March 3, 2014

Administrator Gina McCarthy  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

On behalf of the International Federation of Fly Fishers (IFFF) we wish to express our gratitude for the agency's recent action regarding Bristol Bay. We welcome the announcement this past week that the agency will examine whether to block the massive Pebble Mine.

We believe that today’s action shows that you are concerned about this pristine watershed. The agency is listening to the many voices of Alaska Natives, commercial fishermen, sportsmen, and others who petitioned the agency nearly four years ago to use its authority to stop harmful mining development in Bristol Bay. We appreciate your efforts thus far and today’s actions in particular.

The EPA’s own watershed assessment left no doubt the negative impact that mining on the scale of Pebble would mean for Bristol Bay’s economy, environment, and salmon-based culture. We believe it ultimately had no choice but to initiate the Clean Water Act as any other action would have meant the agency was neglecting its own legal obligations, the science, and the very real consequences large-scale mining would pose to Bristol Bay and its 14,000 jobs and $1.5 billion in economic output.

Though today’s news is welcome throughout Alaska and the lower 48, there’s still a long process before Bristol Bay is permanently protected. Moving forward, IFFF will stay engaged in the EPA’s 404c process with the many other organizations also involved, which is likely to include both public comment and public hearings to make sure the voices of Alaskans and sportsmen from all over the country will continued to be heard in this debate.

Sincerely,

Philip Greenlee  
Chairman of the Board