



## **External Peer Review Meeting for *An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska***

Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center  
Tikahtnu (Cook Inlet) Ballroom, Sections C-F  
600 West Seventh Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**August 7-8, 2012**

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### **MEETING OVERVIEW, GOALS, AND EXPECTATIONS**

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#### **Overview of the Peer Review Process:**

On May 18, 2012, EPA released its draft document, *An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska*. To support the scientific review of this draft document, EPA held a public comment period, which ended on July 23, 2012. Versar, an independent EPA contractor, assembled twelve experts to conduct an external peer review of EPA's draft assessment. Peer review is an in-depth assessment of the assumptions, analyses, and conclusions contained in the draft document. The peer review process will provide a documented, independent, and critical review of the draft assessment, which will be made available to the public upon its completion.

Members of the public were invited to nominate candidate reviewers, and Versar evaluated all publically-nominated candidates, as well as those identified through independent research, to select the twelve reviewers. To guide the peer review process, EPA developed fourteen Charge Questions (see handout), which also underwent a public comment period. The peer reviewers have been asked to review the draft assessment and respond to these Charge Questions. These Charge Questions will form the basis of reviewer discussions during the meeting. Comments from the peer reviewers and the public will be considered as EPA revises the draft assessment document.

As a reminder to all attendees, the EPA draft assessment is a non-decisional document. The peer reviewers are charged with evaluating the quality of the science included in EPA's draft assessment and to aid in EPA's revision of this assessment. The peer reviewers are **not** charged with making any regulatory recommendations, and peer reviewers will not be seeking consensus in their deliberations and written comments.

#### **Goals of the Public Peer Review Meeting:**

This public peer review meeting is intended to review the scientific merit of EPA's draft assessment. The meeting follows the assessment's public comment period, during which members of the public were able to submit comments on the assessment. In preparation for this meeting, peer reviewers have reviewed the draft assessment and have been provided with a summary of public comments, as well as access to public comments submitted to EPA during the public comment period.

This three-day peer review meeting is organized as follows:

- On Day 1 of the meeting (Tuesday, August 7), pre-registered speakers will provide brief oral comments to the peer reviewers. Expectations are that these comments will provide technical and scientific perspectives on the assessment, for consideration by each reviewer in their scientific

and independent review of EPA's assessment. While input on the assessment was provided during the public comment period and public meetings hosted by EPA Region 10, this day provides a further opportunity for members of the public to express their views on the assessment.

- On Day 2 of the meeting (Wednesday, August 8), attendees will observe reviewer discussions, which will focus on the scientific merit of EPA's draft assessment and responses to the Charge Questions. Day 2 is open to the public for observation only – the public will not be allowed to address the peer reviewers or provide oral or written comments on Day 2.

Proceedings on Days 1 and 2 will be Webcast live to allow those unable to attend the meeting to observe the proceedings.

Day 3 is a closed session to allow peer reviewers to prepare their final written comments, after considering the events and deliberations of Days 1 and 2. Day 3 will not be open to the public for observation or speaking.

After the meeting, peer reviewers will complete their individual reviews and submit those to EPA's contractor, Versar. Versar will prepare an overall summary to be included with the twelve individual reviews and produce a final peer review report. In addition to presenting the peer reviewer comments, this report will document peer review discussions on Day 2, meeting attendance and speaker lists, and the meeting agenda. No further public comment opportunities, either written or oral, will be provided during this peer review process. The final peer review report will be released to the public by EPA later this fall.

**Registration:**

The start and end times for sign-in/registration are indicated on the Agenda. On Day 1, all attendees will sign-in at the registration tables and will be provided with a name badge. There will be several tables (organized alphabetically by registrant last name) to facilitate attendee registration. If meeting registrants also plan to attend Day 2, please save and bring name badges with you on Day 2 to save time and avoid signing in again. If you forget your badge, or if you are only attending on Day 2, please sign-in at the registration tables during Day 2's sign in period.

**Additional Information:**

For additional background information on the assessment, or to access the draft assessment document, please visit [EPA's Bristol Bay Website](http://www.epa.gov/bristolbay) (www.epa.gov/bristolbay).

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## GROUND RULES FOR MEETING ATTENDEES

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The following ground rules are intended to ensure that the peer review meeting runs smoothly and accomplishes the goals described above.

