not here today on behalf of the Pebble Limited

1 Partnership itself or on behalf of Northern Dynasty.
2 However, I believe that our partners share the views that
3 I will present to you here today.
4 I should also say at the outset, that Anglo American
5 accepts that the right to develop any mining project must
6 be earned. This is done over the course of the project's
7 development and in particular during the course of
8 permitting. Permitting is, thus, a critical process and
9 should never have any preordained outcome, positive or
10 negative. Anglo American accepts this. We are trying to
11 understand whether the EPA does.
12 As was said in (inaudible) testimony, the
13 combination of mining a hypothetical mine plan to assess
14 project effects, leaning heavily on environmental
15 activists or scientific information, and refusing to
16 consider the scientific work completed by Pebble as a
17 part of its environmental baseline document, has
18 contributed in no small part to the deep flaws inherent
19 in the draft report.
20 Meaningful judgments about Pebble and its effects it
21 may have on fish and water in Alaska cannot be made
22 before the project is fully designed, proposed, and
23 evaluated under NEPA. The EIS that will be prepared for
24 Pebble under NEPA will be fully informed by Pebble's
25 proposed development plan, its mitigation strategy --

1 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
2 JASON BRUNE: I'm almost done.
3 -- the U.S. and Alaska rigorous systems for
4 evaluating (inaudible) --
5 BETSY DANIELS: See, I don't have to
6 be the referee. You are.
7 BENJAMIN BLAKEY: Thank you for coming
8 here today for providing this opportunity to review your
9 assessment.
10 My name is Ben Blakey. I am a Bristol Bay fisherman
11 and a former fleet manager for Snopac Products based here
12 in Seattle. I live and grew up in Seattle, but I've
13 spent every summer in Bristol Bay since I was about five
14 years old.
15 I'm here today to voice my opposition to any large-
16 scale mining project in the Bristol Bay watershed and
17 voice my full support for the EPA's 404(c) process and
18 the watershed assessment of the potential mining impacts.
19 My family and I have worked in Bristol Bay for my
20 entire life and we hope to for many years to come. And
21 basically, this EPA assessment that we are talking about
22 today is, at its core, a risk assessment. And if we're
23 asking whether or not the potential benefits of mine
24 development in Bristol Bay watershed will outweigh the
25 risks, I just want to make this very clear that on behalf

1 of myself, my family, and the hundreds of other Bristol
2 Bay fisherman that could not be here today, we are
3 adamantly opposed to any mine development activity that
4 would put our salmon at risk.
5 So thank you for coming here today and for hearing
6 these comments.
7 JORDEN GREINER: Hello. My name is
8 Jorden Greiner. I was born and raised in Homer, Alaska,
9 and just finished my undergraduate degree in
10 international political economy at the University of
11 Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.
12 Like many Alaskans, I was raised in a family that
13 depends on fishing. Working on my Yupik father's charter
14 boat, I have deckhanded for the majority of my existence,
15 as a family tradition and to finance my education.
16 Starting with knowledge gained on the boat and
17 continuing with high school reports and my college senior
18 thesis, the proposed Pebble Mine has influenced my
19 academic and personal life in Alaska and here in
20 Washington. And just last year, Homer's 82 Bristol Bay
21 commercial fishermen contributed nearly $9 million of
22 gross earnings from the Bristol Bay's 2011 season alone.
23 Inevitably, the proposed mine has cast a dominant
24 shadow on my life and has propelled me to passionately
25 take action against it. Earlier this week, when I was

1 attempting to organize my testimony, I found it difficult
2 to narrow down the list of scientific and economic data
3 posed against the mine, not to mention the threat it
4 poses my family's way of life.
5 The abundance of negative claims makes it clear
6 that whether the mine should be developed isn't even a
7 question. For those of you involved in the process of
8 the mine, you know how deeply it would affect the people,
9 the land, the economy of Alaska and the rest of the
10 world.
11 As we have heard from the various testimony today,
12 there are endless reasons the Pebble Mine should be
13 stopped, reasons that are not only perilous but are also
14 quite obvious. It is time for the Obama administration
15 to stand up and protect Bristol Bay, American fishing
16 jobs, and the wildlife Alaskans depend on for subsistence
17 fishing and hunting. It can do so by using the authority
18 granted to the EPA under Section 404(c) of the Clean
19 Water Act to halt the development of this mine.
20 Thank you.
21 DAVID HARSILA: Thank you. Good
22 afternoon. My name is David Harsila. I'm here
23 representing fishermen that own and operate businesses
24 and vessels that fish the waters of Bristol Bay. I'm a
25 resident of our association AIFMA, the Alaska Independent

1 Fisherman's Marketing Association, which was formed by
2 commercial fishermen in 1966. And I'm here on our
3 fishermen's behalf, since they cannot be here.
4 AIFMA endorses the EPA 404(c) process and the
5 watershed assessment of potential mining impacts on
6 salmon ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska. After
7 reviewing as much of the material, our board has not
8 found inaccuracies in the report so far and does not
9 disagree with the content so far, but we will continue to
10 plow through the material and might have further comments
11 down the road here shortly.
12 Also, approximately 900 permits that fish the waters
13 of Bristol Bay are owned by Washington State residents.
14 The Bristol Bay fishery and related industries
15 substantially contribute to the economy of the state of
16 Washington. The economics of Bristol Bay are well
17 established and have been sustainable over time.
18 We urge the metallic sulfide mining within the
19 watershed of Bristol Bay be prohibited. Clearly the risk
20 of damage by the mining industry to the freshwater
21 habitat that salmon depend upon is too great, as most
22 likely the damage will be certain.
23 Some specific reasons: perpetual care and storage
24 of acid-generating rock waste and tailings; massive
25 dewatering of groundwater affecting streams; and the

