

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, Jan. 16, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Yesterday's release by the Environmental Protection Agency of the final Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment brought praise from a vast coalition of 1,048 sporting groups and businesses opposed to mining operations in the southwest Alaska region. The groups sent a [letter](#) to the EPA today calling on the agency to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to finally protect this international fishing and hunting mecca and ensure it isn't turned into a waste storage site for proposed massive mining operations.

Scott Hed, director of the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska, emphasized the broad support for the conservation of the Bristol Bay region, stating, "Sportsmen and women from across the country have joined forces and worked for years to defend one of the planet's finest sporting destinations. The EPA's watershed assessment identifies the threats posed by massive mining proposals in the region, and hunters and anglers believe it is better to address these very serious concerns up front rather than wait until it may be too late."

One of the largest and most diverse mobilizations of the sporting community in history, coalition members include a range of sporting conservation groups and trade associations including the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Dallas Safari Club, American Fly Fishing Trade Association, Trout Unlimited, Pope & Young Club, Federation of Fly Fishers, Conservation Force, American Sportfishing Association, and more. Many of the most recognizable brands in hunting and fishing products have expressed their wishes to protect Bristol Bay as well, including Sturm, Ruger & Co., Buck Knives, Filson, Orvis, Sage, Simms, Patagonia, and more than 150 others.

"This issue unites the complete spectrum of the sporting community," Hed concluded. "When catch and release anglers and makers of fly rods and reels work in concert with big game hunters and firearm manufacturers, that's a powerful set of interests – all in agreement that large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed is simply the wrong idea in the wrong place. The Obama administration has the rare opportunity to protect jobs, preserve vital hunting and fishing habitats, and secure its conservation legacy by permanently protecting Bristol Bay under the

Clean Water Act. The science is clear; the time to act is now."

The letter and full release accompanying it, which includes comments from leaders of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Dallas Safari Club, and American Fly Fishing Trade Association, can be found [here](#). For more information on yesterday's EPA announcement see the [EPA's official Bristol Bay site](#).

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SOURCE Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska