



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL
ADMINISTRATOR

March 13, 2014

Mr. Tom Collier
Chief Executive Officer
Pebble Limited Partnership
3201 C Street, Suite 604
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Collier:

I am replying to your March 11, 2014 letter requesting an extension of time to the 15 day period to respond to the EPA's February 28, 2014 letter initiating the Clean Water Act section 404(c) process.

I want to clarify that the initial 15-day process is just one of many opportunities the Pebble Partnership and others are provided to submit comments and participate in the section 404(c) review. The 404(c) review process is established to facilitate submittal of information to the EPA for the record to demonstrate, for example, that no unacceptable adverse environmental effects to aquatic resources would result from discharges associated with mining the Pebble deposit or that actions could be taken to prevent unacceptable adverse effects to waters from such mining. The time period described in 40 C.F.R. §231.3(a)(2) is designed to be an initial opportunity to provide a response and additional information that may not be in the record. The regulations provide further opportunity to provide information through a formal public comment period and opportunity for a public hearing if the EPA decides to proceed to the next phase of the 404(c) process. At any step in the review process, the EPA could decide that further 404(c) review is not necessary, based on information submitted by the Pebble Partnership or any other party. Therefore, your input is not limited to this initial response period.

Your letter supports Alaska's request that the Agency's section 404(c) review be stayed until permit applications for the Pebble Mine are submitted and the Corps has completed its review under the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Neither the Corps nor the EPA regulations prevent permit applications from being submitted or reviewed. Our regulations make clear, however, that a permit for the Pebble Mine may not be issued while a section 404(c) review is underway.

The EPA is extending the time period for both the State and the Pebble Partnership to respond to the EPA's February 28th letter by 45 days, to April 29, 2014. As we discussed in our meeting on March 6, 2014, the EPA welcomes the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Pebble Partnership to engage in continued discussions on this matter. I assure you that the information the Pebble Partnership provides for the record during this period or at any step in the review process will be fully considered.

If you have any questions, or wish to discuss any of these issues, please contact Rick Parkin, who is the Agency's lead for the Bristol Bay matter, at (206) 553-8574.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. McLerran". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dennis J. McLerran
Regional Administrator