

Revised Draft Assessment is Available for Review

Bristol Bay, Alaska

April 2013

The revised draft Bristol Bay Assessment is available for public review and comment at www.epa.gov/bristolbay. Comments are invited until **Sunday, June 30, 2013**.

EPA revised the May 2012 draft assessment after considering 233,000 public comments, consulting and coordinating with tribes, and receiving input from twelve expert peer reviewers. EPA heard from Bristol Bay residents, commercial fisherman, seafood processors, the mining industry, sportsmen, members of the faith-based community, conservation organizations and many others.

Why A Revised Draft?

EPA is releasing this draft as part of our continued commitment to provide opportunities for public involvement. Our objective is to ensure that we are using the best available science and that we heard and considered all comments received in response to the May 2012 draft assessment.


EPA is arranging for the 12 expert peer reviewers to evaluate the changes that were made to the draft assessment to make sure we addressed the comments they provided in 2012. This follow-up with peer reviewers should occur in May 2013 about the same time as the public comment period.

About the Bristol Bay Assessment

In May 2010, nine federally-recognized tribes and others concerned about how large-scale mining could impact Bristol Bay fisheries formally requested that EPA use Clean Water Act authorities to prevent the construction of large scale mines in the watershed. Other tribes and stakeholders requested that EPA wait for mining permit applications to determine the potential environmental impacts of mining.

In February 2011, EPA launched the Bristol Bay assessment to gain a better understanding of the watershed and the potential impacts of large-scale mining in the area. The assessment will provide a scientific and technical foundation for future decision-making, helping EPA evaluate options consistent with our role under the Clean Water Act. EPA has made no decisions about using Clean Water Act authorities in Bristol Bay.

How to Submit your Comments to the EPA Public Docket

- *This is the preferred method:* **Submit them online** at www.regulations.gov
Specify Docket # EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189.
- Send EPA an e-mail to ORD.Docket@epa.gov
Include EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189 in the subject line.
- Fax them to: (202) 566-9744.
Include EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189 in the subject line.
- Send a letter to the EPA Bristol Bay docket at:
Office of Environmental Information
(Mail Code: 28221T)
Docket # EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460
- Make a request to accommodate language or other special needs by contacting Judy Smith at  smith.judy@epa.gov or (503) 326-6994

Changes Made as a Result of Public Comment and Peer Review

EPA revised the May 2012 draft assessment based on valuable feedback from peer reviewers, tribes and members of the public. Key changes include:

- We reorganized the assessment to better reflect the ecological risk assessment approach and to clarify the purpose and scope.
- We refined the mine scenarios and explained how they are based upon worldwide industry standards for porphyry copper mining and specific preliminary mine plans submitted to state and federal agencies related to the Pebble Mine project.
- We incorporated modern conventional mining practices into mine scenarios and clarified that projected impacts assume those practices are in place and working properly.
- We added an appendix describing potential methods for compensating for impacts to wetlands, streams and fish.
- We added additional details about water loss and water quality impacts on stream reaches, drainage of waste rock leachate to streams, and mine site water balance to assessment of potential mine impacts.
- We expanded information on the potential transportation corridor to include analysis of diesel pipeline spills, product concentrate spills, truck accidents involving process chemicals and culvert failures.

Next Steps

It is EPA's goal to finalize the assessment in 2013 after reviewing additional public comments, consulting and coordinating with tribes and considering input from the expert peer reviewers. A separate document providing responses to all comments will accompany the final assessment report when it is released later this year.



For More Information:

Join the Bristol Bay listserv to get regular e-mail updates about EPA's work. Send an e-mail message to smith.judy@epa.gov or click the link on the web page.

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