

DNR statement in response to press questions re: “The Pebble Tapes”

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is aware of recorded conversations between executives of Pebble Limited Partnership and its parent company, Northern Dynasty Minerals, Ltd. (PLP), and other unknown person or persons. The Environmental Investigation Agency has released excerpts of taped conversations, which pertained to PLP’s proposed Pebble mine project.

DNR cannot comment at this time regarding the accuracy of the recordings or the transcripts provided. However, as presented, these materials do not accurately reflect the facts about the department’s involvement with the project.

The State of Alaska has a robust permitting process that applies to resource development projects across the state. That process provides all parties, whether advocates, opponents or neutral parties, the opportunity to present, comment on, be critical of or defend a proposed project. The goal of this process is to ensure decisions regarding the use and development of state resources are made responsibly, include full information, are grounded in law and regulation, are made with public involvement, and serve the best interests of the state.

As the state agency responsible for managing state land and resources where the Pebble deposit is located, DNR will be one of the primary state agencies responsible for considering possible development plans proposed by PLP. PLP has elected not to initiate state permitting until it has completed the federal permitting process, and DNR has not received any permit applications from PLP related to the construction or operation of a mine. Accordingly, there are no specific plans or applications that are ready for DNR to consider or discuss with the public at this time.

As part of its federal permitting process, PLP officials have sought information from DNR about the land, water and other resources in the vicinity of the Pebble deposit. In recent weeks, at the request of PLP, DNR’s Office of Project Management and Permitting has coordinated four meetings between staff from PLP and DNR’s Division of Mining Land and Water to answer questions from PLP regarding existing state land use laws and associated regulatory processes.

Although PLP’s interest in state land use laws are related to its efforts to revise its compensatory mitigation plan, as required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under federal laws, DNR cannot and did not provide guidance as to what options may or may not be acceptable to the Army Corps. It is the responsibility of PLP to prepare its compensatory mitigation plan for review and deliberation by the Army Corps. DNR has not received an application from PLP for the use of state lands beyond its approved mineral exploration activities. Should PLP apply for the use of state lands in the future related to compensatory mitigation required by the Army Corps, DNR’s public process will ensure that all interested parties have the materials to review and comment upon to inform DNR’s decision.

If PLP applies for the state permits or authorizations necessary to construct and operate a mine, DNR will engage with it and the public in a full public process in which all parties have the opportunity to present and comment on the proposed activity.