



**united**  
TRIBES OF BRISTOL BAY

**FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN  
BRISTOL BAY**



April 16, 2021

Dear Members of the Alaska Legislature,

We are writing to express our significant concerns about Mr. Abe Williams' nomination to the Board of Fisheries (Board) by Governor Dunleavy, and to encourage the Legislature to reject his nomination. We the undersigned write on behalf of our organizations and the thousands of commercial fishermen, hunters and anglers, businesses, tribes, and communities whose livelihoods depend upon the pristine Bristol Bay fishery. Confirming Mr. Williams to the Board would undermine its role in conserving and developing Alaska's fisheries and would call into question the Board's ability to responsibly manage Bristol Bay's fisheries.

Mr. Williams has spent much of his career working to promote the proposed Pebble mine, which risks severe impacts to the sustainability and profitability of one of our state's most important fisheries. In recent years he has filed a lawsuit funded by the Pebble Limited Partnership against fellow commercial fishermen, consistently mischaracterized the overwhelming views of commercial fishermen and local communities from the region on the proposed mine, and testified dozens of times in support of developing the project despite the fact that it would permanently destroy between 105-300 miles of rivers and streams in the region. His long-standing commitment to the proposed Pebble mine and willingness to cast aside the undeniable harm it would cause to the local fisheries raise grave concerns and unresolvable conflicts with his ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the Board to conserve and develop Alaska's fisheries.

A Bristol Bay resident has maintained near constant representation on the Board of Fish for 40 years. Replacing a board member in good standing who represents both the State's largest salmon fishery and rural Alaska with an out-of-region active advocate for the Pebble Mine flies in the face of the values and priorities the Board of Fish is mandated to represent. If confirmed, Mr. Williams would be the second member of the Board, along with Marit Carlson-Van Dort, to be a current or recent staff member of the Pebble Limited Partnership. A foreign-owned company trying to develop a massive mining project atop the world's most productive wild-salmon fishery should not have such strong representation in an entity responsible for the health of our fisheries.

In the fall of 2020, our organizations along with hundreds of Alaskans, Bristol Bay organizations, tribes, businesses, and other Bristol Bay stake holders, made our positions on this nomination quite clear through hours of public testimony and official comment letters that overwhelmingly opposed the confirmation of Mr. Williams. It is the duty of the Legislature to take these comments, both previous and current, into consideration when deliberating and voting on this appointee. The organizations on this letter represent businesses and individuals from across the spectrum of commercial, sport, and subsistence users that often advocate different perspectives to the Board, but we are unified in our opposition to Mr. Williams' nomination. We urge the legislature to reject the

nomination and encourage the Governor to find a more suitable candidate that has the faith of fishermen in fulfilling the Board's important role in managing our fisheries.

Sincerely,



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