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Pebble Mine Policy Statement (03/30/05)

AWRTA's stand on the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay area

Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association (AWRTA) strongly opposes the development of the Pebble Mine and all other large-scale mining activity proposed for the headwaters of the Koktuli, Mulchatna, Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers near Lake Iliamna in the Bristol Bay Watershed.

As an ecotourism proponent, AWRTA supports sustainable uses of public lands on the condition that they do not adversely affect habitat, fisheries, wildlife and other renewable resources essential to the nature-based tourism industry. The proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District would threaten the region's renewable natural resources, undermine Alaska's nature-based tourism industry and return very little to the State of Alaska.

The Bristol Bay drainages produce one of the greatest salmon fisheries on Earth with more than 46 million salmon returning to the bay in 2004. This proposed mining project is located at the headwaters of many productive salmon and trout bearing rivers. These rivers contain prime and largely untouched spawning and rearing grounds for all five species of Pacific salmon as well as trophy rainbow trout.

The Bristol Bay area is known for its fishing, both commercial and sport, and these sustainable industries bring millions of dollars of revenue to the state of Alaska. Large-scale mining in this area would eliminate ecotourism opportunities and threaten thriving businesses that depend upon clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and intact ecosystems.

In addition to the threat that this proposed mining project poses to Bristol Bay's environment, the Pebble Mine would return very little to the State of Alaska. Proposed by Northern Dynasty, a Canadian company, the Pebble Mine would require an enormous expenditure of public funds, perhaps as much as \$400 million, for industrial infrastructure while it would return very little to the state in royalties.

Enormous open pit mines such as Pebble, are not compatible with nature-based tourism opportunities and are an enormous threat to Alaska's world-class fisheries. Furthermore, the mining industry is unsustainable by its very nature and is defined by boom and bust cycles that jeopardize the environment, human health and rural communities.

We urge the State of Alaska, the Lake and Peninsula Borough, and the Bristol Bay Native Corporation to strongly oppose the development of the Pebble Mine and the Bristol Bay Mining District. The Pebble Mine would be good for Canadian Mining Companies but bad for Alaska and bad for nature-based tourism businesses that depend upon intact ecosystems and that define sustainable economic development.

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