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DONLIN GOLD MINE DEIS PUBLIC MEETING

8

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

9

January 28, 2016

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Anchorage, Alaska - 1/28/2016)

3 (On record - 6:00 p.m.)

4 MR. GORDON: Good evening, folks. We're going
5 to start the program in about three minutes, so if
6 there's a place you'd like to sit, it would be a good
7 time to start moving in that direction. Thanks.

8 (Pause)

9 MR. CRAIG: Hello, everybody. Thank you for
10 coming. I'd like everybody to come in if you could,
11 please. We'll start with safety. The exits, if we
12 need to exit the room to the back of the room and there
13 are exits up here in the front as well. Then washrooms
14 are out in the hall and down to the left. I'm Bill
15 Craig with AECOM and it's my pleasure to introduce
16 Keith Gordon with the Corps of Engineers.

17 MR. GORDON: Good evening, ladies and
18 gentlemen. My name is Keith Gordon. I'm a project
19 manager with the Alaska District regulatory division.
20 I am the Corps of Engineers project manager for the
21 project. We're here tonight to discuss the status of
22 the Donlin Gold EIS draft, environmental impact
23 statement, and how you can comment on the project and
24 assist us with the analysis of the potential impacts of
25 the project.

1 At the bottom of the screen you can see the
2 various cooperating agencies that are assisting us in
3 the development of the draft environmental impact
4 statement. Federal and State cooperators and tribal
5 cooperators, the United States Fish and Wildlife
6 Service is also a cooperator.

7 In about 45 minutes when we get done with our
8 opening presentations, we'll ask the Federal and State
9 folks, Donlin folks and AECOM folks who are in the room
10 to introduce themselves to you so you know who to talk
11 to.

12 The Army Corps of Engineers is developing a
13 draft environmental impact statement for the Donlin
14 project because under the National Environmental Policy
15 Act of 1969 there is a preliminary conclusion that the
16 project may have potential significant impacts.
17 Therefore, we're required to go through the EIS
18 process, both draft and final.

19 Our agenda tonight, we're going to do an
20 opening presentation for about 30 minutes regarding the
21 draft EIS, then we're going to give you about a 15-
22 minute presentation regarding BLM's ANILCA 810 hearing
23 that will take place later in the evening. After we do
24 those two opening presentations, we're going to do a
25 poster session that's available in the next room where

1 you can review posters on the project that define how
2 the project would be constructed if permitted and gives
3 you information on key resource issues that we're
4 analyzing in the draft EIS.

5 After the poster session we'll reconvene to
6 take your comments, but to try to facilitate the
7 process, when we go to the poster session, for those
8 folks on the phone, we will immediately start taking
9 their comments and see if we can go through all the
10 comments on the phone before the poster session
11 concludes.

12 Anybody who would like to make comments that
13 does not want to go through the poster session is
14 welcome to stay in here during the poster session and
15 just go ahead and make your comments. About 8:00
16 o'clock we'll start the 810 hearing if we still have
17 people making comments on the DEIS, we'll conclude the
18 hearing and then resume the comment session.

19 Bruce, did you want to make a statement
20 regarding the 810 hearing?

21 MR. BITTNER: Good evening. My name is Alan
22 Bittner. I'm the Anchorage Field Manager for the
23 Bureau of Land Management. I have a short statement to
24 read regarding the 810 analysis that we did.

25 In addition to the draft EIS, Section 810(a) of

1 the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
2 requires that an evaluation of subsistence uses and
3 needs be completed for any Federal determination to
4 withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use,
5 occupancy or disposition of public lands.

6 Due to the proposed project affecting BLM
7 managed land, the BLM prepared a preliminary analysis
8 of subsistence impacts. The preliminary findings
9 concluded that the project may result in significant
10 restrictions to subsistence uses for certain
11 communities. Immediately following this presentation
12 our subsistence biologist Bruce Seppi will present this
13 analysis.

14 Also following the DEIS public comment period
15 the BLM will conduct an 810 public hearing to gather
16 testimony related to that preliminary analysis of
17 subsistence impact. This will be your opportunity to
18 provide formal comment on the potential for this
19 project to affect subsistence resources.

20 Thanks.

21 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. So, as I
22 mentioned, the Corps of Engineers is the lead Federal
23 agency for the development of the draft environmental
24 impact statement, final environmental impact statement,
25 et cetera. I mentioned the cooperators who are

1 assisting us. It's important to understand that at
2 this point in time the analyses in the document as it
3 currently exists is draft. The conclusions in the
4 document as it currently exists is draft.

5 We went out for scoping meetings and I'll
6 describe a little bit about the NEPA process very
7 briefly in a few minutes to give you an idea of how we
8 got initial information on the project. What we need
9 are your comments on the project as proposed, the
10 alternatives we've looked at, et cetera. I'll give you
11 a little bit more about that in a few minutes.

12 We're here to hear your comments tonight. We
13 need to know what you think about the project and where
14 we're at, but we'll start with just a brief review of
15 the project that is proposed so we all have an
16 understanding of what we're talking about.

