



VIA EMAIL ONLY
(doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov)

January 22, 2019

Doug Vincent Lang, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 115526
1255 W. 8th Street
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: States' Rights & a Rushed Process for the Proposed Pebble Open Pit Mine

Dear Commissioner Vincent Lang:

As you know, the Army Corps of Engineering (Corps) is proceeding with an expedited timeline to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed Pebble mine. We are unaware of any project the size and scope of the proposed Pebble Mine which has received such hasty consideration under NEPA.

Due to the varied and complex issues raised by a large open pit mine in the headwaters of Bristol Bay, we remain concerned about the rushed timeframe for consideration of the Pebble DEIS. Specifically, we are concerned with the state's ability to adequately understand, consider and address fish, water and wildlife issues.

The State of Alaska has a unique responsibility to manage our fish, wildlife and water resources in the best interests of all Alaskans under the Alaska Constitution. In fact, the State of Alaska has fought hard over the years to fend-off federal overreach, and to ensure Alaska plays a serious and meaningful role in managing and overseeing Alaska's resource wealth. Your January 2, 2019, letter to the Department of Interior – laying out a litany of concerns with federal intrusions into Alaska's fish and wildlife management – reflects a strong position defending Alaska's states' rights.

Under the Pebble EIS timeline established by the Corps, however, the experts, scientists and managers in the Alaska Department of Fish & Game do not have the time and resources needed to conduct a legitimate review of the draft EIS. In fact, many ADFG staff engaged in the Pebble

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EIS review do not have training or skill sets in providing EIS comments, and some do not even have EIS reviews included in their job descriptions. If this situation persists, Alaska will undermine its inherent rights as a state, and hand over a considerable amount of resource management authority to the federal government.

From our perspective, Alaska agencies and the experts they employ are best suited to assess, analyze and attempt to mitigate the many significant impacts likely to flow from the proposed Pebble mine. And of course a perfunctory review by ADFG may only create litigation problems down the road if a court finds the EIS review lacking. We hope you agree ADFG should have the time and resources needed to conduct a thorough review of the EIS, and that the current process is unfolding too fast to provide the State of Alaska and ADFG a meaningful role in the Pebble Mine EIS process.

“Open for business” does not and should not mean ceding our states’ rights to a federal government hell-bent on rushing through one of the most important projects in Alaska history.

Thank you, and we look forward to your response.

Yours for Cook Inlet,



Bob Shavelson
Inletkeeper

Cc: (VIA EMAIL ONLY)
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U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (Via USPS)