1 inevitable releases of contamination, including dam
2 failure seepage, slurry, and fuel pipeline failures.
3 Thank you.
4 JOEL REYNOLDS: Thank you very much.
5 My name is Joel Reynolds, senior attorney with the
6 National Resources Defense Council and appearing on
7 behalf of its 1.3 million members and activists.
8 First, we applaud the EPA for exercising its
9 authority in undertaking the watershed assessment, and we
10 applaud Senator Cantwell for her leadership in supporting
11 it.
12 I urge you not to be deterred by claims from Anglo
13 American and Pebble Limited Partnership of an EPA
14 overreach or that this is rushed or that this is
15 premature. One suspects that any science not controlled
16 by PLP will be considered an overreach or fear mongering.
17 And the notion that the 404(c) process or the 104
18 process enacted by Congress does not comply with
19 principles of due process is just not supportable as a
20 matter of law.
21 Second, the watershed assessment is a highly
22 technical document with a great depth of scientific
23 analysis and detail, but in simple terms, it confirms
24 what the residents of the region have long understood:
25 that large-scale mining like the proposed Pebble Mine

1 would pose an unacceptable and unavoidable risk of harm
2 to the people, the communities, and the wildlife of the
3 Bristol Bay watershed.
4 Building a massive mine in this location at the top
5 of the watershed of the world's greatest wild salmon
6 fishery is a reckless idea, a dangerous venture for which
7 significant risk to protected resources cannot be
8 eliminated, no matter how extensive the environmental
9 review or comprehensive the mitigation regulators might
10 impose.
11 The only certainty is that eventually the mitigation
12 will fail, eventually contamination will occur,
13 eventually the fisheries will be destroyed.
14 We shouldn't gamble what we can't afford to lose,
15 and we can't afford to lose the Bristol Bay fishery.
16 On behalf of NRDC and its members, we thank you for
17 your critically important work thus far, and we urge you
18 to move forward proactively to protect the people and
19 wildlife of Bristol Bay.
20 BRENDAN FLYNN: Hi. My name is
21 Brendan Flynn. I am a Puget Sound reef net fisherman and
22 gill net fisherman. I was born and raised in the San
23 Juan Islands, Lopez Island, and grew up fishing the
24 Fraser River stock of Sockeye salmon.
25 I had the good fortune to make it to Bristol Bay in

1 2003 and have been fishing there since and am a Bristol
2 Bay permit holder.
3 Thank you for undertaking this process. I'm very
4 hopeful that we can come to the point where we all agree
5 that this place needs to be protected.
6 I saw on the pie chart you had there that the
7 southern B.C. and U.S. stocks make up one of the more
8 significant portions of Sockeye salmon in the world other
9 than Bristol Bay.
10 Well, that is the case some years. We've had the
11 misfortune of fishing every other year, every third year
12 here, every fourth year at times. It's immensely
13 inconsistent, and that is the beauty of Bristol Bay. It
14 happens every year. It's a pristine ecosystem. We don't
15 have the good fortune of that here in the southern
16 states.
17 And I just -- I really support you to protect this
18 place under the 404(c). It is a national treasure and
19 there is nothing like it in the world.
20 JENNIFER GISH: Hi. My name is
21 Jennifer Gish, and I'm the marketing manager for
22 Redington. We are a fly fishing company that
23 manufactures fly fishing rods, reels, wares and apparel.
24 The Bristol Bay Pebble Mine is very important topic,
25 as it is the livelihood of our business, it does depend

1 on it. The proposed Pebble Mine which would be situated
2 in the heart of Bristol Bay watershed produces an
3 unacceptable risk for the fly fishing industry, which
4 relies on the health and vitality of hunting and fishing
5 ecosystems.
6 Upon learning about the possibility of a massive
7 mine in the heart of this ecosystem in 2007, we've been
8 outspoken in our opposition. Redington has been a
9 leading conservation voice for this campaign, holding
10 true to the ethos that conservation of major fisheries is
11 of paramount importance for protecting the longevity of
12 our industries.
13 Alaska attracts recreational anglers from all over
14 the world. Sports fishing contributes $1.4 billion
15 annually to the Alaska economy and more than $60 billion
16 to Bristol Bay alone. Many visitors spend up to a
17 thousand per week to stay at well-appointed lodges and
18 fly in small planes to some of the most exclusive and
19 celebrated trout and salmon waters in the world.
20 These are our customers. This is who I'm standing
21 up here for today; these customers and for our future
22 customers. Our commitment to save the Bristol Bay
23 campaign has never wavered, and with the recent EPA
24 studies to assess the impact a massive pit mine might
25 have, our commitment is stronger than ever. We want to

1 thank the EPA for shedding more light on the effects of
2 the Bristol Bay Pebble Mine. Our fisheries are more
3 precious than gold.
4 JIM WADDELL: Thank you. My name is
5 Jim Waddell. I'm a professional civil engineer and a
6 taxpayer.
7 And I want to base my comments, though, on my
8 experience of 35 years working for the Army Corps of
9 Engineers in various fields such as designing and
10 constructing earthen dams and levies and so forth. Also,
11 my experience maintaining and operating complex systems
12 like dams and my experience working with EPA Superfund
13 cleanup projects; in particularly, dam reclamation and
14 asset waste problems.
15 One of the problems I find with the report is, you
16 don't go into enough detail explaining the consequences
17 of the -- well, basically the assumptions that you're
18 making about failures and operations and so forth. You
19 give some pretty good examples in there, but you need
20 more of that kind of stuff.
21 What you really need to explain, though, is, the
22 probability of failures is sort of, I think,
23 underestimated, frankly. Having experienced these kind
24 of projects, having dealt with these kind of projects,
25 nothing is ever built like the plan says it's going to

1 be. The mitigation plans are rarely followed, and
2 there's various reasons for this. Usually even in
3 the well -- well, semi-well-funded public sector, there's
4 never enough money to pay the engineers or the
5 technicians enough to do what is required to ensure the
6 safety, either ecologically or human, of the project.
7 In a case like this, we're starting off
8 understanding, we've got a limited partnership. Why did
9 they do that? Why isn't it, you know -- you know, why is
10 it limited? Well, there's obvious reasons for that.
11 What we need to be doing is understanding what it
12 takes to manage these projects and explain it to the
13 public in these documents, because without that, they're
14 not -- you're never going to appreciate the complexity
15 and what it takes to actually construct and operate these
16 things safely.
17 JON FRANKLIN: My name is Jon
18 Franklin. I work for Trident Seafoods presently. Our
19 company has approximately 500 permit holders that fish
20 for us in the Bristol Bay area. And I've personally been
21 involved in Bristol Bay for 32 years. Both my sisters
22 are married to Bristol Bay natives. So I have a pretty
23 fair idea of the beauty, and the extent to which this
24 project will impact the Bristol Bay native population.
25 And one thing that I really appreciate is the

