



Jewelers join Alaskans in London to oppose Pebble mine

A delegation of Alaska Native leaders and commercial fishing community members from Bristol Bay traveled to London in mid-April to confront Anglo American executives and shareholders face-to-face with their concerns about the company's massive Pebble mine project in southwest Alaska. The Pebble mine, if built, would be the largest open-pit copper and gold mine in North America and would sit at the headwaters of the world's most-productive salmon-spawning rivers.



Thomas Tilden, Lydia Olympic, Everett Thompson, and Bobby Andrew from Alaska bring their message to London

The Alaskans, including Thomas Tilden, Chief of the Curyung Tribal Council, and Bobby Andrew, board member of the native group Nunamta Aulukestai, attended the Anglo American annual shareholder meeting to present their concerns. The group raised important questions about the mine's impacts and viability. They also had an article and opinion piece printed in the Times of London, a feature news story on Sky News and garnered extensive press coverage in the UK and Alaska.

UK jewelry retailers joined the Alaskans in speaking out against the Pebble mine. Six prestigious jewelry retailers and designers representing 260 stores pledged their support for protection of Bristol Bay. These jewelers added to the list of eight US retailers who signed the Bristol Bay protection pledge last year. The threat to the Bristol Bay fishery has generated a diverse array of allies, including Alaska's fishing industry, the Alaska Intertribal Council, and numerous conservation groups.

Bobby Andrew, spokesperson for Nunamta Aulukestai (Caretakers of our Land), a group of eight Alaska Native village corporations opposing Pebble, summed up the importance of the trip to London: "The people of London, and the entire world, need to know that Anglo American's Pebble mine would ruin the greatest wild salmon fishery left on Earth and the cultures that depend on it," he said.

Prior to the shareholders meeting, the group attended the City premiere of the award-winning documentary “Red Gold,” which tells the story of the people of Bristol Bay who depend on salmon and how Pebble could ruin their way of life and livelihoods. English fly-fishing celebrities joined the Alaskans for the screening.



Sockeye salmon in Alaska. Photo Ben Knight

The trip followed on the heels of a visit to Alaska in late March by Sir Mark Moody Stuart, president of Anglo American’s board of directors. He was seeking to counter the local opposition but was greeted by protestors waving “No Pebble Mine” and “Stop Cultural Genocide” signs and heard an earful from local residents.

For more information see

<http://www.ak2uk.com/>

http://www.nodirtygold.org/CV_BristolBay.cfm