

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 15, 2019

1:21 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair  
Representative Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair  
Representative Sara Hannan  
Representative Ivy Spohnholz  
Representative Chris Tuck  
Representative George Rauscher

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative John Lincoln, Co-Chair  
Representative Dave Talerico  
Representative Sara Rasmussen

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation

Jason Brune - Anchorage

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JASON BRUNE, Commissioner Designee  
Department of Environmental Conservation  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as commissioner designee to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

HEATHER RASCH  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ANTHONY VLAHOVICH, Boat Captain  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DAVE HARBOUR  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

BOB SYLVESTER  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DEREK BENSON  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the hearing of Jason Brune.

CARL BRODERSEN  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ROGER MCCAMPBELL  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ERIN KANDOLL  
Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ANNE KAHN  
Lake Clark/Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CHESTEN CLARK  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ROY SMITH

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ALANNAH HURLEY, Executive Director  
United Tribes of Bristol Bay  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LYNN AMMU  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

RIKA MOUW  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KIRIL BASARGIN  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KRIS BENSON  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ANNE FULLER  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SUSIE JENKINS-BRITO  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

JOLIE TULLY  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

EVERETT THOMPSON  
Naknek, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SUSAN HANSON  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KATE FINN  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

STEVE KAHN  
Lake Clark/Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

AMY RAINE  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MICHAEL FERRIS  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SOMMERS COLE  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

JORDEN NIGRO  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

TOM GLASS  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ERIN WILAHAN  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MEGHAN GERVAIS

Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SELIVAN BASARGIN

Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

TESS HOSTETTER

Igiugig, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CLAIRE SANCHEZ

Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ARTHUR BLOOM

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MARK LISAC

Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ERIC FEIGE

Chickaloon, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KYLE KNIGHT

Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MARTHA MCKINNEY

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

BRIAN HIMELBLOOM

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

NINA VIZCARRONDO

Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

VERNA KOLYAHA

Pedro Bay, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DAVE ATCHUSON

Sterling, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

COLE HANSEN

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LINDSEY BLOOM, Project Manager  
Commercial Fisherman for Bristol Bay  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MIKE SATRE

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CASEY JANZ

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CLARK WITNEY JR.

Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MELANIE BROWN

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

WOODY CYR  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

FRANCES BRANN  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CHANDLER O'CONNELL  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

VIKKI JO KENNEDY  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KEITH COMSTOCK, Chairman/CEO  
Juneau Hydropower/Juneau District Heating; Spokesperson  
Alaska Independent Power Producers Association  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DAVE CANNON  
Aniak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

STEVE SCHOONMAKER  
Kasiloff, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

TRISTAN CHANEY  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

JIM CLARK  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LINDSAY LAYLAND  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CONSTANTINE JOHNSON  
Kwigillingok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DONNA RAE FAULKNER  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LISBETH JACKSON  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SURAJ HOLZWARTH, Executive Director  
Whirling Rainbow Foundation  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Speaking on her own behalf and representing Native Americans, testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

BARBARA REILLY  
Anchorage/Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

HEATHER FORBES  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

STEVEN ALBERT  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ANI WEE  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KRISTEN ULERY

King Salmon, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

TOM HARRIS

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KAMPER HART

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

GEORGE ORTMAN

Willow, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DEBRA LATHROP

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LIZ RANGEL

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ALYSSA QUINTYNE

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ROBERT HOCKEMA

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

RICHARD HERRAN

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

ADAM WEBER

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

NIKOS PASTOS

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MIKE BRONSON

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CODY JACOBSON

Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LIZ DEAM

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

JESSICA MCDONNEL

Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KATIE DAWSON

Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

EDWARD MCDONNEL

Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

LEONARD YUKMIS

Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

IDA NELSON

Igiugig, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MARK NIVER, President  
Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

BRYCE NIVER  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

DANIEL SONDERGAARD  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

SUSAN AMUNDSON, Consultant  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CASEY COUPCHIAK  
Togiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

REBECCA TEMPLE  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

MARGARET ANDERSON  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KATE CRUMP, Spokesperson  
Forget Adventure Travel  
Bristol Bay, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

BERTHA PAEIAN-LOCKUK

Togiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

KRISTIN CARPENTER

Cordova, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CARL WASSILIE

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

CAROL FORD

Homer/Nikiski, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

WALLACE MILLS

Halibut Cove/Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

TYLER CASKEY

Ekwok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

GORDY VERNON

Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:21:54 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR GERAN TARR** called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:21 p.m. Representatives Tuck, Hannan, Hopkins, Rauscher, and Tarr were present at the call to order. Representative Spohnholz arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):**  
**Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation**

[1:22:27 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced the only order of business would be a confirmation hearing of Jason Brune, commissioner designee to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

CO-CHAIR TARR read the following statement:

The mission of the Department of Environmental Conservation: Conserving, improving, and protecting Alaska's natural resources and environment and enhance the health, safety, economic, and social well-being of Alaskans. The commissioner provides policy direction for the department and relentless coordination of investment and service delivery, ensures that public concerns are fully considered in department decisions and actions, establishes department objectives and assures performance, serves as spokesperson for the governor on environmental matters, issues decisions on administrative appeals requests, and adopts all department regulations.

[1:24:08 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER JASON BRUNE, commissioner designee to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), provided a short background of his education and qualifications [a complete resume was provided in the committee packet]. While attending college to attain a biology undergraduate degree, he completed an internship at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, in Anchorage, working on sea otters that were oiled by the [Exxon Valdez oil spill of 3/24/89], an experience he said, "helped shape who I am today." Alaska's economy depends on resource extraction; however, the state must ensure responsible and ethical development to prevent a similar occurrence. Commissioner Brune said he continued his graduate school education in Anchorage and worked at what is now the Biological Resources Division, U.S. Geological Survey, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the Resource Development Council (RDC). He said RDC's mission is: "Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development," a motto he incorporated into his personal environmental ethic: "Think Globally, Develop Locally." Commissioner Brune noted his diverse and statewide work experience includes oil and gas, mining, fishing, timber, tourism sectors, and relationships with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations, labor unions, local communities, and the support sector. He listed his association with the Alaska Mineral and Energy Resource

Education Fund, his accomplishments as executive director of RDC, and his service to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council Public Advisory Committee and to the [board of directors] of the Alaska Sealife Center. In 2011, he became the government and public affairs manager for Anglo American, a [former] partner in the Pebble project [also known as the Pebble Partnership]. While working for Anglo American, he learned much about the mining industry and gained a deep understanding of the process to permit a mine in Alaska and the need for a predictable permitting regime that does not "scare off investment": a Fraser Institute study ranked Alaska below "the Congo" on the predictability of its permitting regime [document not provided]. Commissioner Brune acknowledged Alaska has, and should have, the highest environmental standards in the world; however, its ground rules must not constantly change. The state must work with industry to provide timely science-based and legally defensible permits to ensure operations will coexist with Alaska's environment. Returning to his work experience, he said he worked as the Senior Director of Land and Resources for Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated (CIRI), where he fostered relationships with CIRI's village corporations, Tribes, and shareholders; he expressed his pride in the development of CIRI's universal gravel agreement with its villages which established the highest standards for surface gravel mining.