1 science that you guys have put into this. I do agree
2 that things -- there's things that could be explained
3 better, but you guys have done a very good job of delving
4 into this huge project.
5 And what it really boils down to is not whether I
6 live to see this thing done, or anybody in this room.
7 It's the future generations. There's 10,000 years of
8 history that can go on 78 years of a mine. What's going
9 to happen in 78 years? The jobs are all going to be gone
10 in 78 years, except for the people that have to sit there
11 and look over the toxic landscape and say, "That's my
12 legacy."
13 The Obama administration should follow in the
14 footsteps of Teddy Roosevelt. Be bold. Do not let
15 corporate interests run over the population of Bristol
16 Bay.
17 Thank you.
18 TOBY HALTER: My name is Toby Halter.
19 I was born and raised in Montana about 200 miles from the
20 Butte copper mine.
21 One thing that was in this report that I didn't see
22 anything was the adverse human effects or what would
23 happen to the long-term effects.
24 I have a lot of family members, friends that have
25 grown old, grown up around Butte, that have had some very

1 nasty diseases associated with the mining. So I just
2 think that in this assessment, I just -- you know, the
3 adverse effects of mining and what they do to a human
4 population is a (inaudible) native people.
5 There's a lot of native Alaskan people that are
6 going to stay living in that area. Like the gentleman
7 said before, 78 years of mining, you know, and you're
8 looking at maybe five, ten thousand years, if we can even
9 hold on that long, of having to deal the negative effects
10 and the carcinogens and all the nasty chemicals that are
11 associated with mining.
12 So I just didn't see that very clearly in your
13 report.
14 Thank you.
15 LELAND MIYAWAKI: I'm Leland Miyawaki,
16 and I am the fly fishing manager for the Orvis store in
17 Bellevue. And the Orvis company owns about 50 or 60 fly
18 shops across the country. We're 160 years old. We are a
19 retailer and a -- and a manufacturer at the same time.
20 We have endorsed guides, outfitters, lodges
21 throughout the United States and the world, and we send a
22 lot of people to Alaska and to Bristol Bay to go fishing.
23 There's a lot of them that go there, a lot spend a lot of
24 money.
25 I urge you to, under your authority, to -- excuse

1 me -- under your authority to go forth with 404(c) and
2 the Clean Water Act and stop this mine in its tracks.
3 But there's something more important I want to say
4 other than that: my wife, who loves Sockeye salmon. She
5 thinks it's the only thing that swims in the sea. He
6 doesn't care what I bring home and what I catch and what
7 I release. So I urge you, bring peace and harmony to my
8 home.
9 ANDREW BENNETT: Thanks. My name is
10 Andrew Bennett. I grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska, and now
11 I run a sport fishing lodge on the Kanektok and
12 (inaudible) Rivers just northwest of Bristol Bay. I
13 employ 20 people each summer and host 250 guests from
14 all over the world who come to experience the incredible
15 unique fishery in southwest Alaska. I'm also good
16 friends with many residents of the Yupik village of
17 Quinhagak just down river from our camp, who depend on
18 annual salmon runs for subsistence.
19 I'm opposed to large-scale mining in Bristol Bay
20 because I feel that the risks that a large-scale mine has
21 an adverse impact on this healthy, unique fishery is too
22 great. I applaud the content of the draft assessment.
23 I currently live here in Washington, where our
24 deficient balance in development with management of our
25 natural resources have decimated salmon populations, and

1 I don't want to see the same thing happen in my great
2 home state of Alaska.
3 Thank you.
4 KAREN REED: Good afternoon. I'm not
5 a commercial fisherman and it's been a long time since
6 I've even caught a fish, but I have been privileged to
7 spend time nearly each of the last 40 summers on the
8 shores of Lake Iliamna on Knutson Bay, at the easternmost
9 end of the lake. That's the beach that's shown on Page
10 19 of the executive summary.
11 I am completely opposed to the idea of the Pebble
12 Mine mine. I think that the ecology there is so fragile
13 and the impacts from the haul road construction and the
14 pipeline construction really need to be looked at more
15 seriously in your 404(c) study.
16 Just imagine a traffic accident of a truck hauling
17 arsenic to do -- the leachate on the minerals on the
18 mine, a pipeline break. We've seen a lot of really
19 serious spring floods in the bay and it will wash down
20 hundreds of yards of material and change the shoreline
21 over night, and trying to built a road that could survive
22 that kind of an environment is difficult to imagine.
23 So I really appreciate the work that you've done in
24 this assessment. The findings are very alarming. It's
25 hard to imagine, if these findings hold, that this

1 project should go forward.
2 What I was young, we would speak frequently with
3 fisheries research people that had a base on Porcupine
4 Island in Lake Iliamna, and they told us that the beach
5 on Knutson Bay was the largest Sockeye spawning salmon
6 ground in the world. And right now there's no roads in
7 that area, there's no other cabins, there's no power
8 lines. There's nothing. And to think about putting the
9 haul road right past the most prolific Sockeye spawning
10 beach in the world is sort of incomprehensible.
11 Thank you very much for the work you've done and I
12 appreciate your thoughts. Thanks.
13 RON RICHARDS: My name is Ron
14 Richards. I'm an Alaska salmon fisherman. A lot of us
15 live here. All of us get our equipment here. And the
16 Seattle area is a largest market for Alaska Sockeye
17 salmon. It's a natural place to have the first hearing.
18 I applaud the EPA for embarking on this study.
19 History here does not bode well for us, except in this
20 case it appears we're off to a good start.
21 All of the arguments I've heard today in support of
22 this mine are arguments that have been advanced over the
23 course of history time and again; there's never anything
24 that's going to go wrong with their project, everything's
25 going to work out great.

