

Ballot Measure No. 4 - 12BBAY
An Act Providing for Protection of Bristol Bay Wild Salmon and
Waters Within or Flowing Into the Existing 1972 Bristol Bay Fisheries
Reserve

This bill would require the legislature to approve future large-scale metallic sulfide mines in the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve (BBFR) by passing a law. The law would have to find that any proposed mine would not endanger the BBFR fishery. The approval would be in addition to any other required permits or authorizations. The bill defines “large-scale metallic sulfide mining operation” as “a specific mining proposal to extract metals, including gold and copper, from sulfide-bearing rock and that would directly disturb 640 or more acres of land.” The bill lets the Department of Natural Resources adopt regulations.

The bill would make findings. The bill’s findings would be that the legislature found the BBFR important by creating it in 1972; that the bill’s protections are necessary; that protecting the waters and wild salmon of the BBFR is of statewide interest based on the region’s fisheries, economic benefits, cultural heritage, and unique wild salmon resources; and that metallic sulfide mining may harm these interests because mines can produce toxins and pollutants. The bill intends the legislature to approve any large-scale metallic sulfide mine in the BBFR or which could adversely affect its watershed.

The bill would apply only to large-scale metallic sulfide mines in the BBFR that lack all required permits, licenses, or approvals before the bill’s effective date.

Should this initiative become law?