[1:30:14 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BRUNE continued to note while at CIRI, he developed a carbon offset program and oversaw land reclamation activities. He related his extensive relationships throughout Alaska are evidenced by his service to the Tyonek Tribal Conservation District, the Alaska Sealife Center, [Alaska Chamber], Alaska Miners Association, Consumer Energy Alliance Alaska, the "Cook Inlet beluga whale recovery team," and the civil engineer squadron on [former] Elmendorf Air Force Base. Since his appointment as commissioner, Mr. Brune has met with industry, Tribal and ANCSA entities, environmental organizations, and others; in addition, he has met many of the staff at DEC. He provided personal information. Commissioner Brune remarked:

Congress and the Alaska legislature established the laws which DEC is responsible for implementing. To create a positive and predictable business climate, we must do no more and no less than what we have the authority to do. I believe the experiences that I have outlined uniquely prepare me for this position. Those who know me will speak to my integrity and

commitment to the environment. I am proud to work to promote Governor Dunleavy's agenda of showing Alaska is open for business.

[1:34:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN referred to the rulemaking and regulation process for [Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)] groundwater cleanup and asked when the draft regulations would be released for the public review.

COMMISSIONER BRUNE said in September [2018] [the Walker Administration] released draft regulations on PFAS; [in February, 2019] the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its decision that EPA will set a maximum contaminant level for PFAS; therefore, DEC will "follow the lead of the EPA on this ... so we are going to be pulling back the draft regs that we had put forward in September, ... and awaiting guidance from the EPA ...."

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN questioned how [the reversal by DEC] would impact the ongoing cleanup projects of specific sites that were based on the testing thresholds of contamination previously issued by the state.

COMMISSIONER BRUNE advised in 2016, DEC promulgated regulations for cleanup levels of PFAS at 400 parts per trillion; EPA has issued a health advisory level at 70 parts per trillion. He said DEC is "using those levels" and he has met with impacted communities, as the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities will likely be the responsible party; groundwater contaminated by PFAS has been discovered in King Salmon, Dillingham, Gustavus, Fairbanks, Utqiagvik, and Yakutat, and DEC will continue to provide drinking water to those communities. Commissioner Brune was unsure how the areas will be cleaned up; however, there will be a pilot test to burn PFAS soil because he does not support exporting contaminated soil.

[1:39:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN restated her question as to the estimated timeline for state regulations.

COMMISSIONER BRUNE advised he will advocate that EPA has an expedited process - DEC will await direction from EPA - and expressed his hope "it's very soon."

1:40:05 PM

CO-CHAIR TARR opened public testimony on the confirmation hearing of Jason Brune.

1:41:07 PM

HEATHER RASCH expressed her strong belief the commissioner of DEC should be extremely interested in protecting Alaska waters and fisheries. As a former employee of Anglo American, Mr. Brune has a conflict of interest in that he supports mining in Bristol Bay; mining in Bristol Bay is not beneficial to the environment and protecting the salmon industry and clean waters is of the utmost importance. Further the commissioner should want to protect the environment, salmon, and fisheries from a neutral stance, without the influence of big business.

1:42:49 PM

ANTHONY VLAHOVICH urged the committee to oppose the confirmation of Jason Brune. Mr. Vlahovich said he holds a drift permit and is a Bristol Bay boat captain and career fisherman. He and his family live in Juneau and Bristol Bay sockeye contribute to 90 percent of his family's income and its future. He and his wife have made a commitment to Alaska where its fisheries are strong; however, he questioned his decision to live in Alaska after Jason Brune's nomination, which shows contempt for a successful fishery and the livelihoods of fishers. He characterized the nomination as a threat to his family and said the nomination of a biased person to a position of public trust surprised and disappointed him, because Mr. Brune will approve the Pebble mine and the mine will fail.

1:44:40 PM

DAVE HARBOUR said as a former state regulator, and as a personal and business reference, he endorses Mr. Brune's confirmation. From his longtime personal experience, he is inspired by Mr. Brune's qualities of generosity, integrity, a cheerful and optimistic attitude, and professional competence. He directed attention to his written testimony [provided in the committee packet] that offers compelling logic to reinforce the committee's decision to confirm the appointment due to Mr. Brune's extensive biological and natural resource management background that qualifies him as commissioner from constitutional and statutory perspectives. Mr. Harbor urged the

legislature to base its decision upon qualifications and the testimony of those who have actual experience with the nominee.

[1:46:41 PM](#)

BOB SYLVESTER commented allowing EPA to function as rulemaker for the state is not a good idea. He said Mr. Brune is better suited to a position with the Department of Natural Resources, that has a different task than DEC. Further, efforts to work with all the stakeholders would impede making good judgement on proposals. He expressed his opposition to the appointment.

[1:48:16 PM](#)

DEREK BENSON said he strongly opposes Mr. Brune's nomination because of his previous position as spokesman for the Pebble project. He said he has worked at the headwaters of a Bristol Bay fishing camp and does not want to see the area destroyed, which would hurt Alaskans who depend upon salmon fishing income.

[1:49:24 PM](#)

CARL BRODERSEN cautioned confirming the nominee equates to putting "... a career corporate advocate and lobbyist for the exact industry he would have to regulate at the head of the very organization charged with overseeing that industry." Although, Mr. Brune is familiar with industry, a pro-Pebble corporate advocate is unfit to run the department that exists to protect and conserve our environment. Mr. Brodersen said he is pro-miner, but is wary of some mining companies because of their actions. He opined Mr. Brune's life's work is strongly advocating for the interest of mines and he should not be the commissioner of DEC.

[1:51:19 PM](#)

ROGER MCCAMPBELL stated he is a retired state employee with work experience in ranching, technology, closing oil wells, and oil spill cleanup. He said Mr. Brune's testimony showed he is competent and skilled and has a lot of experience, and is a good candidate for those who have a financial interest in Pebble mine; however, Mr. McCampbell expressed his opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation.

[1:52:51 PM](#)

ERIN KANDOLL said she was representing her family and expressed concern about the commissioner of DEC. Her family owns permits and operates a Bristol Bay salmon boat; their livelihood would be harmed by any threat to the fishery such as mine contamination. She said Mr. Brune's lobbying efforts in support of Pebble mine are in direct conflict with the responsibilities of the commissioner's position at DEC, which is to ensure clean water, to protect Alaskans from pollution, and to protect sustainable natural resources for the following generations.

[1:54:01 PM](#)

ANNE KAHN said she is a lifelong Alaskan living in Lake Clark and Homer. She expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment and urged the committee to contact those with sufficient knowledge to assess the risks of advancing the Pebble mine. She reported 62,000 workers are employed because of the Bristol Bay fishery and others are employed in the tourist industry. She urged the committee to research worldwide incidents of tailings dam failings, especially in areas of sensitive habitat. Ms. Kahn stated DEC should require a prefeasibility study on Pebble mine to outline its economic viability. She said the confirmation of Mr. Brune would ignore the wishes of a majority of Alaskans in favor of mega-corporations.