1 If you read Malcolm McLeod's "Salmon King of Fish,"
2 "A River Lost," "Golden Spruce," and (inaudible), you'll
3 get a good historical context of how these natural
4 resources decisions are usually made, and it's usually
5 not right. You guys are off to a good start.
6 One suggestion in your economic analysis. The
7 Valdez oil spill showed us that not only will an adverse
8 environmental impact in a certain area affect the income
9 of the people that are impacted directly, but it will
10 impact all of the Alaska fish market.
11 We Alaska fisherman who were not directly impacted
12 by the oil spill saw the value of our catch plummet. The
13 same thing will happen in a Bristol Bay disaster, where
14 some pollutant affects the fish. It will tarnish the
15 reputation of all of us.
16 Finally, as an attorney in the past, I struggle with
17 the definition of "insanity" from time to time, but I'll
18 tell you, I've never seen a better example of insanity
19 than the Pebble Mine application.
20 Thank you.
21 THOMAS QUINN: I'm here to speak as an
22 academic and a researcher. I got my Ph.D. in fisheries
23 over 30 years ago, have been studying ecology and
24 conservation of salmon and trout ever since, including
25 the last 25 years in the Kvichak watershed.

1 The research has taught me two things about
2 conservation and salmon and natural resources. Two
3 pillars.
4 The first is the restoration of that which is
5 damaged but salvageable, and the second is the
6 preservation of that which is valuable and still
7 functioning.
8 We saw the removal of the dams on the Elwha River,
9 and that's a wonderful, wonderful example, but at a cost
10 of hundreds of millions of dollars, and in truth, the
11 total numbers (inaudible) estimates in the populations
12 we're talking about in Bristol Bay. Not that it's not a
13 good thing to do. We need to keep in perspective what
14 our mothers taught us: an ounce of prevention is worth a
15 pound of cure.
16 And in Bristol Bay, we have the opportunity to
17 prevent destruction of something which is already
18 functioning perfectly as it is.
19 As a scientist -- I see a number of current and
20 former students out here in the audience -- we commend
21 EPA for their scientific approach. We're happy to
22 contribute all the data that we have. In fact, we'd be
23 happy to examine data presented by the Pebble
24 Partnership.
25 The more data you see, the farther you proceed with

1 the science, the more certain you'll become that this is
2 not something that you should allow.
3 You're the Environmental Protection Agency. We're
4 counting on you to live up to your name: protect our
5 environment.
6 Thank you.
7 CHARLES TREINEN: Thank you very much.
8 Charles Treinen. I thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify.
10 I want to thank the EPA Region 10 for the political
11 fortitude that it took to undertake this study to begin
12 with, and then also to release this study and give us the
13 opportunity to speak about what we've seen so far from
14 that report.
15 To me, as a commercial fisherman for 35 years in
16 Alaska and ten of the last -- last ten years in Bristol
17 Bay, I want to say that I believe that you've done a good
18 job of expressing something that seems, to me,
19 intuitively obvious, and that I want to encourage you to
20 continue to bring that scientific evidence to light so
21 that we can have the same sheet of music to read off of,
22 so to speak, in determining what's real and what's not,
23 outside of the public relations environment.
24 And just in terms of something that you may want to
25 look at a little further is to reevaluate or to continue

1 to evaluate the value of commercial fishing to people
2 throughout your Region 10, because I'm here doing
3 business and I hadn't planned to testify but just
4 happened to be here on a day when you were having this
5 hearing and appreciate the fact that you can do it here
6 in Seattle, because this is a place that also has some of
7 the benefits from this resource that is in Bristol Bay.
8 Thank you.
9 EDWARD DAVIS: Thank you. The EPA is
10 to be congratulated -- am I on? The EPA is to be
11 congratulated for their assessment that they've done to
12 date.
13 Suppose you finally get to the point to where you
14 actually go by your instructions as an Environmental
15 Protection Agency and veto and don't let the mine go
16 through.
17 You really should be looking at a further study, a
18 larger one. Look at the boundaries of the watershed
19 area. Maybe you should be looking at the totality of the
20 watershed area, and maybe, like the gentleman mentioned
21 earlier, a Teddy Roosevelt kind of action. Maybe a
22 wilderness area for the entire watershed, with the
23 existing developments that are there to be able to remain
24 and expand in the manner in which they have in the last
25 200 years.

1 That's all I really have to say. Thank you.
2 FRED HARNISCH: Hello. My name is
3 Fred Michael Harnisch of Homer, Alaska. I thank you for
4 the opportunity to express my thoughts concerning the
5 proposed Pebble Mine, Alaska.
6 I was born and raised in Slag Valley on the south
7 side of Chicago, within a large industrial area. It was
8 here that I began my education on large industry, seeing
9 how many were driven by greed and without much concern
10 for their employees or for the natural environment.
11 My calling then was the natural environment in the
12 west, and after completing my four-year degree in forest
13 management at Purdue University, I began my permanent
14 work with the United States Forest Service, which lasted
15 for 31 years, until I took early retirement in 1994 to
16 spend more time with my family and friends.
17 I have worked with the United States Forest Service
18 in Idaho, Montana, Washington State, Oregon, and Alaska,
19 spending 19 of these years on the Tongass and Chugach
20 National Forest in Alaska, along with fighting forest
21 fires and other activities throughout the state.
22 I retired as district ranger for the Darrington
23 Ranger District in Washington State and moved back to my
24 363-square-foot cabin in Homer, including an outhouse.
25 I also continue to spend time in Washington in order

1 to be close to my family, where I have a cabin also, a
2 small one, near Darrington. I have fished for Four
3 Seasons commercially in Bristol Bay, three for red salmon
4 and one for herring, and have friends in Alaska,
5 Washington State, and Oregon that commercial and sport
6 fish throughout Alaska.
7 In fact, I was quite surprised to find ranchers in
8 eastern Oregon that also fished in Bristol Bay.
9 The experience I've gained over the years in various
10 areas of the world concerning large industry, and of what
11 I've read --
12 BETSY DANIELS: Fred, you're going to
13 have to wrap it up.
14 FRED HARNISCH: I'm strongly against
15 the proposed Pebble Mine.
16 ERIC FORRER: My name is Eric Forrer.
17 I have 50 years in the state of Alaska.
18 The genie in a bottle of the Pebble proposal is the
19 chemistry and the physics of open-pit mining. Once the
20 land is broken, no technology and no litany of corporate
21 promises can halt the destruction of Bristol Bay's river
22 ecology.
23 With a level tone and in clean expository English,
24 the EPA draft watershed assessment puts flesh on the
25 bones of this development dilemma. It also touches on

