



BRISTOL BAY
Regional Seafood Development Association

Commercial Fishermen
for
BRISTOL BAY

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Bristol Bay Fishermen Celebrate Supreme Court Decision to Reject Alaska v. EPA

(Dillingham, Alaska) – Today, the [United States Supreme Court announced their decision to reject](#) the State of Alaska’s challenge of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Clean Water Act veto of the proposed Pebble Mine. Commercial fishermen joined Bristol Bay Tribes and a majority of Alaskans in asking EPA to act to veto Pebble Mine over a decade ago. This protective action, finalized in January of 2023, ensured that Bristol Bay’s irreplaceable salmon runs – which sustain the people, culture as well as the foundation of a commercial fishing industry that generates more than \$2 billion annually in economic output and supports more than 15,000 jobs – are not impacted by irresponsible open pit mining.

In July of 2023, Governor Dunleavy filed a lawsuit [asking the Supreme Court to step in](#), arguing that the State of Alaska faced a unique conflict in pursuing its claims in the lower courts and that the gravity of EPA’s veto merited immediate review from the nation’s highest court. Today’s decision signifies that any future lawsuit challenging EPA’s 404(c) action in Bristol Bay would need to follow an ordinary appeals process through the lower courts.

“While we are relieved and happy to see the Supreme Court dismiss Governor Dunleavy’s unreasoned attempt to challenge the EPA’s Clean Water Act veto of the Pebble Mine, as an Alaskan fisherman I am concerned about the amount of public money that was wasted to push this frivolous case,” said **Mark Niver, Bristol Bay fisherman and BBRSDA Board Member**. “Unfortunately we know that this is not the end of the attacks on Bristol Bay and we will not stop working to defend our irreplaceable fishery. We need our elected officials to work with us to pass legislation to permanently protect Bristol Bay and all that the watershed supports in order to end the uncertainty that’s loomed over us for decades.”

"We are glad to see the Supreme Court dismiss Governor Dunleavy's attempt to undo the EPA's Clean Water Act veto of the Pebble Mine. The EPA's decision is in alignment with the people of Bristol Bay, a majority of Alaskans, thousands of commercial fishermen, and Americans who know that Bristol Bay’s wild salmon are more important than the interests of a foreign mining company," said **Nels Ure, Bristol Bay fisherman and Communications Director of Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay**. "It is clear that legislation that permanently protects Bristol Bay is necessary to ensure that we are not forced to fight this existential threat decade after decade."

Background:

In Response to the State’s filing, Bristol Bay Tribes and Native Corporations responded with [an amicus brief](#) defending EPA’s action in Bristol Bay. [UTBB and BBNC responded](#) to today’s decision.

Support for action to protect the Bristol Bay region and its fishery from large-scale mineral development has remained consistently strong among Alaskan voters as [recent polling](#) released by the Bristol Bay Native Corporation shows.

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