[1:56:10 PM](#)

CHESTEN CLARK said he is a lifelong commercial fisherman who fishes in Bristol Bay. He expressed his strong opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation because he is biased and too supportive of mining, which is a conflict of interest [for the commissioner of DEC].

[1:57:03 PM](#)

ROY SMITH said he is a lifelong Alaskan who has fished in Bristol Bay for over 40 years and each year he is amazed by the salmon run. He cautioned against the appointment of senior officials in government who are selected to advance personal and party agendas at the expense of fairness, science, and history. Mr. Brune's confirmation would raise serious doubts about his diligent oversight and equitable motives. Mr. Smith urged the committee to protect the super sockeye and king salmon runs at Bristol Bay by a no vote on [confirmation].

[1:58:36 PM](#)

ALANNAH HURLEY, Executive Director, United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB), informed the committee UTBB is a Tribal consortium of fifteen Bristol Bay Tribal governments representing over 80 percent of the population of Bristol Bay. Ms. Hurley urged the committee to not confirm Mr. Brune, whose appointment is an affront to the people of Bristol Bay and all Alaskans because his support of the Pebble project prevents his objectivity. Further, his acceptance of the nomination with an obvious conflict of interest indicates a lack of integrity and character. She commented on inaccuracies in statements made by Mr. Brune - on various occasions over many years - and read a quote. Ms. Hurley opined Mr. Brune's appointment disallows trust in "the process"; in fact, an objective and fair commissioner of DEC is not a partisan issue.

[2:01:31 PM](#)

LYNN AMMU supported the testimony of the previous witness and opined consideration of the confirmation of Mr. Brune is an error due to Mr. Brune's conflict of interest.

[2:02:29 PM](#)

RIKA MOUW expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation and her concurrence with other witnesses who have testified in opposition. She surmised Mr. Brune is a delightful person; however, the responsibility of the DEC commissioner is to conserve and improve the environment, and Mr. Brune previously stated one of Alaska's goals is to grow Alaska through corporate resource development. She opined Mr. Brune is a "single objective nomination." Ms. Mow concluded Pebble mine threatens her community.

[2:04:05 PM](#)

KIRIL BASARGIN said he is a fourth-generation commercial fisherman in Bristol Bay and elsewhere. He expressed opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment because Mr. Brune is unfit and should know from his work in biology what could be devastating to Alaska; in addition, he does not work for conservation of Alaska's resources. Mr. Basargin referred to a "childish" incident and cautioned against putting childish minds into office.

[2:05:58 PM](#)

KRIS BENSON said she has 18 years of experience working for a land development agency that applies for "permits." She said the commissioner of DEC should be neutral when reviewing proposed development, and questioned Mr. Brune's neutrality because of his past work as a strong advocate for development. Further, Mr. Brune does not have experience or qualifications in environmental enforcement against polluters, promulgating environmental regulations, developing government policy, working within government, or working within "neutral-type" agencies. She urged the committee to vote no on Mr. Brune's nomination.

[2:07:55 PM](#)

ANNE FULLER pointed out current reasonable regulations are not serving to improve and protect natural resources, or the environment as indicated by the air and soil adjacent to the Red Dog [mine] and the water at Hawk Inlet. She said, "I don't think that predictability of permits needs to mean approval." She urged the committee to inquire as to Mr. Brune's [position] on specific regulations related to issues such as cleaning up firefighting foam.

[2:09:15 PM](#)

SUSIE JENKINS-BRITO said she is a lifelong Alaskan and her family has fished for four generations in Bristol Bay on drift gillnet vessels. Although this hearing is not on Pebble mine, she opined testimony on Pebble mine is relevant because Mr. Brune's appointment is offensive to the 75 percent of Bristol Bay residents who are opposed to Pebble mine. She said Mr. Brune's aforementioned motto, "Think Globally, Develop Locally" should mean enhanced support to the already vibrant economy in the fisheries industry and to the subsistence culture. Ms. Jenkins-Brito said she was not antimining, but mining must be managed by someone with preservation and conservation in mind. She stressed Mr. Brune was unsure how to clean up certain pollutants and urged the committee to not support his appointment.

[2:10:43 PM](#)

JOLIE TULLY expressed her strong opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Brune and observed [government] leaders should appoint the best person for the job to a position of power and responsibility over natural resources. She opined Mr. Brune's appointment is a cynical act of bad faith against the spirit of the position he would hold.

[2:11:33 PM](#)

EVERETT THOMPSON said he is a commercial fisherman in Bristol Bay and a lifelong resident of Naknek. He urged the committee to reject Mr. Brune's nomination; Mr. Brune has publicly supported the Pebble mine and has indicated he has already made his decision about permitting [the Pebble mine]. He opined Mr. Brune would unfairly be in the position of permitting Pebble mine, which is a mine that is too much of a risk to Alaska fisheries and the fisheries industry.

[2:13:02 PM](#)

SUSAN HANSON spoke in opposition to Mr. Brune who is not a steward of the sockeye salmon fisheries in Dillingham and is pro-Pebble mine. She said Mr. Brune is past president of the [Alaska Mining Association] and therefore is not neutral. She opined the toxins from the gold and copper mine will eventually seep into the headwaters and threaten the sockeye fisheries there. She urged the committee to oppose the nomination.

[2:14:00 PM](#)

KATE FINN reiterated Mr. Brune's history has not earned him the right to be perceived as neutral, as the commissioner of DEC must be. She recalled pro-Pebble statements made by Mr. Brune under varied circumstances. Further, DEC must consider other mines without a conflict of interest; she characterized Mr. Brune as auditioning for a future job in the mining industry.

[2:15:06 PM](#)

STEVE KAHN said he is a lifelong Alaskan living in Lake Clark and Homer and is strongly opposed to the confirmation of Mr. Brune. He posited a former spokesperson and advocate for Greenpeace, even if qualified, would not be confirmed by the legislature; likewise, Mr. Brune should not be confirmed.

[2:16:01 PM](#)

AMY RAINE said she lives in the Bristol Bay watershed where she and her partner have owned and operated a commercial fishing vessel for decades. Ms. Raine opined Mr. Brune is not suited to be commissioner of DEC because of statements he made related to Pebble mine. Also, Mr. Brune was spokesperson for Anglo American, a former co-owner of the [Pebble project], executive

director of the Resource Development Council, which exists to support mines, and a board member of the Alaska Mining Association. When considering Mr. Brune's advocacy of the mining industry, his appointment would undermine the purpose of DEC, which is to protect Alaska's water supply.

[2:17:14 PM](#)

MICHAEL FERRI grew up in Kodiak and now lives in Anchorage. He said he has fished throughout Alaska and fishes in Bristol Bay with his son. He spoke in support of Mr. Brune's appointment to commissioner of DEC. He has known Mr. Brune for many years and worked with him at the Resource Development Council. Mr. Brune is a passionate father and has a passion for Alaska and its resources. Mr. Ferri said he has fished in Bristol Bay for 25 years and those who are critical have never met or worked with Mr. Brune. He stressed Mr. Brune would never show preference for one Alaska resource over another. He urged the committee to advance Mr. Brune's confirmation.

