

**Alaska Independent Fishermen's
Marketing Association**

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Phone/Fax (206) 542-3930



December 12, 2005

Governor Frank Murkowski
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Murkowski:

RE: AIFMA Opposes the Proposed Pebble Mine

AIFMA opposes the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region. AIFMA is the largest association of commercial sockeye salmon fishermen in Bristol Bay and represents the interests of many residents of the Bristol Bay Region, Alaska and other West Coast states.

In recent years the salmon industry and your Administration have invested a great deal in Alaska's Wild Salmon and this investment is beginning to pay dividends throughout the state. As you know, tens of thousands of existing Alaskan jobs depend upon the purity of our renewable and sustainable salmon fishery and the integrity of its spawning habitat. These jobs also depend upon a continued strong, positive public perception of our Wild Alaska Salmon brand.

The proposed open-pit Pebble Mine, and the more than 1,000 square miles of additional mining claims staked throughout Bristol Bay's headwaters, pose an enormous threat to salmon habitat, fish populations and the Wild Alaska Salmon brand. We urge you to immediately join us in our opposition to the proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District.

During the past two years we have been closely monitoring the proposed Pebble Mine, the additional mining claims filed on state lands, and the Bureau of Land Management's new proposal to open all of its currently protected Bristol Bay lands to open pit mining. We have met with Pebble's supporters and opponents and have conducted our own investigation.

What we have learned is alarming:

- Even the most minute quantities of certain minerals, including copper, and toxic chemicals (cyanide and sulfuric acid) associated with open pit mining are deadly to juvenile salmon.
- The mining industry wants to dump its waste into Alaskan salmon spawning habitat under the guise of "mixing zones."

- It is virtually impossible to keep deadly pollutants in some quantity from entering the streams adjacent to open pit mines and their tailing ponds, even under ideal circumstances.
- Alaska is not known for ideal circumstances and is subject to earthquakes, floods and other natural calamities that could easily breach even the best engineered tailing ponds.
- The specter of a gigantic open pit gold and copper mine being operated at the headwaters of the Bristol Bay salmon fishery is enough by itself to ruin the Wild Alaska Salmon marketing plan.

We are writing today to inform you of our strong opposition to the proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District. The proposed Pebble Mine and other potential mining activity on state and federal lands in Bristol Bay poses a grave threat to pure water, Wild Alaska Salmon and the tens of thousands of jobs they sustain.

We urge you to immediately oppose the proposed Pebble Mine and all large-scale mine development in the Lake Clark, Iliamna-Kvichak, and Nushagak-Mulchatna drainages as an unacceptable threat to Alaska's Wild Salmon habitat, populations and emerging global brand.

As you know, Governor Hammond believed that we should only support proposed resource development projects that are environmentally sound, pay their own way, provide maximum benefit to all Alaskans and are supported by a majority of Alaskans. The proposed Pebble Mine fails to meet these criteria and would threaten far more jobs than it would create.

Please immediately withdraw your Administration's support for Pebble and the Bristol Bay Mining District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Harsila". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

David Harsila,
President