1 the secondary issue, which is the unpredictability of
2 corporate behavior.
3 In 1963, '64, and '65, it was my privilege to be the
4 only Caucasian in the King salmon fishery on the lower
5 Yukon. There were some days from those years on the
6 river that were so full of light, that they still sparkle
7 through the mist of 50 years of memory. And from those
8 days, I formed the values I have lived by and wrote the
9 rules of my own road.
10 Although it was the waning years of a world class
11 system, it was still healthy enough to understand what it
12 had been before, and the young adults who taught me to
13 fish still had a sense of their culture and their place.
14 The collapse of the fishery there has been
15 accompanied by a relentless economic and social stress
16 that foreshadows the fate of Bristol Bay under the
17 influence of a generations-long mine.
18 I make three arguments regarding Bristol Bay.
19 First, I join those and see that culture and place
20 will be destroyed by the mine. Basically, Pebble
21 developers will push everything I know and love right out
22 of the frame.
23 Second, given the destruction or massive damage to
24 every salmon system from the Sacramento to the Yukon, I
25 argue that this last reasonably healthy system should

1 have the benefit of a sense of cumulative protection that
2 has not been applied --
3 BETSY DANIELS: You can submit the
4 rest of your comments. Thank you.
5 RICHARD LEEDS: My name is Richard
6 Leeds. Thank you for holding this meeting today.
7 As the co-president of the Wildlife Forever Fund
8 located in Washington State, we've been active in the
9 conservation of estuaries and coastal wetlands along the
10 connected habitats of the Pacific Coast, from Oregon to
11 Alaska.
12 I visited the proposed mine site in the Bristol Bay
13 watershed, as well as Bristol Bay and large sections of
14 the Alaskan coast, including the Prince William Sound.
15 The Prince William Sound, unanticipated remaining damage
16 has been discovered 20 years after the Exxon Valdez oil
17 spill. We can't expect otherwise in any other
18 development.
19 Based on my experience, I believe that the hydrology
20 and air interconnections within and outside the proposed
21 mine site have potential poisonous flows with their
22 susceptibility to seismic events and the resulting
23 catastrophic long-term damage are understated in the
24 report.
25 Let me repeat: I've been up there and I think it

1 understates the level of interconnectivity.
2 Large-scale mining is too risky to be permitted in
3 this important natural resource, as has been identified
4 in this EPA assessment. Please continue to study the
5 risks presented by development and large-scale mining in
6 particular.
7 Thank you for holding these hearings and thank you
8 for protecting indigenous people and wildlife nationwide
9 and worldwide.
10 SALLY SHORT: I'm Sally Short and I'm
11 a retired microbiologist. I spent 22 years working in
12 fish pathology lab for the state of Alaska. Our primary
13 job was to monitor the health of salmon stocks in both
14 wild systems and in hatcheries.
15 Basically my professional life was concerned with
16 understanding and supporting Alaska's salmon runs, while
17 learning natural risks of disease and habitat. We did
18 this to defend Alaska at a basic biological level of
19 health, life, and a sense of pace for Alaska's human
20 population, as well as for all of the species connected
21 to salmon.
22 It breaks my heart to see that any people or any
23 industry would woefully threaten to destroy what I spent
24 my life defending. It makes me angry to think that a
25 lifetime of effort by myself and many others would be

1 swept away by some industrial disaster, when all we have
2 to do is say no.
3 Thank you.
4 ANN KROEKER: Ann Kroeker. You had
5 asked what needs to be changed away from the (inaudible).
6 I would actually --
7 THE REPORTER: Could you speak up a
8 little bit?
9 ANN KROEKER: Besides the cultures who
10 live close, salmon of course travel far and wide, which
11 is why we in Seattle are just as important as the ones in
12 Bristol Bay. The health of the salmon is particularly
13 important to our health here, whether we get to eat it or
14 not or -- and whether it's nutritionally damaged.
15 Historically and culturally, it does affect more
16 than the close-by cultures who are affected most, but it
17 certainly should be considered in its entirety.
18 I also want to ask you, please don't add economic
19 values or job values or other disputed trade-offs to your
20 study, which, if you can keep it as factual and
21 bio/eco/regional as possible, we would absolutely
22 appreciate that.
23 Thank you very much.
24 STU SMITH: Good afternoon. My name
25 is Stuart Smith, individual citizen from Olympia,

1 Washington. Thanks for the time to speak with you, and
2 also thanks for your efforts on this assessment.
3 I am in agreement with it. I believe, however, it
4 misses one point within my interest (inaudible); that
5 misses the impact on the human soul.
6 The people that are proposing mining in this part of
7 the world, such as the Pebble Mine, they don't see their
8 purpose as providing human kind or mankind with a useful
9 product like iron and gold. Their interest is in money.
10 They see money in the ground. And these people have a
11 black stain upon our soul called greed. They're already
12 super billionaire, trillionaire, millionaire kind of
13 people, and for some reason, that isn't rich enough.
14 They've got to have more. That's an illness with them.
15 With them, it's about extracting as much money as they
16 can to become even richer than they were before.
17 They weren't happy with just being stupendously
18 rich. They've got to be fantastically super rich. And I
19 see that's the problem with Pebble and mining in that
20 part of the world.
21 I had the opportunity in the fall of 2010 to travel
22 to this part of the world and spend some time at the
23 Pebble site. And it was on the shore of Lincoln Lake, I
24 talked to a helicopter pilot who had landed at a fueling
25 station there and was eating lunch. And we had a nice