[2:18:43 PM](#)

SOMMERS COLE said Mr. Brune is unacceptable and unqualified as an appointee for the commissioner of DEC because he is unable to make unbiased decisions related to permitting major mine projects. His work history should preclude him from this role in a department tasked with making decisions on environmental permits; Mr. Brune has a clear conflict of interest. Mr. Cole cautioned the public does not trust its elected officials; in fact, confirmation of Mr. Brune, who has advanced the interests of foreign mining companies and lobbied for decreased environmental protections, would illustrate who holds power in Alaska. He concluded confirmation of Mr. Brune would be a disservice to democracy and to present and future generations of Alaskans, who do not believe the government works for them because public opinion has no bearing on the actions of their representatives, but corporate spending does. Mr. Cole advised the system is corrupt.

[2:20:47 PM](#)

JORDEN NIGRO said she is a lifelong Alaskan and asked the committee not to confirm Mr. Brune's appointment because his background as a mining industry spokesman is in clear conflict with the mission of DEC, which is to conserve, improve, and protect Alaska's natural resources and environment. Alaskans deserve a commissioner who is nonbiased and not beholden to

private industry; the appointment of Mr. Brune is an insult to Alaskans by an administration that lacks a vision for the state. She opined the committee has a vision that prioritizes the land, considers future generations, and understands the importance of its actions.

[2:22:03 PM](#)

TOM GLASS said he has been a commercial fisherman for 31 years and opposed the confirmation of Mr. Brune because of his record advocating for mining and the Pebble mine.

[2:22:56 PM](#)

ERIN WILAHAN said although she respects Mr. Brune's work experience and demeanor, DEC is a "poor fit" for Mr. Brune due to his background, prior mining affiliations, conflict of interest, and uncompromising support for Pebble mine. She read a quote from Mr. Brune, and opined Mr. Brune has clearly and repeatedly expressed his support for the Pebble mine project and questioned whether he would consider local concerns related to any development project.

[2:23:56 PM](#)

MEGHAN GERVAIS said she is a commercial fisher who holds a drift permit and fishes in Bristol Bay in the summer. On behalf of her children and herself, she expressed her opposition to the appointment, based on Mr. Brune's long history working for mining interests, which is in conflict with his position at DEC.

[2:24:43 PM](#)

SELIVAN BASARGIN expressed his opposition to Mr. Brune because of the Pebble mine. He noted in Canada a mine dam failed and caused environmental damage which was not cleaned up; if that happened [in Bristol Bay] fish would be poisoned, and he would not be able to fish.

[2:25:42 PM](#)

TESS HOSTETTER urged the committee to not advance Mr. Brune's nomination because the commissioner of DEC should be rooted in conservation; further, the commissioner should be one Alaskans can trust to protect Alaska and not bend to the needs of developers. She opined Mr. Brune will not act impartially and his work experiences are very ill-placed for the commissioner of

DEC. His appointment is irresponsible and inappropriate as his interests seem more focused on development than protecting and conserving Alaska's land, resources, and water.

[2:27:15 PM](#)

CLAIRE SANCHEZ said she did not support the confirmation of Mr. Brune because the commissioner of DEC is a fair decision-maker grounded in environmental conservation; Mr. Brune's previous work with Anglo American mining company proves otherwise. She related the appointment is disrespectful to Alaskans and Mr. Brune is not appropriate for the position, which requires someone with experience and dedication to the mission of conserving, improving, and protecting Alaska's natural resources and environment to enhance the health, safety, economic, and social wellbeing of Alaskans.

[2:28:11 PM](#)

ARTHUR BLOOM stated his agreement with most of the previous testimony and his opposition to the nomination of [Mr. Brune].

[2:28:58 PM](#)

MARK LISAC said he has lived in Alaska for 36 years and urged the committee to oppose the confirmation of Mr. Brune, who has a conflict of interest and glossed over his career lobbying and advocating for foreign mining companies. Further, he served the Resource Development Council - which exists only to promote mines and dams - in direct conflict with DEC that is responsible for reviewing permit applications for mines. Mr. Lisac questioned Mr. Brune's claims and testimony before the Senate Resources Standing Committee related to his stance on the Pebble project. Mr. Lisac reviewed the responsibilities of DEC and pointed out Mr. Brune opposes the basic mission of DEC and has spent his career advocating for mines over the interests of Alaskans. He cautioned against creating more Superfund sites in Alaska.

[2:30:32 PM](#)

ERIC FEIGE, former member of the Alaska House of Representatives, said the committee's task is to review the qualifications of the appointee and determine whether he has the leadership talent, managerial skill, and requisite technical knowledge to perform his duties. Mr. Feige said his experience, as a former chair of the House Resources Standing Committee, is

that Mr. Brune represented various organizations with personal integrity and worked to solve issues. Mr. Brune has been a successful manager under difficult circumstances and has a solid academic background and early experience in Prince William Sound where he saw the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Mr. Feige related Mr. Brune has solid experience dealing with the government, and the public, in various roles and has brought a perspective to DEC that will balance its regulatory, environmental, and customer service aspects due to his successful career.

[2:33:12 PM](#)

KYLE KNIGHT stated his opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Brune as his nomination is inappropriate, unethical, and unacceptable. The nomination [of Mr. Brune] demonstrates a preference by the administration for big business and big money over the interests of Alaskans.

[2:34:18 PM](#)

MARTHA MCKINNEY said her daughter fishes in Bristol Bay every summer and spoke in opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Brune due to his conflict of interest, his bias, and his past experience. She recalled in 2012, EPA issued a decision that the Pebble mine proposal would negatively impact Bristol Bay salmon; in 2014, EPA proposed to limit mining within Bristol Bay; in 2017, EPA ignored scientific study and overwhelming public support and withdrew protections. She strongly urged the committee to not approve the confirmation of Mr. Brune and thereby prevent a tragic choice.

[2:35:55 PM](#)

BRIAN HIMELBLOOM informed the committee he is a 32-year resident of Kodiak Island and expressed his adamant opposition to Mr. Brune's nomination because he not qualified and lacks the knowledge to protect air and water quality and environmental health, as tasked by the Division of Environmental Health, DEC. He suggested Mr. Brune is well-qualified to serve the Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources. He cautioned against pitting the renewable resources of salmon fisheries against mining.

[2:37:30 PM](#)

NINA VIZCARRONDO said she is a previous subsistence chair for the Alaska Native Sisterhood in Sitka. She cautioned people with monetary interests who have power in government [positions] cannot speak for and properly defend Alaska's environment because there is an obvious conflict of interest. Ms. Vizcarrondo urged the committee to represent Alaskans and fail to appoint Mr. Brune.

[2:38:06 PM](#)

VERNA KOLYAHA said she was born and raised in [Pedro Bay] and opined Mr. Brune is wrong for the appointment because he is jeopardizing her way of life and that of future generations.

[2:38:40 PM](#)

DAVE ATCHUSON agreed with most of the previous speakers and urged that the committee not support the nominee due to his obvious conflict of interest. He said Anglo American has a disastrous environmental track record and Mr. Brune cannot be objective; further, Mr. Brune's appointment will deepen distrust of government.

