

Stevens Expresses Concerns to EPA Over Bristol Bay Mining

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{audio}/images/stories/mp3/120613.stevens_on_epa_pebble.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Kodiak

Senator Gary Stevens was in Dillingham last week for a hearing by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on its Draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment concerning the potential effects of large scale mining in Bristol Bay. He said the testimony there was different than that heard in Anchorage the day before.

The public

comment period on the EPA's draft assessment continues through July 23. You can submit your comments online [here](#).

-- (Pebble 1 on the water.") 32 sec "Heard a lot of course in Anchorage ... on the fish and

He said another fear was that consumers may stop considering Alaska salmon as being fresh and natural:

-- (Pebble 2 25 sec "That's really crucial to all Alaskans ... will not be

successful.")

Stevens

turned aside criticism that the EPA was jumping the gun on doing the analysis before the Pebble Partnership even applies for permits to mine:

-- (Pebble 3 26 sec "I think the EPA's analysis ... and that's what they're doing.")

A large

open pit mine would need an equally large amount of space to store what are called tailings - basically the rock that holds the microscopic pieces separated from the target ore. The tailing pond in this case could be the size of a lake and contain water contaminated by the chemicals used to separate ore from rock. Holding that lake back with a huge earthen dam is Stevens' main concern:

-- (Pebble 4 27 sec "There's going to be a lot of ... and protect the fisheries.")

Stevens'

current Senate district overlaps much of the area where the Pebble Mine would be located, but under the recent reapportionment of election districts, he would represent much more of Southwest Alaska in the legislature - if he is re-elected in the fall.

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