Dear EPA Administrator,

We are writing on behalf of the United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA), Alaska’s commercial fishing industry and the thousands of Alaskans who depend on Alaska’s sustainable salmon fisheries to respectfully request that the EPA invoke its powers under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to secure permanent protections for the Bristol Bay watershed from the development of large-scale mining and mining discharge, including Pebble Mine.

UFA has worked for over a decade with Bristol Bay Tribes, local residents, businesses, and conservation groups to protect Bristol Bay’s thriving salmon fishery from threats posed by potential large-scale mines, such as Pebble Mine.

The Bristol Bay salmon fishery generates approximately $2 billion in annual economic activity and employs more than 15,000 people. Additionally, there is a public health interest in conserving the salmon that return to Bristol Bay which account for over 50% of the world supply of sockeye salmon each year and is known to be amongst the most beneficial protein sources.

Despite the consistent findings by both the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers that the Pebble Mine would pose unacceptable adverse impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed and fisheries, the Bristol Bay region remains vulnerable to Pebble Mine, other large-scale mining operations, and mining discharge. Without 404(c) protections in place, Bristol Bay is at risk and Bristol Bay’s fishermen cannot rest.

UFA asks EPA join with us, Bristol Bay Tribes, and numerous other organizations to help preserve the pristine quality of Bristol Bay’s delicate ecosystem, which directly supports America’s seafood supply and provides such a strong renewable economic engine for Alaskans.

The EPA has an opportunity to act under Section 404(c) in a manner that would lay the foundation for permanent protections for Bristol Bay and end the uncertainty that, for far too long, has clouded the future of Alaska’s fishing industry, its citizens and all Americans who seek to conserve and benefit from the...
Bristol Bay salmon fishery. Please join with us to ensure that salmon can continue to thrive and provide our fellow Americans and the world with renewable, nutritious, wild seafood and support our commercial fishing families for generations to come.

CC:
Secretary, Department of Interior
Secretary, Department of Commerce
President’s Council on Environmental Quality
Acting Under Secretary of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator from Alaska
Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator from Alaska
Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senator from Washington
Patty Murray, U.S. Senator from Washington
Jared Huffman, U.S. Representative from California

Regards,

Matt Alward
President

Frances H. Leach
Executive Director