[2:39:58 PM](#)

COLE HANSEN said he is a second-generation Bristol Bay fisher and his livelihood is dependent upon the sustainable management of Alaska's natural resources. He opined Mr. Brune has serious conflicts of interest that prevent his leadership of DEC: he is a former spokesman for Anglo American and a board member of the Alaska Miners Association. Mr. Hansen said mining lobbyists should not be trusted to make decisions about the use of Alaska's resources, especially the permitting process for the Pebble mine. He cautioned predictability in regulations means "... letting miners and resource extraction do what they will ...." He repeated the DEC mission statement and urged the committee to reject the confirmation of Mr. Brune.

[2:41:18 PM](#)

LINDSEY BLOOM, Project Manager, Commercial Fisherman for Bristol Bay, informed the committee she is a member of a Bristol Bay fishing family that has fished for several generations. She said Commercial Fisherman for Bristol Bay represents the largest salmon fleet in Alaska and pointed out in 2018 Bristol Bay represented \$1.5 billion in economic activity and was responsible for approximately 47 percent of the value of salmon

in Alaska. Ms. Bloom recalled one of the first meetings related to the Pebble project was held jointly by the Department of Natural Resources, DEC, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and mine interests. When fisherman brought forward concerns about the [permitting process for Pebble mine] they were told not to worry because they would be protected by the state's rigorous permitting process: a fair, science-based process that one can trust. She remarked:

To me this nomination, it flies in the face of, of that promise and we don't have to look further than what's already been said with Twitter feeds and media posts about where Jason Brune stands on the Pebble project, it's also disturbing that [he] clearly harbors some distain for commercial fishing in general, which you can also find in his social media feeds.

[2:44:19 PM](#)

MIKE SATRE said he is a lifelong Alaskan who works in the mining industry and who is speaking for himself. Mr. Satre said he has known Mr. Brune for many years as a man with passion for Alaska, and its people, environment, and resources. He is also a man of honor and integrity with work experience that some view as a conflict; however, all commissioners should have educational, work, and life experiences to serve Alaskans while following the law and process. He advised Mr. Brune is a man of process who will follow the rule of law. Mr. Satre urged the committee to support Mr. Brune's nomination.

[2:46:10 PM](#)

CASEY JANZ said she has been a resident of Kodiak for 40 years. She expressed her strong opposition to the nomination of Mr. Brune because he has demonstrated his position on Pebble mine and his past words and actions demonstrate a conflict of interest with protecting the environment. She urged the committee to not advance his confirmation.

[2:47:03 PM](#)

CLARK WITNEY JR., on behalf of his children and himself, spoke in strong opposition to the nomination of Mr. Brune. Regarding Mr. Brune's employment at Anglo American, he said Anglo American received profits from South Africa and slave labor.

[2:47:54 PM](#)

MELANIE BROWN said she is a lifelong Alaskan, a Tribal citizen of Naknek Native village, and a Bristol Bay permit holder. She acknowledged Mr. Brune has a very substantial resume that was designed for mining proponents. Further, she opined the low ranking of mine permitting in Alaska as stated by Mr. Brune is because Alaskans do not grant social license to projects such as the proposed Pebble mine. As acting commissioner of DEC, Mr. Brune has not listened; in fact, he has issued a permit to the Donlin gold mine project for waste management that has demonstrated his willingness to bend the law, create loopholes, and redefine terms. Ms. Brown urged Alaskans to review the waste management permit issued by DEC.

[2:49:48 PM](#)

WOODY CYR said he has a background in ecology, fisheries, and soils and is vehemently opposition to the nomination of Mr. Brune. He cautioned in 20 years the effects of today's decisions will be seen and he urged the committee to use its power to institute "checks and balances."

[2:51:12 PM](#)

FRANCES BRANN said she has been an Alaska resident since 1975 and cautioned against appointing a commissioner of DEC who supports the Pebble Partnership and large-scale mining. She opined this is not just an Alaska problem: tourists come from around the world; poison in the sockeye salmon are sold around the world and other animals and humans who eat the fish will carry the heavy metal contamination around the globe. She said the economic and environmental costs of permitting the [Pebble] mine are too high to risk; Mr. Brune is a champion of large-scale mining, is not neutral, and should not be appointed commissioner of DEC.

[2:52:22 PM](#)

CHANDLER O'CONNELL said she is a lifelong Alaskan and part of a fishing family. She expressed her belief Mr. Brune has not earned the trust of Alaskans and thus she is opposed to his confirmation.

[2:52:50 PM](#)

VIKKI JO KENNEDY acknowledged Mr. Brune's fortitude; however, she said she could not support his confirmation.

2:53:41 PM

KEITH COMSTOCK, President and CEO of Juneau Hydropower/Juneau District Heating, on behalf of the Alaska Independent Power Producers Association read the following statement:

The Alaska Independent Power Producers Association goal is to encourage and promote independent power production in the State of Alaska. AIPPA respectfully submits this letter of support of Jason Brune to serve as our next commissioner of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. Mr. Brune has a history of supporting lower cost, renewable energy development in Alaska and has demonstrated his fact and science-based approach to regulation. He has earned a well-deserved reputation in his business dealings and is open and approachable by those who have worked with him that include Native, environmental, and nonprofit interests. He has served on the Alaska Sealife Center board, Cook Inlet beluga whale endangered species act recovery team, etc., etc. Mr. Brune has a demonstrated record ....

2:55:03 PM

DAVE CANNON said he is a fish biologist who lives in Aniak. He is a 20-year Alaska resident who witnessed the decline of salmon, steelhead, bull trout, Pacific lamprey and other fishes of the Pacific Northwest. The decline was due to many reasons including habitat alteration and hydropower dams. In Idaho, mining played a substantial role in direct habitat modification or eradication, or in the degradation of water quality, and industry fought all regulations to halt the decline. At all levels, environmental stressors are mounting; there is no doubt building the Pebble mine would have an impact on the important salmon fishery in Bristol Bay. Mr. Cannon concluded Mr. Brune has a strong conflict of interest and he opposed his nomination.

2:56:55 PM

STEVE SCHOONMAKER spoke in opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation due to his gross conflict of interest.

2:57:27 PM

TRISTAN CHANEY opined Mr. Brune is unfit for DEC because of his past views on mining, especially the Pebble mine in Southwest Alaska. The best clean water from all over Alaska deserves the best [commissioner of DEC].

[2:58:31 PM](#)

JIM CLARK said he has been a resident of Alaska for 50 years and served as transition director and chief of staff for former Governor Frank Murkowski. In that position, he helped select a number of commissioners, and he pointed out one's involvement with mining does not equate with being not qualified; he noted two prior commissioners, Ernesta Ballard, whose work experience was heavily involved in logging, and Larry Harding, who was an attorney for Red Dog mine, proved to be adequate commissioners of DEC. Mr. Clark said Mr. Brune has a background in science and a lot of experience in various industries. He urged the committee to look past the caricature of Mr. Brune and also look at the experience of a previous appointee who had represented mining and has been a great commissioner.

