

August 12, 2021

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

Dear Administrator Regan:

One year ago, while campaigning for office, President Biden promised to protect Bristol Bay, Alaska from the destructive Pebble Mine. On behalf of the undersigned sport fishing and hunting organizations and trade associations, representing millions of members and hundreds of businesses across the country, we write with a simple request: honor that promise and take immediate action under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay and stop the Pebble Mine.

You have pledged to lead the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a way that places clean water and science at the center of its decision-making process. Protecting Bristol Bay's clean water and wild salmon from the existential threat posed by the Pebble Mine perfectly aligns with those objectives. Bristol Bay is home to the world's greatest wild salmon fishery, generating \$2.2 billion annually, supporting 15,000 jobs, providing 57 percent of the world's sockeye salmon, and sustaining indigenous communities. Protecting this landscape creates a win for the economy and the environment while also aligning with President Biden's *America the Beautiful* initiative. This process cannot wait, and swift action is needed.

It has been more than a decade since the residents of the Bristol Bay region first petitioned the EPA for permanent protection under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act. Ten years ago, the EPA visited the region to learn about the threat that Pebble Mine poses to the fishery and all it supports. President Obama visited Bristol Bay in 2015 and promised protection. In 2020, President Biden echoed that promise. Yet today, the region remains at risk.

After extensive scientific study and public engagement, Administrator McCarthy initiated the Clean Water Act 404(c) process in 2014. That action was requested and supported by over 1,000 angling and hunting groups and businesses from across the country. Unfortunately, this process was not completed before the change in administrations and EPA's Proposed Determination (PD) was withdrawn in 2019. The EPA, under your leadership, now has a unique opportunity to resume the 404(c) process that was started in 2014 and provide the lasting protections that President Biden and President Obama promised to deliver.

As EPA scientists and researchers have documented over the past decade, the importance of protecting Bristol Bay couldn't be clearer. This year more than 65 million sockeye salmon returned to Bristol Bay - shattering the previous record. These fish drive the most robust and sustainable commercial fishery on the planet and draw anglers from across the globe to pursue all five species of Pacific salmon as well as trophy rainbow trout, arctic char, Dolly Varden, grayling, northern pike, lake trout and more. Hunters journey to southwest Alaska to pursue brown bear, moose, caribou, ptarmigan, and waterfowl in a remote wilderness setting found nearly no place else in the present day.

As we watch rivers across the west coast suffer from drought and extreme temperatures that are decimating salmon and other species, the salmon returns at Bristol Bay are simply irreplaceable. Yet, the CEO of the foreign company proposing to mine the Pebble deposit continues to double down on his commitment to build. Even if he isn't successful, another mining company can simply pick up where Pebble left off. Until Bristol Bay is permanently protected, this watershed and the salmon it supports remain at risk.

One year ago, President Biden recognized the threat of the Pebble Mine and pledged to protect Bristol Bay:

*Bristol Bay has been foundational to the way of life of Alaska Natives for countless generations, provides incredible joy for recreational anglers from across the country, and is an economic powerhouse that supplies half of the world's wild sockeye salmon. It is no place for a mine. The Obama-Biden Administration reached that conclusion when we ran a rigorous, science-based process in 2014, and it is still true today...As President, I will ...listen to the scientists and experts to protect Bristol Bay — and all it offers to Alaska, our country, and the world.*

On the one-year anniversary of President Biden's promise, we urge you to fulfil that pledge by taking immediate action under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay and stop the Pebble Mine.

Sincerely,

**2% for Conservation**

**American Fly Fishing Trade Association**

**Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**

**Fly Fishers International**

**International Caribou Foundation**

**Izaak Walton League of America**

**National Wildlife Federation**

**Wild Salmon Center**

**AFFTA Fisheries Fund**

**Angler Action Foundation**

**Camp Fire Club of America**

**Houston Safari Club**

**International Game Fish Association**

**National Deer Association**

**Pope & Young Club**

**Wildlife Forever**