

Ballot Measure No. 4

An Act Providing for Protection of Bristol Bay Wild Salmon and Waters Within or Flowing Into the Existing 1972 Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

Ballot Measure 4 is necessary to protect Bristol Bay salmon from the harmful effects of large-scale mining—VOTE YES

This measure will require large-scale mines to meet the standard that has applied to oil and gas exploration for 40 years—avoiding irreparable harm to vital Bristol Bay fisheries.

Bristol Bay's importance—

Bristol Bay, with its many rivers, lakes, and streams, produces wild salmon on a scale and of a quality unmatched by any other place on Earth. Bristol Bay's annual production of 31 million sockeye salmon amounts to one-third of the world's supply. It is the world's largest and most valuable wild salmon fishery. Unlike other salmon-producing regions, this fishery is 100% wild and has never been supported by hatchery-grown fish. It is truly a one-of-a-kind region.

Bristol Bay salmon are critical to Alaska's economy. The sport and commercial fisheries support 10,000 jobs—with an annual economic impact in Alaska between \$318 and \$578 million—nationwide, that impact is \$1.5 billion.

Thousands of local residents depend on the annual salmon run to support their way of life, as it has for generations.

Bristol Bay's fishery can continue to provide economic and cultural benefits far into the future if Ballot Measure 4 is passed.

The Fisheries Reserve—

In 1972, the Alaska Legislature created the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve. The watershed of the Reserve includes critical rivers and streams and portions of two national parks and one state park. Ballot Measure 4 would affect only about 5% of Alaska's total area.

To protect the Reserve, the legislature inserted one additional step for oil and gas developers seeking drilling permits in the region—the developers had to demonstrate that their activities would not endanger the Reserve's salmon, and the economy dependent upon them.

If the developers met their burden, the elected representatives of Alaskans (*and not* unelected bureaucrats) would authorize the activity. To this day, the Reserve is the only one in Alaska.

Ballot Measure 4 simply takes that same standard—a standard that has applied to oil and gas activities for 40 years—and applies it to large-scale metallic sulfide mining.

Protecting Bristol Bay for future generations—

Large-scale metallic sulfide mining in Bristol Bay is currently being pursued in the form of Pebble Mine. Mining of this type produces chemicals that could harm the surrounding waters in a manner uniquely toxic to salmon. Such mining would also require massive amounts of such toxic substances to be stored in or near the Reserve forever. No mine of Pebble's size has ever been developed without polluting the surrounding groundwater.

Given that mining of this type is being proposed in the heart of the world's greatest salmon-producing watersheds, it is vital that Alaskans vote yes on Ballot Measure 4 to protect the Fishery.

If a project will not endanger Bristol Bay, then Ballot Measure 4 will not stop it. However, the measure provides a necessary safeguard against any project that would destroy a priceless resource.

VOTE YES on Ballot Measure 4—VOTE YES for salmon.

Christina Salmon – subsistence user/Bristol Bay resident
Mark Niver – oilfield worker/commercial fisherman
John H. Holman – small business owner/lodge operator

The statement printed on this page is the opinion of the author(s) and is presented as submitted to the Division of Elections.