[3:00:16 PM](#)

LINDSAY LAYLAND expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation due to his obvious conflict of interest in reviewing mining permits and his previous employment with mining companies. She urged the committee to do its job by listening to over 50 of the 55 Alaskans who have testified so far in opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation.

[3:01:27 PM](#)

CONSTANTINE JOHNSON, on behalf of his family and himself, spoke in opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Brune because Mr. Brune would be unable to provide a fair and neutral position on the Pebble project, which poses a great threat to Mr. Johnson's region, due to Mr. Brune's previous work experience with a company supporting the Pebble project. Further, Mr. Brune has made recent statements reconfirming his support for development at Pebble. Mr. Johnson concluded Mr. Brune would not be an objective commissioner and urged the committee to not support his confirmation.

[3:02:14 PM](#)

DONNA RAE FAULKNER said she was strongly opposed to the appointment of Mr. Brune, which she characterized as horrifying and disrespectful. She said she is an Alaskan farmer who cares about food security, the environment, Alaska cultures, and salmon. She acknowledged she is biased against the Pebble mine and Mr. Brune's nomination and biased toward regenerative farming, environmental stewardship, and the health of Alaskans. She pointed out eight additional witnesses at the Homer legislative information office (LIO) are waiting to testify in opposition.

[3:03:31 PM](#)

LISBETH JACKSON informed the committee she is not in support of Mr. Brune for DEC commissioner. She read the mission of DEC and opined Mr. Brune has an impressive resume that does not include the expertise, attitude, or experience to adequately represent the state through DEC. Mr. Brune's work experience has been to develop Alaska's natural resources, and she urged the committee to not confirm Mr. Brune. Ms. Jackson questioned whether the testimony heard would have an impact on the committee's actions.

[3:05:13 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR explained that public testimony is heard during committee hearings and the fact the committee forwards a name for confirmation does not indicate that individuals will be supported by members of the committee. She urged witnesses to continue to advocate for their positions up to the joint session of the legislature, during which members will vote on confirmations.

[3:05:43 PM](#)

SURAJ HOLZWARTH, Executive Director, Whirling Rainbow Foundation, said she is a 40-year resident of Alaska and was speaking on her own behalf and representing Native Americans. Ms. Holzwarth stated Native Americans understand that the preamble to the U.S. Constitution identifies we, the people, as also the fish people, the rock people, and the tree people. She expressed her agreement with previous opposition and questioned veracity and the safety of Alaska's fish, wildlife, air, and water quality. Although Mr. Brune is qualified to represent mining companies; however, water keeps people alive but is being sold off to the industries of oil and gas and mining without consideration of the economy and the amount of time necessary to clean up poisoned water. Ms. Holzwarth stressed the importance

of protecting resources for future generations; in fact, the commissioner of DEC should be a superhero for the environment.

The committee took a brief at ease.

[3:09:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR recessed the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to reconvene at 5:30 p.m.

[5:31:15 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting back to order at 5:31 p.m. Representatives Hannan, and Tarr were present at the call back to order. Representatives Rauscher and Spohnholz arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[5:32:10 PM](#)

BARBARA REILLY stated her strong opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment due to his conflict of interest, bias, lack of qualifications, and his interest in money, power, and mining companies. She said Red Dog mine is a toxic waste pit and noted she has master's degrees in marine science and engineering and opined mining is not a good idea. She said, "this mine is in a seismically active [region] period" and predicted Red Dog mine will fail. She suggested if the state is interested in money, it should keep the fishing industry strong and increase tourism. Ms. Reilly concluded Mr. Brune does not demonstrate the qualifications of conservation, preservation, and improvement of natural resources.

[5:35:23 PM](#)

HEATHER FORBES said she is strongly opposed to Mr. Brune's nomination and asked whether the committee can fail to advance Mr. Brune's name.

CO-CHAIR TARR advised appointees names are forwarded from committee for consideration before a joint session of the legislature; during the joint session, members vote on confirmations.

MS. FORBES suggested there must be a more neutral person for the job.

[5:36:55 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[5:37:08 PM](#)

STEVEN ALBERT said he is retired after 27 years as a biologist with ADFG; he said as part of his work he visited the Pebble site and its surrounding area and warned about many facets of the project. Mr. Albert opined Mr. Brune is not impartial and has no professional experience that could ensure the public Alaska's water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife habitat would be protected anywhere in the state.

[5:40:17 PM](#)

ANI LEE expressed her appreciation for Alaska's fish and water and said she does not trust Mr. Brune to protect them. Thirty-five years ago, she emigrated from China where the government is willing to ruin the environment in order to increase the gross domestic product. Alaskans should preserve Alaska's pristine environment, and Mr. Brune is not sufficiently neutral for the job, and does not have a background in environmental protections.

[5:42:03 PM](#)

KRISTEN ULERY said she lives and works in King Salmon where she relies on Bristol Bay's strong salmon runs. She said she opposes the nomination of Mr. Brune because the ecological, economic, and social value of Bristol Bay's salmon fisheries demand the respect and attention of a commissioner who will not put big business first, and who is unbiased. Ms. Ulery said there is evidence Mr. Brune has a clear bias favoring Pebble mine, and his confirmation would be unethical, inappropriate, and irresponsible.

[5:43:00 PM](#)

TOM HARRIS stated Mr. Brune has served as a board member of Alaska's first and largest Tribal Conservation District in Tyonek, that has a mission to conserve, enhance, and encourage the wise use of natural resources. He related the Kenai Peninsula has had a documented reduction in wildlife harvest, a loss of 90 percent of the renowned moose harvest and formation of the Tribal Conservation District will bring an abundance of wildlife to the area. There are now 23 Tribal Conservation Districts in Alaska and Mr. Brune has been part of that movement

which will bring in millions of dollars of wildlife resource renewal funding without any requirement of state matching funds. Mr. Harris encouraged those who don't know Mr. Brune to do so. Mr. Brune also worked in management at Cook Inlet Region, Inc., in charge of relationships between villages and corporations. Mr. Harris said, "And in no case did he put the environmental health of the community ahead of profit ...." He said he supports Mr. Brune who is a man of integrity and honesty and who strives for fairness and equity in all tasks.

[5:45:21 PM](#)

KAMPER HART expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune. She said she is a deckhand in Bristol Bay and believes someone supportive of Pebble mine could harm her family and families like hers.

[5:45:44 PM](#)

GEORGE ORTMAN said he has been a fishing guide since 1981 - now retired. He said he has been to Talarik Creek and Kuktuli River, which are areas inappropriate for a gold mine as are the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak rivers. He said Mr. Brune is the worst man for the job and legislators should not consider his appointment.

[5:46:29 PM](#)

DEBRA LATHROP spoke in opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Brune because he has neither the background or the inclination to protect and preserve Alaska's waterways, as evidenced by his nonsupport of the Ocean Ranger program, [Division of Water, DEC], and his background as a lobbyist for Pebble mine interests. She suggested there are better choices for commissioner.

