



July 31, 2008

The Honorable Sarah Palin  
Governor  
State of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Proposals to Create Mining District in Portions of Bristol Bay Watershed

Dear Governor Palin and Secretary Kempthorne,

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the nation's recreational fishing industry trade association. ASA represents over 750 sportfishing manufacturers, retailers, and angler advocacy groups, as well as the interests of America's 40 million recreational anglers. ASA safeguards and promotes the social, economic, and conservation values of sportfishing in America which generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion-a-year impact on the nation's economy, creating employment for over one million people.

ASA is concerned about the proposals for mining in southwest Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed. In addition to the livelihood and recreational enjoyment of Alaskans, anglers from around the world travel to Bristol Bay to pursue some of the world's last great runs of wild salmon and trophy rainbow trout. Because of its ability to support sustainable populations of all five species of Pacific salmon - king, sockeye, silver, chum, and pink - as well as rainbow trout, arctic char, grayling, northern pike, lake trout and Dolly Varden, the Bristol Bay watershed is a national and international treasure.

ASA respectfully requests that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management maintain the current prohibition on hard rock mine prospecting and development on publicly-owned land it manages in the Bristol Bay area. ASA further requests that the State of Alaska support the federal prohibition by denying water withdrawal, dam construction, and other permit applications recently submitted and related to hard rock mining.

**AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION**

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The Honorable Sarah Palin  
The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
July 31, 2008  
Page 2

Through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, passed in 1950 at the request of the sportfishing industry, special excise taxes on fishing gear and boating fuel have contributed over \$268.5 million to Alaska fish conservation. At nearly \$17.5 million, Alaska received the highest state apportionment of these funds in 2007. The Bristol Bay salmon fishery generates an estimated \$332 million per year, with sportfishing contributing a substantial \$61 million of that total.

Proposals to create a large mining district in the Bristol Bay region pose a significant risk to the water quality and fish habitat of the area. Hard rock mining exposes the Bristol Bay region's incredible fishery resources to what sportfishing industry members, and the sportsmen they serve, believe is an unacceptable level of risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Gordon C. Robertson  
Vice President