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Pedro Bay Village Council
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united
TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY

July 8, 2021

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004
regan.michael@epa.gov

Re: Invitation to visit Bristol Bay, Alaska to discuss with Tribal leadership the proposed Pebble Mine

Dear Administrator Regan:

The 15 federally recognized Tribes that comprise the United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB) write to formally invite you to visit Bristol Bay, Alaska. We hope that, like President Obama, Secretary Jewell, Administrators Jackson and McCarthy, you will take this opportunity to see firsthand why this irreplaceable landscape we call home must be protected.

Our region's local Tribes have relied on the wild salmon run of Bristol Bay—central to our traditional ways of life—to sustain our people since time immemorial. We are one of the last remaining salmon-based cultures in the world but face an existential threat from Pebble Limited Partnership's (PLP) proposed open-pit mine at the headwaters of our watershed. If fully built, this mine would produce up to 10.2 billion tons of toxic waste at our headwaters permanently. This mine not only threatens our tribes, families, and way of life but also the tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic opportunity that depend on the salmon.

During the Obama Administration, Administrator McCarthy initiated the 404(c) withdrawal process under the authority of the Clean Water Act and in 2015 when he visited, President Obama recognized Bristol Bay as a “national treasure” that needed permanent protections. Unfortunately, the EPA process was not completed before the change in administrations and the proposed determination was withdrawn during the Trump Administration.

Salmon are the lifeblood of Bristol Bay's Native people, serving not just deeply held religious and cultural significance, but also as the primary present day economic resource for many Native communities. Any disruption to the fisheries, such as Pebble Mine's projected destruction of more than 80 miles of streams and 3,500 acres of wetlands, would devastate local Alaska Native communities. Similarly, the

construction of a 230 megawatt power plant and installation of a 188-mile long natural gas pipeline would directly affect the Tribes' ability to access and protect sacred sites that support our way of life.

It has now been 10 years since the EPA first visited Bristol Bay to investigate proposed mining operations and the danger they posed to the watershed. It has been nearly 6 years since President Obama visited and called for protections. It has been nearly a year since President Biden, while campaigning for office, pledged to protect Bristol Bay. Today, our people and salmon remain at risk.

The people who have lived in Bristol Bay for millennia and those who work here are united in their desire to see you exercise your authority under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect our watershed and all it sustains. We invite you to come to Bristol Bay and experience first-hand why Bristol Bay needs protections now and for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Heyano".

Robert Heyano, President
United Tribes of Bristol Bay