[5:47:19 PM](#)

LIZ RANGEL testified in opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment because of his history as spokesman for Anglo American and the Pebble mine project. There is no evidence he can remain neutral in his decision-making or that he can protect and conserve the environment in Bristol Bay and elsewhere in Alaska; in fact, Alaskans prefer a DEC commissioner who works in Alaska's best interest and not that of mining companies.

[5:48:04 PM](#)

ALYSSA QUINTYNE testified in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Brune and directed attention to her previously-submitted written testimony. She said Mr. Brune is pro-extractive and pro-fossil fuel and listed his activities with RDC, the Alaska Miners Association, and as a Pebble mine spokesman. She said DEC needs a commissioner who will advocate for Alaskans and for villages, and provide competent guidance on projects. She recalled testimony by Mr. Brune did not reveal his true position on extractive projects, in the case of a violation, in an emergency, or how he would report to the legislature. Ms. Quintyne acknowledged others have said Mr. Brune has integrity, but she has not seen a history of expertise and neutrality.

[5:51:11 PM](#)

ROBERT HOCKEMA said he is a student at the University of Alaska Anchorage and strongly opposes Mr. Brune's nomination. He read the DEC mission statement and opined an appointee's work experience should be indicative of an ability to serve the purpose of a department, not to undermine its capacity to serve the public.

[5:52:30 PM](#)

RICHARD HERRAN said he is a registered nurse who has lived in Alaska for 39 years. He said he and members of his household fish and preserve fish to consume for health benefits. The Pebble mine project represents a potentially significant danger to the natural environment, spawning salmon, freshwater animals, and organisms. Developments such as the Pebble mine proposal fail and destroy living organisms and biomes. Mr. Brune has been a proponent of damming the Susitna River, which would lead to a tremendous loss of habitat; the mining industry does not care about fish, clean water, or clean air, and Mr. Brune has worked for the mining industry. Mr. Herran equated Mr. Brune's confirmation to that of DEC not caring about these issues either. He urged for the legislature to decide whether it represents Alaskan citizens and voters or industrial entities.

[5:54:32 PM](#)

ADAM WEBER said he is a pilot who sees that fish are an important resource to the communities in rural areas of Alaska and especially Southwest Alaska. Mr. Brune's nomination is a threat to an ecosystem and Pebble mine is a mistake that could not be undone. Confirmation of Mr. Brune would be a blow to Alaskans and a betrayal of Alaska by its government. He

disagreed with the spurious argument that the Tyonek area represents Mr. Brune's success and observed there is little commercial hunting and fishing traffic on that side of [Cook Inlet]. He urged the committee not to confirm Mr. Brune.

[5:55:24 PM](#)

NIKOS PASTOS said he is a lifelong Alaskan whose father was a hunting guide. He is an environmental sociologist and referred to previously submitted comments that were written on behalf of Alaska's Big Village Network, a voluntary association. He addressed the major social impacts to the Great Land: cultural, economic, and spiritual. He cautioned natural resources are being robbed away from the people at the expense of the state's rich cultures and ecosystems. All members of Alaska's Big Village Network oppose Mr. Brune's appointment and even though he may be a decent person, he was paid by industry to develop a project harmful to Alaska. Furthermore, there is the question of how development projects such as the Pebble mine, Donlin Gold, and the natural gas pipeline to Crooked Creek "build on each other and the, and the aggregate impact to community, culture, the economy, the air - you know - the natural environment are just way too costly."

[5:58:17 PM](#)

MIKE BRONSON spoke in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Brune. He said for 20 years he worked in the oil industry in Alaska and is familiar with its operations and the regulations implemented by DEC; further, he has run and floated rivers all over Alaska and eats plenty of salmon. Mr. Bronson pointed out the legislature has an opportunity to "step away" from the appointment of Mr. Brune because he is the wrong man for the wrong job.

[5:59:18 PM](#)

CODY JACOBSON stated his opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment. He said Mr. Brune's track record and prior work history have documented that he cannot be impartial. The commissioner of DEC is an extremely important position suited to one who has the right work history without political influence. Mr. Jacobson said his extensive experience in the Bristol Bay area leads him to believe some areas are too sacred and important to be developed; however, Mr. Brune has shown that he favors development.

[6:00:47 PM](#)

LIZ DEAM said she is a lifelong Alaskan and expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment. She said as a Pebble mine spokesman, Mr. Brune has a conflict of interest. Pebble mine is not a project that promotes conservation of the environment nor preservation of Alaska's resources, but seeks profit for its Outside developers. Further, she opined Mr. Brune is not an impartial appointee because his interest may be for profit and personal interest. His appointment would be unethical, biased, and irresponsible, and would do a disserve to the state and its pristine resources. Ms. Deam said a watershed cannot be rebuilt and unprecedented damage cannot be undone.

[6:02:04 PM](#)

JESSICA MCDONNEL said she grew up in the Bristol Bay watershed where she and her husband own and operate a commercial fishing operation. She stressed appointing Mr. Brune is in direct conflict with the position of power he would hold. She questioned Mr. Brune's statement that he has not made up his mind about "Pebble." Alaskans deserve an unbiased permitting process for projects such as Pebble, and the committee can deny Mr. Brune his goal of fast-tracking permits for Pebble mine. Ms. McDonnell said DEC is in charge to enhance the health safety and welfare of Alaskans; Mr. Brune is unfit for this position.

[6:03:12 PM](#)

KATIE DAWSON informed the committee Homer has many fisheries and a lot of tourism activities and expressed her surprise [the state] is still thinking about [permitting] Pebble mine. Therefore, Mr. Brune should not be [commissioner of DEC] because he was a spokesman for Pebble mine and will not be neutral. Ms. Dawson opined Pebble mine will destroy the environment for a long time and it doesn't make sense to give profits to a major corporation.

[6:04:26 PM](#)

EDWARD MCDONNEL said he has been a commercial fisherman for 20 years; he cautioned much time is needed to see the importance of resources to maintain the delicate balance of life existing in Bristol Bay and elsewhere, and how important the resources are to Native people, their culture, spirit, and education. He read the mission of DEC and acknowledged Mr. Brune has an impressive resume, but his interest is limited to the economic portion of

the DEC mission as evidenced by his desire to be commissioner of the department that approves water and air quality permits. Mr. McDonnell urged the committee to remember the other elements of DEC's mission - conservation and the protection of the health and safety and social wellbeing of Alaskans - and to vote no on Mr. Brune.

[6:06:18 PM](#)

LEONARD YUKMIS said for 53 years he has hunted and fished the hills and streams of the Bristol Bay area. He said Mr. Brune's resume is "laughable" and that he did not want Mr. Brune to be DEC commissioner. He related he is a moderate Republican and will provide additional written testimony.

[6:07:29 PM](#)

IDA NELSON said she lives in Igiugig, 40 miles away from the proposed Pebble mine, and is testifying in opposition to Mr. Brune's appointment.

[6:08:08 PM](#)

MARK NIVER, President, Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay, informed the committee the 1,400 members of his organization are opposed to the appointment of Mr. Brune because Mr. Brune has stated in public media that he has no doubt Pebble mine can coexist with the Bristol Bay watershed. He urged the committee not to advance the appointment and to listen to the amount of opposition to the Pebble mine.

[6:09:38 PM](#)

BRYCE NIVER said he is a lifelong resident and urged the committee to not advance Mr. Brune's [confirmation] due to Mr. Brune's obvious bias.

[6:10:22 PM](#)

DANIEL SONDERGAARD said he was from Minneapolis and is strongly opposed to Mr. Brune's appointment. In response to Co-Chair Tarr, he explained he spends his summer fishing in Alaska.

[6:11:44 PM](#)

SUSAN AMUNDSON said she is a consultant to organizations in the workplace and is opposed to the confirmation of Mr. Brune. She

agreed with others that Mr. Brune has a conflict of interest related to permitting the proposed Pebble mine because of his positions with the Alaska Miners Association and the Pebble mine, which are perceived and direct conflicts of interest. Ms. Amundson concluded Mr. Brune would be biased, his confirmation would be unethical, and it would be hard for him to consider what is best for Alaska, its people, and its resources.

[6:13:17 PM](#)

CASEY COUPCHIAK said she is from Togiak, a small coastal village on the edge of Bristol Bay which is very beautiful and where her family has fished for centuries and relied on the land for sustenance. It is a place where wildlife and salmon have fueled their bodies every year. Her family's roots go very deep there and Pebble mine would destroy it all. She expressed her opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation.

[6:14:37 PM](#)

REBECCA TEMPLE said she is a lifelong Alaskan and a Bristol Bay fisherman who opposes the appointment of Mr. Brune. She said Mr. Brune presents a conflict of interest with the purpose of DEC, and she read from the DEC mission statement. Mr. Brune's work history includes lobbying for the proposed Pebble mine and she described aspects of the open pit mine project. She opined Mr. Brune's work history prevents him from being neutral and impartial when reviewing mine permits.

[6:15:26 PM](#)

MARGARET ANDERSON urged the committee to oppose the confirmation of Mr. Brune because his obvious bias is a danger to the heart of Alaska. [Due to technical difficulties further testimony was indecipherable.]

[6:17:20 PM](#)

KATE CRUMP said her Bristol Bay business, Forget Adventure Travel, is a sport fishing outfitter that employs four people and brings over one hundred tourists to the region each season. She testified in strong opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation as he has a conflict of interest based upon his past affiliation with the Pebble Partnership and the mining industry. Ms. Crump said Mr. Brune cannot be impartial in making decisions related to Pebble mine as evidenced by his public statements; his appointment would be unethical. She advised the federal

permitting process has not been fair or transparent thus Alaskans cannot trust the process to Mr. Brune. Ms. Crump said her business experience in Oregon made her aware of the danger of trading the natural resource of salmon for industries' gain; Bristol Bay is the last wild salmon fishery left in the world.

[6:19:27 PM](#)

BERTHA PAEIAN-LOCKKUK said she has served the Traditional Council of Togiak, the United Tribes of Bristol Bay, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and Southwest Region School District. On behalf of her community of Togiak, she informed the committee her community is not in support of Mr. Brune's appointment because the residents live there year around and if their needs are not met, they will not go to someone else's yard and dig for income. She said the major economy in Togiak is based on commercial fishing and has been for a long time; even when salmon prices fluctuate residents remain in the community and some rely on salmon for their subsistence lifestyle. Community leaders must serve their communities, regions, and the state, and in the best interest of the village, she urged the committee to carry on their voices opposing Mr. Brune's [confirmation] and development of the Pebble mine project. Ms. Paeian-Lockkuk stated the people in her village pay their taxes and expressed her belief it is the committee's duty to listen to their voices.

[6:23:30 PM](#)

KRISTIN CARPENTER said she opposes the confirmation of Mr. Brune on behalf of herself and the Copper River Watershed Project, an entity that is a past grantee for DEC "section 319" funds and which has worked with DEC to mitigate stormwater pollution and on other issues. She stated her concern about Mr. Brune's ability to implement DEC's mission related to Alaska's water quality, pollutant discharges, and oil spill prevention and response, because his past work history does not reflect experience in these matters.

[6:25:12 PM](#)

CARL WASSILIE expressed his strong opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation. Mr. Brune has advocated for the destruction of Alaska's subsistence resources by allowing development, and that is a concern to Mr. Wassilie and others. [Due to technical difficulties portions of the testimony were indecipherable.] Mr. Wassilie urged the committee to recognize the threat of resource extraction over the basic benefits that provide

Alaskans with nutritional, physical, spiritual, and cultural protections of natural resources that are renewable.

[6:28:35 PM](#)

CAROL FORD said she lives in Homer and Nikiski. She opined although Mr. Brune seeks to be commissioner of DEC, he has shown himself to be against conserving Alaska's environment and prefers short-term monetary gain; in fact, to balance debate on Alaska's future natural abundance, the commissioner of DEC must be a strong voice for environmental conservation, reason, and for guiding the protection of the balance of the natural resources. Ms. Ford questioned how many voices are needed to bring understanding that this appointment and some projects are abominations.

[6:30:03 PM](#)

WALLACE MILLS said he has been an Alaska resident for over 40 years and is a retired lawyer, pilot, and active Episcopal priest. He expressed his belief Mr. Brune "is the wrong person and the wrong project, both" and said he is in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Brune. Mr. Mills agreed with others who have said Mr. Brune has an "unconscionable" conflict of interest. He referred to an EPA assessment of impacts of the Pebble mine on water and air quality in the Bristol Bay watershed that was based on "good science"; in addition, the project is disruptive to Homer and Kodiak because of the infrastructure required in [Kachemak] Bay and Lake Iliamna and an affront to Bristol Bay and its renewable resources. He urged the committee to not confirm Mr. Brune.

[6:32:07 PM](#)

TYLER CASKEY said he has been a sportfishing guide for 12 years on the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Island, the Kenai Peninsula, and the Nushagak River drainage and watershed. He said he owns and operates a business in Ekwok and is speaking for himself and his company. Mr. Caskey said he is opposed to Mr. Brune and to the Pebble mine [because] he hoped his grandchildren in the next 30-60 years will have same opportunity that he has, [but] that may not happen with the mine. Mr. Caskey said he has listened to others and waited two hours to give his testimony opposing Mr. Brune and the Pebble mine.

[6:35:22 PM](#)

GORDY VERNON spoke in opposition to Mr. Brune's confirmation. He said he holds stock in five iron ore mining companies, two of which have suffered tailings dam failure - a 40 percent failure rate in one month. The proposed tailings dam at Pebble mine is seven hundred feet tall, which would be one of the ten tallest dams in the world. Mr. Vernon said the dam is to keep ponded water in perpetuity, and he questioned who would keep the dam from leaking, because tailings dams leak. He said he shares responsibility for two dam failures - and for deaths caused by a dam failure - and he is worried about insidious leaks and leaching from the dam that would be genocide for the Yupik people and their way of life.

[6:37:31 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR, after ascertaining no one further wished to testify, closed public testimony. The confirmation of Jason Brune was held in committee for possible further public testimony and the committee's consideration.

[6:39:29 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [6:39] p.m.