

An Update on the Proposed Pebble Project

This mailer is produced by Lake and Peninsula Borough staff to provide information to residents on the process



APRIL 25, 2019



Lake and Peninsula Borough
PO Box 495
King Salmon AK 99613
www.lakeandpen.com

What is the status of the Federal EIS process?

The process for the Pebble Partnership to acquire all the many permits it needs to build the Pebble mine is quite long. The primary federal permit that Pebble needs is a wetland permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) considers alternative scenarios and possible outcomes from the project. The Corps will use the EIS to issue or deny Federal wetland permits, as well as a few other federal permits.

Additionally, the Pebble Mine will need authorizations from Alaska State agencies. These include permits such a Fish Habitat permits from the Department of Fish and Game; Plan of Operations, Dam Safety, and Reclamation Plan approval from the Department of Natural Resources; or a water discharge permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation. To date, Pebble has not applied for these state permits, so the permit process may continue for a long time, even after the Federal EIS is finalized.



What role does LPB have in the Federal EIS process?

The Lake and Peninsula Borough has partnered with the Army Corps of Engineers as a “Cooperating Agency” with expertise on transportation, cultural resources, socioeconomics, and subsistence use within the Borough. This means that when considering the Borough’s EIS comments on these subjects, the Corps of Engineers recognizes our special expertise in these areas. The Borough may comment on many other subjects for the EIS as well, but such comments will not carry any more weight than an individual’s comments. The Corps is also conducting “Government-to-Government” consultation with the Native tribes within Bristol Bay, and some of the Kenai Peninsula.



What role does LPB have in the permitting process, overall?

The decision about how and if the Pebble Mine proceeds is in the hands of the Federal and State governments. The State Supreme Court considered the Save Our Salmon initiative #2 that the voters of LPB passed in 2011 and ruled that the Borough does not have jurisdiction over State lands. However, the Borough created a section of code that requires developers of large projects to get a Large Project Development permit, which includes a required “socio-economic impact” and a Fiscal Impact study produced by an LPB consultant. (chapter 9.08 of the LPB municipal code)

What does the “Socio-Economic Impact” Development Permit do?

Just as the EIS considers the impact the mine would have to land, water, and wildlife, the Socio-economic Impact study (SEIS) considers how the project could affect people and communities. The state and federal agencies have the responsibility to review the proposed Pebble Mine’s potential



effects on the environment – fish, water quality, wildlife, cultural resources, etc. However, they do not have the responsibility to protect our villages. The Borough does have that responsibility, and it developed the Socioeconomic Impact study to consider the mine’s effect on population, transportation, traffic, employment, income, education, housing, energy, subsistence resource use, and community health & wellbeing. The Large Project development permit provides a mechanism for the

Borough to ensure the Borough government and our residents participate in developing plans and agreements to reduce potential impacts of the project and increase potential benefits. The Socio-Economic Impact Permit, along with the Borough’s existing tax on mining, will assure the Borough and the villages will have enough funding to deal with the impacts of project development and operation.





Photo by Jason Sear, KDLG

How would this permit work?

Through negotiations between LPB and Pebble, the SEIS would produce a list of conditions and agreements the mine would be required to adhere to.

The Borough takes responsibility seriously to protect our villages if the mine is approved. As one individual from Nondalton put it, “I’m a firefighter. I may not like fires, but I sure want be prepared in case one happens.” In a sense, the Borough government is in a similar situation. Some people in the Borough are in favor of the mine, others oppose it. But if the mine is approved by the state and federal government, the Borough wants to do everything it can to capture any positive benefits and avoid negative effects.

Nonetheless, the entire process could take years for the State and Federal governments to grant needed permits along with the expected litigation. Consequently, negotiations to finalize a set of conditions and agreements between LPB and the project developers could be years in the future.

How can I get involved?

FEDERAL LEVEL: To voice your opinion about the EIS, contact the Army Corps of Engineers. They will be taking comments through May 30, 2019. You can submit your comments through testimony at public meetings, email them to drafteis@comments.pebbleprojecteis.com or mail them to:

Program Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers
645 G St.
Suite 100-921
Anchorage, AK 99501

STATE LEVEL: Once the Federal EIS process is complete, at the request of Pebble, the State of Alaska will begin considering individual permit requests. The Pebble Project will need permits from the Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Fish and Game (ADF&G), and Environmental Conservation (DEC). The public notices will be issued, and public hearings will be conducted.

BOROUGH LEVEL: The Borough permit process has begun, and several public meetings were held in the Iliamna Lake area; however, we are always available for additional comments, as the permits are not yet issued. A draft copy of the SEIS will be made available in May 2019. The Borough will again seek public opinion on the report. If you need additional information on this or other matters linked or the proposed mine, please email pebbleopinion@lakeandpen.com or send them to

Lake and Peninsula Borough
PO Box 495
King Salmon AK 99613



Lake and Peninsula Borough
PO Box 495
King Salmon AK 99613

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM Retail

BOX HOLDER
GENERAL DELIVERY