1 little chat. And the pilot was part of a group of maybe
2 a half a dozen or a dozen helicopters that were operating
3 in the area, doing sampling for the proposed mine.
4 The helicopter pilot was against the mine, but she
5 said, "The money is so good, I can't pass it up." And it
6 got me thinking that now she's got a little bit of this
7 black stain on her soul.
8 And I just see these large industrial developments
9 come about because lots of little people end up with --
10 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you for your
11 comments.
12 ROBERT WISSMAN: I'm Robert Wissman.
13 I'm a retired professor at the University of Washington.
14 And I congratulate EPA on their assessment, but it's
15 required by law. Usually these bureaucratic assessments
16 are a mile wide, and science, they're a millimeter deep,
17 they're not there.
18 And I have studied systems all over the world, and I
19 think what we need is a simultaneous scientific
20 assessment funded by EPA and industry, because I know how
21 long it takes these systems to show their resilience to
22 recovery. I've studied Mt. St. Helens. I've studied
23 Coeur d'Alene mining district, effects on the river and
24 the lake. I've studied with Tom in Alaska in the Bristol
25 Bay area, as far as wetlands, streams and lakes. And

1 these systems, we know how fragile they are, but we do
2 not know how resilient they are, but I'm afraid they do
3 not have the resilience to take the insult that the
4 industry is proposing in these landscapes. We don't know
5 really what's going to happen.
6 So I encourage a scientific assessment, not a
7 government-funded bureaucratic assessment. Science
8 usually gets short-circuited in these arenas.
9 Thank you.
10 DAVID KERLICK: David Kerlick.
11 Thanks. I am a theoretical physicist and a taxpayer.
12 One of the things that seems weak about your
13 executive summary really is probability of failure. I
14 think one of my mentors, Richard Feynman, who was
15 assigned the space shuttle disaster, and all of the
16 senior guys at NASA were saying, oh, one in a million,
17 and the engineers on the ground were saying one in
18 twenty-five, and then the shuttle blew up. It was one in
19 twenty-five.
20 So I'm very, very distrustful of dam failure once in
21 2,000 years. That's not very good failure analysis.
22 Okay. Your guys' expertise is not in civil
23 engineering. You need to have some civil engineers
24 onboard, as well as the fisheries people, when you're
25 trying to make estimates of failure analysis.

1 That's it.
2 JUANITA CARLSON: Hello. My name is
3 Juanita Carlson.
4 This is emotional.
5 First, I want you to know who I am. My husband for
6 40 years was John Francis Smith, until he passed in
7 February 2004. My husband was Yupik Eskimo, born and
8 raised in Dillingham, Alaska, although we made our home
9 in Buckley, Washington. He worked for Boeing for 42
10 years.
11 His father, George Smith, was long-time manager of
12 the Felder and Gale General Store in Dillingham. His
13 brothers, William, Tennyson, and George Smith and sister
14 Liz Flores are all Yupik. Many of our relatives and
15 friends are residents of Dillingham. In fact, I think
16 we're related to half of the town.
17 We're also members of the (inaudible) Corporation.
18 My three children are also Yupik and shareholders of
19 BBNC, a legacy from my husband to his children,
20 grandchildren, and me. In fact, my oldest daughter, Erin
21 Smith, teaches math at the Eagle River High School and
22 her husband is on the executive board of BBNC.
23 I am so proud of my family's connection to Bristol
24 Bay and our heritage. I love my visits to Dillingham,
25 the people; the culture, the fishing, the pristine, quiet

1 beauty. Everything about the area. I don't want a
2 large-scale mine to affect adversely this area.
3 My fear is that salmon fishing in the Bristol Bay
4 region will change and disappear. I want the EPA to stop
5 the development of large-scale mining.
6 Thank you.
7 AMY GULICK: Amy Gulick. I live here
8 in Washington State.
9 The Columbia, the Skagit, the Nisqually, the
10 Duwamish, these are just a few of the many river systems
11 right here in Washington State that once had incredible
12 runs of wild salmon.
13 Gig Harbor, Anacortes, Westport, these are just a
14 few of the many communities that salmon used to support
15 in Washington State.
16 In Oregon and Northern California, it's the same
17 story.
18 Today, the lower 48 has just 2 percent of its
19 historic wild salmon runs. 2 percent. That's it.
20 How did this happen? Like most losses, it happened
21 gradually, one river at a time, one stream at a time, one
22 community at the time, one fishing boat at a time. We
23 dammed, dredged, logged, developed, and polluted salmon
24 habitat; in some cases out of ignorance, others out of
25 greed, and others we just fight in the name of progress.

1 Some salmon systems we lost long ago; a hundred,
2 hundred and fifty years ago. Others we have lost just in
3 my lifetime.
4 So we are here today sitting in Seattle, where
5 salmon are a cultural icon, and yet almost all of the
6 wild salmon that makes it to our dinner tables comes from
7 Alaska. It has come to this.
8 So I ask you, are we really going to repeat the same
9 mistakes we made here in the lower 48 and destroy Bristol
10 Bay, a place with some of the last and most productive
11 wild salmon habitat in the world? Are we going to
12 destroy the entire Bristol Bay ecosystem? Are we going
13 to destroy the way of life for the communities and
14 economies that Bristol Bay salmon support?
15 And we know what wild salmon need: unobstructed
16 spawning ground, clean water, clean gravel to spawn, the
17 right amount of water at the right time, the right water
18 temperature at the right time.
19 The Environmental Protection Agency's own scientific
20 review on this issue concludes that large-scale mining in
21 Bristol Bay would result in adverse impacts to wild
22 salmon populations. So this time in Alaska, if we are to
23 go ahead and mine in the world's largest Sockeye salmon
24 producing system, we can't claim ignorance, because we
25 know what salmon need and we know the impacts --

