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Sporting groups nationwide applaud EPA plans to study Bristol Bay's fish and wildlife resources

Sioux Falls, SD – Hunting and angling interests around the country have mobilized in recent years to protect the waters and lands of southwest Alaska's famed Bristol Bay region. These groups are applauding today's announcement by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that the agency is planning an assessment of the Bristol Bay watershed to better understand how future large-scale development projects may affect water quality and Bristol Bay's salmon fishery. EPA initiated this assessment in response to concerns from federally-recognized tribes and others who petitioned the agency in 2010 to assess any potential risks to the watershed.

"The potential development in the region is scary for sportsmen," said Scott Hed, Director of the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska. "Each year anglers and hunters make the trip to Alaska just for an opportunity to fish and hunt in the famous Bristol Bay watershed. Sportsmen and women from across the country have joined forces to stop plans by foreign mining interests that could turn the entire Bristol Bay region into a massive mining district. Today's announcement by the EPA shows that the agency recognizes the threats posed by the proposed Pebble Mine project, and that it is better to address these very serious concerns up front rather than wait until it may be too late."

Over 325 sporting groups and businesses oppose the mining plans in Bristol Bay. Sporting conservation groups and trade associations include *Dallas Safari Club, Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, European Fishing Tackle Trade Association, Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, American Fly Fishing Trade Association, American Sportfishing Association, Izaak Walton League of America, Wildlife Forever, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Bull Moose Sportsman's Alliance, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, North American Fishing Club, North American Hunting Club, and the Campfire Club of America*. Some of the most recognizable brands in hunting and fishing products have expressed their wishes to protect Bristol Bay as well, including *Sturm, Ruger & Co., Savage Arms, Buck Knives, Hornady, Sitka, Filson, Orvis, Sage, Simms, ExOfficio, Patagonia, Scott, Hardy*, and more than 150 others.

"This is an issue that unites the complete spectrum of the sporting community," continued Hed. "When you have got catch and release anglers and makers of fly rods and reels working in concert with big game

hunters and firearm manufacturers, that's a powerful set of interests – all in agreement that large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed is simply the wrong idea in the wrong place. We look forward to working with the EPA and other decision makers as this public process to determine the fate of Bristol Bay moves forward.”

Background

Bristol Bay = International Fishing and Hunting Mecca

The stakes are high for sporting interests in southwest Alaska's Bristol Bay region, an area that is home to the world's largest wild salmon runs, as well as some of the greatest trophy rainbow trout fishing and remote wilderness hunting on the planet. It's a wild, remote and rugged place that is in the crosshairs of a plan to develop a massive mining district on millions of acres of state and federal lands.

Commercial, sport, and subsistence fishing all depend on the wild salmon supported by Bristol Bay's healthy waters. For thousands of years, Alaska natives have lived off Bristol Bay's land, waters, and of course, its fish and wild game. Bristol Bay is home to the world's largest commercial wild sockeye salmon fishery, with earnings accounting for nearly 33% of Alaska's total harvest earnings. The harvest and processing of Bristol Bay fish generates nearly \$450 million a year and provides jobs for thousands.

For more information on the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska visit:

www.SportsmansAlliance4AK.org

For more information on today's EPA announcement see [the official news release](#).