



united
TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2020

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Groups vow to Carry on Work to Protect Bristol Bay Fishery

ANCHORAGE, AK – Bristol Bay organizations are considering all options to protect Bristol Bay after today's ruling to decline considering whether proposed protections for Bristol Bay were illegally withdrawn.

The Bristol Bay Defense Alliance sued the EPA in October regarding the withdrawal of the proposed Clean Water Act protections first requested by Bristol Bay Tribes. Today, Judge Sharon Gleason determined that the EPA's action is not one that can be challenged in court. This does not change the facts already established in the scientific and public record, which make clear that the Bristol Bay fishery is threatened by the development of the Pebble Mine.

The Defense Alliance is comprised of Bristol Bay Native Association, United Tribes of Bristol Bay, Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, Bristol Bay Reserve Association and Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation. These Bristol Bay Tribal and fishing organizations filed a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency in October on behalf of all those who rely on the Bristol Bay fishery.

The Clean Water Act protections were first requested by six Bristol Bay Tribes in 2010, and were quickly supported by the commercial and sport fishing industries, jewelers, and thousands of Americans. The Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment developed by the EPA as a result of that request outlined a strong need for science-based protections for the world's last great wild salmon run from the Pebble Mine citing the devastating impacts development of the deposit would have on Bristol Bay's waters. The Defense Alliance continues to believe the EPA's move to withdraw was contrary to the scientific and public record, and the Defense Alliance will continue working to secure permanent protections for the Bristol Bay fishery and all it sustains.

BBDA members made the following statements:

BBEDC CEO Norm Van Vactor: "Bristol Bay communities and fishermen have sustainably harvested salmon for more than 100 years, and over the past several years, the Bristol Bay salmon fishery has had strong returns and increasing values. The science is clear that to ensure this continues, we must protect the fishery from the disruption and devastation that Pebble would cause. We will do everything we can to ensure that there are many more seasons to come."

BBNA President Ralph Andersen: "Salmon are more than just food in Bristol Bay. They are our lifeblood. We will not allow the government to forgo its responsibility to protect the clean water that has sustained our region since time immemorial. Despite today's ruling, we will continue working to protect our home for future generations."

BBRA CFO Katie Enslow: “Bristol Bay Reserve Association members have boats and nets to prepare for the coming salmon season. We are upset that the government is choosing one industry over another and has failed to protect our sustainable businesses. We will keep working to protect the fishery that feeds our families and the world.”

UTBB Executive Director Alannah Hurley: “This ruling does nothing to change the scientific fact that Pebble mine cannot coexist with Bristol Bay fisheries. Removing the proposed protections was a short sighted decision and we cannot allow that to harm the fishery that has sustained Bristol Bay cultures and communities for thousands of years. We will never allow this mine to be built in our region.”

BBRSDA Executive Director Andy Wink: “Despite this decision, our mission is unchanged: protecting and promoting the Bristol Bay fishery. The Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment made it clear that this fishery needs the highest level of protection, and we will do everything we can to ensure the salmon continue returning for future generations.”

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Bristol Bay Native Association represents 31 Bristol Bay tribes & is the regional nonprofit tribal consortium providing social, economic, and educational opportunities to tribal members.

Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation represents 17 CDQ communities & exists to promote economic growth and opportunities for Bristol Bay residents through sustainable use of the Bering Sea fisheries.

United Tribes of Bristol Bay is a tribal consortium representing 15 Bristol Bay tribal governments (that represent over 80 percent of the region’s total population) working to protect the Yup’ik, Dena’ina, and Alutiiq way of life in Bristol Bay.

Bristol Bay Reserve Association is a non-profit corporation, which promotes the interests of its 350 members who own commercial fishing vessels and participate in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift fishery.

The mission of the ***Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association*** is to increase the value of Bristol Bay seafood products for the benefit of fishermen. The organization funds activities that promote fishery products, elevate fish quality at the point of harvest, and support resource sustainability.