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April 24, 2019

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Colonel Phillip Borders
Alaska District Commander
CEPOA-DE
Post Office Box 6895
JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

Dear Colonel Borders:

I write today to request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) extend the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Pebble mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska from 90 days to 120 days.

While I appreciate the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers providing a public comment period of 90 days – twice the length of the required minimum comment period of 45 days – I believe the Corps should immediately extend the comment period by an additional 30 days. Acting now is important given the length and complexity of the DEIS and the need to ensure that the thousands of Alaskans who have followed this project closely can provide meaningful feedback on it.

In addition, I urge you to redouble your efforts to engage in meaningful consultation with the Alaska Natives who live in the Bristol Bay region. I understand consultation occurs throughout the EIS process and that input from tribes can occur outside the boundaries of the comment period. I ask that you make every attempt to ensure that local residents receive the DEIS and can provide their input in a government-to-government setting in the region. I also expect that input to be taken seriously and fully considered in the development of the final EIS and the Record of Decision.

I make this request for this proposed project as an exception to my general view about the appropriate length of comment periods for EISs under the National Environmental Policy Act. This request is consistent with the 120-day comment period I asked the EPA to conduct for the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment in 2012. I do not believe, however, that a similar comment period is warranted for any other project or rulemaking underway in Alaska at this time.

I appreciate all the work the Corps is doing on this project to meet its responsibilities with respect to this permitting application. I also recognize that the Corps permit is one of many the proposed Pebble mine will ultimately need to acquire, with the bulk of the permitting for this project occurring at the state level.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator