

**HOUSE BILL NO. 233**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVES EDGMON, Josephson, Hannan, Stutes, Hall**

**Introduced: 5/20/25**

**Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries, Resources**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act prohibiting certain mining activities within the watershed of the Bristol Bay**  
2 **Fisheries Reserve."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 \* **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section  
5 to read:

6 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

7 (1) the Bristol Bay watershed is a region of unparalleled ecological value,  
8 boasting salmon diversity and productivity unrivaled elsewhere in North America;

9 (2) the region's salmon resources have supported Alaska Native people for  
10 thousands of years and continue to support local communities and Alaska Native cultures  
11 throughout Southwest Alaska;

12 (3) the Bristol Bay watershed's largely undisturbed aquatic habitats and  
13 productive salmon populations support one of the most valuable commercial fisheries in the  
14 world, creating \$2,200,000,000 each year in economic activity and supporting 15,000 jobs;

1 (4) the Bristol Bay region is home to a vibrant sport fishing, hunting, tourism,  
2 and recreation economy, supporting 7,000 fishing and hunting jobs and thousands of full- and  
3 part-time tourism and recreation jobs;

4 (5) in 1972, the Seventh Alaska State Legislature determined that a heightened  
5 level of protection was needed for Bristol Bay fisheries and acted by designating the Bristol  
6 Bay Fisheries Reserve to protect the longstanding and valuable commercial, subsistence, and  
7 sport fisheries in the region;

8 (6) the region described as the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve and the rivers,  
9 streams, and lakes that produce the fish continue to require the same level of protection as  
10 when the reserve was created; and

11 (7) the considerations that justified the 1972 action also warrant new  
12 protections to prevent hardrock mining activities that would risk polluting the region's river  
13 systems, ground water, aquifer systems, and other hydrologic regimes, including any  
14 hydrologically interrelated or connected surface and ground water, within the drainage  
15 systems that connect to the surface water of Bristol Bay.

16 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 38.05.142 is repealed and reenacted to read:

17 **Sec. 38.05.142. Mining activities prohibited within watershed of Bristol**  
18 **Bay Fisheries Reserve.** (a) Metallic sulfide mining activities are prohibited within the  
19 watershed of the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve designated in AS 38.05.140(f).

20 (b) In this section, "metallic sulfide mining activities" means mining activities  
21 to extract sulfide minerals or precious metals from sulfide-bearing rock.