### **Ground Rules for Observers (Days 1 and 2):**

- Registered members of the public are welcome to observe public comments on Day 1 and peer reviewer deliberations on Day 2.
- Observers may not distribute any written materials at the meeting.
- Observers may not address or ask questions of the peer reviewers during the meeting.
- Please be aware that the peer reviewers have been asked not to speak to any outside parties, including public observers and the media, about their review of the draft assessment. Their verbal comments will be provided during Day 2 of the meeting and their final written comments will be made public by EPA following the meeting in the form of a peer review meeting report.
- Please, do not call out, applaud, or otherwise disrupt proceedings – speakers on Day 1, or reviewers on Day 2.

### **Ground Rules for Speakers (Day 1):**

- The number of speakers will be limited to pre-registered speakers, who registered to speak by the July 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline. No late speakers will be allowed to share oral comments on Day 1, and registered speakers cannot delegate their time to others.
- Speakers will be assigned a number representing their place in the public speaker order. This order was determined by the comment category indicated on a speaker's registration form (following the category order as it appeared on the registration website and FRN), and by the date of registration within each category. These comment categories are displayed on the speaker list handout. Speakers will present comments according to this pre-determined order to ensure a timely flow of public comments.
- Speakers may not use audiovisual aids (e.g., PowerPoint presentations) or distribute any written material to the reviewers.
- The meeting Facilitator will call each pre-registered speaker in the order they are assigned. Speakers will be allowed to provide oral comments only after they are called on by the Facilitator. The Facilitator will also call out those speakers who are on deck, to line up on each side wall to approach the two microphone positions. When your name is called, please move toward the wait areas on each side wall and be ready to speak when your name is called to the microphone.
- Once called to the microphone, each speaker will have three minutes to share their oral comments. Speakers must adhere to the three-minute limit to ensure that all selected speakers get an opportunity to share their oral comments.
- Please speak to the peer reviewers, as they are the focus of this meeting and will consider your input in their scientific review of the EPA assessment.
- The Facilitator will provide visual cues on a projector screen (green/yellow/red) to indicate the passage and ending of each three minute time slot.
- If the three minute time limit is reached, the Facilitator will ask that the speaker be seated. Strict timekeeping will ensure that all speakers have an opportunity to share their oral comments.
- Speakers may not direct questions to or engage in back-and-forth dialogue with reviewers or EPA during their three-minute slot.

- When speaking, please:
  - Be courteous and respectful.
  - Avoid personal attacks or accusations.
  - Refrain from grandstanding.
  - Do not interrupt when others are speaking.
  - Stay focused on providing scientific and technical input on the assessment.
- If a speaker happens to miss their speaking slot, they may still have an opportunity to speak, if time allows, but will be rescheduled to follow the final speaker in the list.
- Please keep in mind that the peer reviewers are charged with evaluating the quality of the science included in the assessment. They are **not** charged with making any regulatory recommendations. Thus, the public comment session on Day 1 is not intended to urge the peer reviewers to comment on EPA's regulatory role, but is intended to allow members of the public to share substantive comments about EPA's draft assessment with the peer reviewers.

#### **Ground Rules for Media (Days 1 and 2):**

- Members of the media can video, audio record, photograph, and document proceedings on Days 1 and 2 of the peer review meeting, provided that these activities are not disruptive to the proceedings.
- A specific space will be provided for media for cameras and equipment.
- Members of the media are not permitted to approach the peer reviewers for interviews or discussions relevant to the assessment or their review. Peer reviewers have been instructed not to discuss their review of the draft assessment with any outside parties, including members of the media.
- Members of the media are free to approach public observers and speakers, so long as interviews are conducted outside of the meeting space and are not disruptive of the public comment session and reviewer deliberations.

#### **Contacts:**

Please direct any specific media-related questions to the EPA Press Officer, Ms. Hanady Kader ([Kader.hanady@epa.gov](mailto:Kader.hanady@epa.gov); 206-553-0454). Ms. Kader will also be on site at the meeting to handle media questions.

For questions related to meeting procedures, you may ask a member of the Versar meeting coordination staff, who will all be wearing a green-colored name badge. Ahead of the meeting, you may contact Ms. Brittany Ekstrom ([BEkstrom@versar.com](mailto:BEkstrom@versar.com); 703-642-6767).

For technical questions on EPA's draft assessment, you may contact Dr. Jeff Frithsen ([Frithsen.jeff@epa.gov](mailto:Frithsen.jeff@epa.gov); 703-347-8623).