

## **Protests surface over another proposed gold mine**

By Michelle Graff

June 25, 2015

Toronto--Junior mining company Seabridge Gold's plan for a huge gold and copper mine in British Columbia is drawing opposition from indigenous peoples and environmental groups, opposition that might sound familiar to many in the jewelry industry.

The arguments for and against construction of the KSM (Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell) mine echo those of the debate over the proposed Pebble mine in Alaska.

Like Pebble, Seabridge Gold's KSM mine would be the largest open-pit mine in North America, producing gold and copper. It would be located near the northwest border of Alaska and British Columbia and, also like Pebble, would be situated at the headwaters of a key salmon fishery.

In an [online fact sheet outlining KSM](#), Seabridge Gold states that the mine will have a life span of 52 years, provide thousands of jobs for multiple generations, and pump billions into both British Columbia's and Canada's economies.

Those in opposition, however, worry about the water quality being impacted and, in turn, the livelihoods of the indigenous peoples in both British Columbia and Alaska who rely on the salmon fishery to make a living.

They also claim that Seabridge plans to use technology that is "risky" and "discredited" to store its mine waste, and they fear another incident similar to what Canada witnessed at the Mount Polley gold and copper mine last August when [a tailings pond dam collapsed](#) and wastewater spilled into the adjacent waterways.

"We don't need any more Mount Polleys," said Annita McPhee of the Tahltan Nation. "The Mount Polley disaster changes everything."

The Tahltan Nation is one of the organizations that traveled to the Seabridge Gold's shareholder meeting in Toronto this week to ask the mining company to publicly support a review by the International Joint Commission, the body that examines projects located in waters that impact both the United States and Canada.

Also attending the meeting were the United Tribal Transboundary Mining Working Group, which represents 13 tribes in southeast Alaska, and non-governmental organizations MiningWatch Canada and Earthworks, the latter of which has been an outspoken opponent of Pebble as well.

The debate over the proposed Pebble mine first surfaced in jewelry industry about seven years ago and industry heavyweights, including Tiffany & Co., have spoken out against its construction, vowing not to use gold from the mine if it is ever built.

The two major mining companies initially involved in Pebble, Anglo American and Rio Tinto, pulled out in [2013](#) and [2014](#), respectively.

The only company remaining, Northern Dynasty Minerals, has suffered a series of defeats, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to [invoke its rarely used authority under the Clean Water Act \(CWA\)](#) to take a closer look at the project.

The act allows the EPA to prohibit, restrict or flat-out deny the use of any defined area in U.S. waters as a disposal site if it determines that the discharge of material into those waters would harm fishery areas, which it has found to be the case with Pebble.

Northern Dynasty continues to fight the EPA's invocation of the CWA in court.

<http://www.nationaljeweler.com/majors/public-policy-issues/Protests-surface-over-another-proposed-gold-mine-9175.shtml>