1 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you, Amy.
2 PETER MARSHALL: Good afternoon.
3 Peter Marshall. I live now in Bellevue, Washington. I
4 no longer hold a commercial salmon license, but I did
5 years ago, 40 years ago. And like the previous speaker,
6 I've been alarmed by what's happened to salmon in this
7 area. That's why I took a big interest in what may
8 happen north of us.
9 I'm speaking now as a long-term member of National
10 Resources Defense Council and their position that was
11 stated very well earlier. But my own particular concern
12 is over the long-term fate of wild salmon on the earth as
13 a whole. And such a big portion of it originates in
14 these watersheds and is so precious, that I think there's
15 no chance to even imagine having a large-scale mine
16 there.
17 I got a good sense of the significance of the
18 Bristol Bay salmon fishery. I've done projects up in
19 Naknek and King Salmon up in Bristol Bay Borough, and I
20 got a good sense of the pride that people who fish in
21 that area are about the wild salmon, especially and more
22 recently in contrast to the farmed salmon in Canada. And
23 we read nowadays about the risks to the wild salmon
24 stocks.
25 And so I think that the EPA watershed assessment

1 dramatizes the unique conditions that support the Bristol
2 Bay fishery, and I believe EPA should use its authority
3 to protect those conditions in perpetuity.
4 Thank you very much.
5 PATRICIA SUMPTION: My name is
6 Patricia Sumption. I have been an activist with Sierra
7 Club and also with an organization that works on issues
8 related to salmon on the Green River, Green-Duwamish
9 here. And I have not had time -- this meeting came up
10 too fast for me to read any documents. I'm lucky to be
11 here. But I -- so these are preliminary comments, and I
12 will try to do some written comments when I have had time
13 to get the scientific aspects. So I'm going to be
14 emotional, I guess.
15 I wanted to say that I've had -- I think some salmon
16 was talking to me. I've been protecting environmental
17 issues for a long time, but not salmon necessarily, and
18 yet there they were. And they need to be protected. And
19 so somehow I work on that on the Green River. And some
20 of you know that there was a problem with a dam a couple
21 of years ago. And I'm on conference calls every other
22 week with the Corps of Engineers, the fish people,
23 et cetera, and we try to keep our eye on what's going on
24 there and we try to build the salmon runs.
25 As you just heard, salmon runs in Washington and the

1 rest of the lower 48 are in very deep trouble. So it is
2 insane to put a mine in the headwaters of Bristol Bay,
3 considering that it is a huge gift that we are given and
4 that we need to protect.
5 I have a strong affinity for Alaska. I haven't been
6 to Bristol Bay, but I have hiked there. I've been there
7 with fellow fisher -- or not fellow fishermen, because I
8 don't even go fishing, but a fisherman who has fished in
9 Alaska, and my uncle during --
10 BETSY DANIELS: I'm going to have to
11 ask you to submit your full comments. Sorry. Thank you.
12 PATRICIA SUMPTION: I didn't get to be
13 emotional enough.
14 HEATHER LOWE: Hi. I'm Heather Lowe.
15 I am really pleased that we got to this part of the list,
16 because I didn't expect that we'd have an opportunity to
17 hear so many comments.
18 I'll make it short.
19 I am a Seattle resident, born in New York, but I've
20 lived here for 15 years. And your job, to me, is the
21 most important thing on earth, so I commend you for being
22 part of a really influential piece of government.
23 And I'd like to say that in years past, people
24 didn't care what other people did, because it was on my
25 block or my city or my state. And I'm hoping that we're

1 entering this time of enlightenment where we know we're
2 connected.
3 So I don't live in Alaska, but what Alaska does
4 connects to me in my daily life. And so it's important
5 that I speak out against billboards in Fife, because I
6 have to look at them even though they're on tribal lands.
7 So what I'm saying here is, you're charged with a
8 really important job. And I'm the daughter of one of the
9 world's -- he just passed -- geotechnical engineers who
10 was involved with building the world's largest earth dam
11 in Pakistan, three miles wide. My father was brilliant
12 and the plans were brilliant, and it was funded by the
13 World Bank, and the best engineers in the world were
14 commissioned to be part of this project.
15 They had gotten the entire thing completed and they
16 were testing the intake tunnels, and somebody forgot a
17 bolt and the doors didn't shut and the tunnel failed.
18 And the dam was taken off course for the next five years.
19 So what I'm saying to you is, in your assessment --
20 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you for your
21 comments. Sorry we have to cut you off.
22 HEATHER LOWE: I will write to you.
23 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you. Please
24 submit the rest of your comments. I apologize.
25 JANNA TREISMAN: My name is Janna

1 Treisman, and I went to Alaska in the early '70s with my
2 husband, Eric, who has since passed away, who worked for
3 Alaska Legal Services and then was general counsel for
4 Bristol Bay Native Corporation. And so that's how I got
5 to Dillingham.
6 I worked for the schools, and so a lot of the places
7 that you're naming are places where I worked in the
8 schools. I was a federal programs coordinator, so it was
9 (incomprehensible) Portage Creek, and all the way there.
10 I was absolutely astounded by Alaska, having grown
11 up in western New York State. It was just marvelous.
12 And I would like to say that the pristine beauty of the
13 land and the richness of the resource made a lifelong
14 impression upon me and the way that the people would
15 share being able to participate in the subsistence way of
16 life. (Inaudible) didn't have a set net, 25 (inaudible)
17 set net. I learned how to cut fish. I actually, after a
18 while, got kind of good at it.
19 I'd like to congratulate the EPA on your good
20 science in the -- in this draft that I read. I'm very
21 pleased to see this agency taking a proactive stance and
22 setting the bar for the issues that we will be working at
23 later.
24 And as a taxpayer, I am concerned about what I might
25 have to pay for or my children might have to pay for when

1 things go wrong.
2 Specifically, I'd like to talk about your provisions
3 on water collection and treatment operations, where we
4 have a high probability of possible failure; water
5 collection and treatment post closure, where we have a
6 high probability of failure; and the leaching and the
7 amount of water. There's a big range there, 2,000 to
8 almost 60,000 gallons. I'd like to see, you know, more
9 work on that.
10 I found that absolutely terrifying --
11 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
12 JANNA TREISMAN: Thank you.
13 THEO ROE: Hello. I'm Theo Roe. I've
14 had the privilege of running a Bristol Bay fishing boat
15 for each of the last 30 years. I am strongly opposed to
16 the Pebble Mine for many reasons: social, economic,
17 scientific, moral, spiritual, and even patriotic.
18 I'll share just a couple of my objections.
19 Bristol Bay has served as a coming of agery for
20 generations of young people. It certainly helped me.
21 I've watched two of my nephews start fishing as young
22 teenagers. I saw them rise to the challenges of the
23 fishery to build self-confidence and self-worth. They
24 helped feed the world and it felt good. I watched them
25 turn from silly kids into good men.

