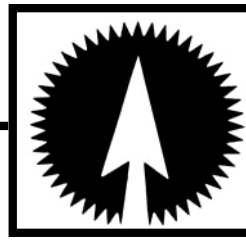


Alaska Forest Association



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May 28, 2013

Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket (Mail Code: 28221T)
Docket # EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Sirs;

The Alaska Forest Association is a trade association representing more than 120 members sharing an interest in the timber industry and public lands of Alaska. The AFA provides a health insurance program and a retirement plan for the timber industry, a Scholarship program and we sponsor a Sustainable Forestry Initiative program for Alaska. We believe in the wise use of Alaska's natural resources to support all businesses and the economic health of Alaska's local communities.

We believe that large development projects can be designed and implemented with minimal risk to the environment. The worst case risks indicated in the EPA Assessment of the potential impacts of large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay area seem exaggerated. A fishery biologist who did studies on the Toutle River said the fisheries there did not suffer such severe, long-term impacts even after the Saint Helens volcano erupted. Any assessments about the impacts of the mine on the resources in the area should be based upon reasonable risk assumptions and the actual plan for developing the mine, not on hypothetical worst-case scenarios.

The Alaska Forest Association requests that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) extend the comment period for the Revised Draft Bristol Bay Assessment (BBA) by at least 120 days.

The comment period ending May 31, 2013 should be extended to adequately allow for public review of the document. The 30-day comment period in place is insufficient and should be extended at least 120 days to allow commenters ample time to provide feedback. The 30-comment period does not provide sufficient time to fully consider responses for such a technical and lengthy document.

Sincerely,

Owen Graham
Executive Director
Alaska Forest Association
111 Stedman Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901