1 My daughter started fishing with me when she was 15.
2 Presently, she is attending college full-time and working
3 a part-time retail job. Yesterday on her 19th birthday,
4 she lamented the fact that her present job had no
5 meaning. She wasn't producing anything. She wasn't
6 contributing enough to society. I think that's pretty
7 good for a 19-year-old.
8 Bristol Bay provides the priceless opportunity for
9 young people to be humbled by the sea, to rise to the
10 challenges, to persevere and ultimately put food in
11 people's bellies. It's a special feeling. It builds
12 character. It instills the need and the confidence to be
13 productive. It creates good people.
14 I've had the honor of spreading the remains of close
15 friends in the waters of Bristol Bay. They weren't from
16 the region, but the impact the area made on their lives
17 made it the right place to lay their bodies to rest.
18 The thought of intentionally building a gigantic
19 cesspool of poisons at their final resting area is just
20 sickening.
21 I'm proud to have spent my life providing such a
22 healthy food for the people of the world. I'm proud to
23 be associated with the people of Bristol Bay, past and
24 present. Don't let Pebble Mine steal the opportunity for
25 future generations to build character, to become

1 confident and productive members of society.
2 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
3 THEO ROE: Thank you.
4 PETE MODOFF: Hi, I'm Pete Modoff. I
5 work for Senator Maria Cantwell.
6 And first of all, I want to thank the EPA for
7 holding this hearing in Seattle in a timely manner. I
8 know that this was one of the major requests, though,
9 Senator Cantwell and folks would have the opportunity to
10 participate.
11 The draft assessment, the watershed assessment, I
12 think, has confirmed many of the concerns that have
13 been -- that Senator Cantwell has on the threat to the
14 fishing industry operating off in Bristol Bay, and
15 just -- I'll be brief, but I just want to read a couple
16 things that she put in a letter she wrote yesterday to
17 Lisa Jackson, the administrator of the EPA.
18 And the first thing that she said was -- besides
19 expressing her concerns and the fact that this draft
20 assessment seems to confirm these concerns -- was that it
21 is important that the EPA continues to adhere to science-
22 based decision-making, and also she wants to make sure
23 that the EPA continues to work on this -- you know, this
24 draft assessment is a positive first step and, you know,
25 she just wants to make sure that the concerns of the

1 fishing industry, much of which is based here in
2 Washington State, is continued to be listened to by the
3 EPA and the other federal regulators as they consider
4 this mine proposal.
5 So thank you very much. And thank you all for
6 coming.
7 SHANNON FORD: Hello. My name is
8 Shannon, and I am a limited government conservative who
9 favors state's rights and generally votes for things that
10 favor business and economic development. I am not
11 opposing resources and mining and all those kinds of
12 things, but this is the wrong mine in the wrong place.
13 I'm a fourth-generation fisherman. I've been
14 fishing up there my whole life. When this issue first
15 came up, I was on the fence because it sounded good; lots
16 of money, lots of jobs, we're in an economic downturn,
17 people need things. And I started doing some research,
18 and the more that I found out, the more horrified I
19 became.
20 I started reading case studies of other states.
21 Jared Diamond's "Collapse" is a wonderful resource of
22 finding out what happens to areas when things like this
23 go in.
24 And this does affect outside of Alaska. The economy
25 spreads all over the entire country. If people from

1 Alaska don't come out here and promote the fish and the
2 area, the economy doesn't develop. You have to be able
3 to sell the fish and have the tourism and all those kinds
4 of things bringing from the rest of the country. So it
5 is a nationwide issue.
6 Right now, we're in an economic downturn, and when
7 that happens, food rules. I am surviving right now by
8 selling my salmon as a personal business. And as fish
9 supplies dry up worldwide, our salmon from Alaska is
10 going to have increasing value. Right now, they're
11 coming back in record numbers. If we keep it that way,
12 we're going to have an incredible resource that's going
13 to be there long beyond any mine.
14 You've heard all the different facts and figures
15 about enough containment pond spillage to bury Seattle.
16 What I want to say, that nobody has said, is: even if
17 nothing happens, there's no spills, nothing ever happens,
18 merely building the mine changes the perception of the
19 area forever.
20 The Exxon Valdez settlement was for --
21 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you for your
22 comments. Sorry no interrupt.
23 DAVID ROWE: Wow. We've heard a lot
24 of theory and horror stories this evening -- or this
25 afternoon.

1 I am from Anglo American's hometown, Johannesburg,
2 South Africa. It's not theory.
3 Johannesburg now has rivers of radioactive mine
4 acid. In a few years, the mine acid is going to be 10
5 percent of the quantity of the rivers right now. Some of
6 the acidity that comes out of these mines is the
7 equivalent of battery acid, something like a pH of two.
8 It is bad stuff.
9 Anglo, before this happened, sold their mines, moved
10 to London, and is now London company. If you ask them
11 what happened to their mines in Johannesburg, they were
12 minority owners, they didn't own these mines. But there
13 are books written about Anglo American, books called
14 "South Africa, Inc." Anglo owned about more than 50
15 percent of the stock equity in the South Africa stock
16 exchange. They pretty much owned the mines, but they did
17 it in clever ways.
18 What could happen in Pebble Mine?
19 When Pebble Mine fails -- not if; when. In
20 perpetuity, this is guaranteed. It's not a possibility.
21 That's one big error in your study. In perpetuity, this
22 is guaranteed to fail. They will pack their bags and
23 wash their hands, and Alaska will be left with the
24 results of this disaster.
25 There have been some people saying, what about the

1 business value of this?
2 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
3 DAVID ROWE: But also include the cost
4 of remediation in perpetuity.
5 BETSY DANIELS: Thank you.
6
7 (Proceedings concluded at 5:00 p.m.)
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12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
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