17 Very briefly, Donlin's proposed project
18 consists of, number one on the screen, two pits that
19 would ultimately become one, approximately 2.2 square
20 miles in size, max depth between 1,100 to 1,800 feet
21 depending on which side of the pit you measure the
22 depth from.

23 The second primary component at the mine site
24 is a tailing storage facility. Tailings are basically
25 crushed rock. It's what's left of the ore after it's

1 gone through the milling process. What they're
2 proposing is a subaqueous tailings method, so the
3 tailings are semi wet when they're placed in the
4 tailings facility. The tailings facility would fill
5 the valley and takes up about 3.5 square miles.
6 Obviously, on the downslope end is a tailings dam.

7 Number three on the screen is the waste rock
8 facility. Waste rock facility is the overburden or
9 rock that just doesn't contain enough ore in it to be
10 worth milling. That facility is also approximately 3.5
11 square miles in size.

12 The second primary component of Donlin's
13 proposed project is the transportation infrastructure.
14 The pink blob in the middle of the screen is the
15 proposed mine site. You can see the reddish line going
16 down to the Kuskokwim River. That is a proposed 30-
17 mile road that would run from the mine site to the
18 proposed Port at Jungjuk. This would be a new port
19 that would have to be constructed on the Kuskokwim to
20 facilitate the project. That's the port at which all
21 cargo and diesel would be barged for the project so
22 they could operate.

23 Transportation infrastructure also includes a
24 5,000-foot airstrip. You can see in the upper left-
25 hand corner of the screen as well as approximately 40

1 million gallons worth of diesel storage between the
2 port at Jungjuk and the mine site. Obviously they'd be
3 burning just over 40 million gallons a year of diesel
4 to operate the equipment at the mine site.

5 The third primary component of the project is
6 the natural gas pipeline. What they're proposing is a
7 315-mile-long 14" diameter buried steel pipeline to
8 carry natural gas from the western side of Cook Inlet
9 over to the mine site. We'll talk in a few minutes
10 about mitigation as one of the processes we use in NEPA
11 to find ways to potentially limit or minimize potential
12 negative impacts of projects.

13 What we have on the screen are half a dozen
14 gold stars that represent the six major river crossings
15 where Donlin's proposed pipeline crosses a major
16 salmon-bearing river. Those are up there just to
17 indicate one of the mitigative measures and that is
18 horizontally directionally drilling under those rivers
19 versus trenching the pipe through the river and
20 therefore limiting some of the impacts.

21 Project phases if constructed. The project
22 would take approximately three to four years to
23 construct as currently proposed, operate for 27 and a
24 half years. Closure and reclamation. There is a point
25 at which mining ceases, but closure and reclamation

1 don't necessarily happen at a specific point. They
2 would begin closing facilities down before they
3 finished mining and then continue to closing facilities
4 down after mining ceased.

5 There's an expectation that the pit will fill
6 with water and take 50 to 55 years to fill with water.
7 After the pit fills with water, that water would have
8 to be monitored and treated before it could be
9 released. So effectively the project would require
10 monitoring and treatment of water in perpetuity.

11 Okay. The NEPA process very briefly, the
12 National Environmental Policy Act. Once we start an
13 EIS we start with a notice of intent, which we did in
14 December of 2012 via the Federal Register notifying
15 people that we were planning to prepare an EIS. We
16 went to the scoping process between December and March
17 of 2013. In that case, we went out to 13 of the
18 communities in the Kuskokwim/Yukon River region and got
19 comments from potentially-affected communities
20 regarding their perspective on the project and
21 primarily what we needed to address in the
22 environmental impact statement.

23 Since then we went through the development of a
24 preliminary draft EIS, which the cooperators reviewed,
25 and now we, as of November 27th of 2015, have put out

1 the draft EIS for you all to review and comment on. We
2 are obviously at the point in time where we're
3 conducting the public meetings to get your input on the
4 project. Please note that while we put it out on
5 November 27th you have until April 30th of 2016 to
6 respond to us.

7 Once we get those responses in we'll look back
8 at the project to see if there's -- the draft EIS to
9 see if there's additional work we need to do and I'll
10 describe that additional work in a couple of minutes if
11 we need to do it. Then we would develop a final
12 environmental impact statement, which would again go
13 out for review.

14 The Federal agencies after that, Bureau of Land
15 Management, the Corps and the Pipeline Hazardous Safety
16 and Materials Administration would use the draft EIS to
17 develop records of decision to indicate whether we
18 could permit the project, permit an alternative to the
19 project or not permit the project and that decision
20 would be recorded via the record of decision.

21 To give you a breakdown of what's in the EIS.
22 When we go through the EIS process, I mentioned we go
23 through scoping to get an indication of what we need to
24 look at in the EIS. Once we've done scoping we go
25 through a data gap process to determine if there a data

1 gaps out there that we need to fill, additional
2 baseline information we need, additional studies we
3 need, et cetera, before we go forward with the process.
4 We then develop alternatives to what's proposed to
5 determine if there's a better way to do it. A less
6 human and naturally environmental impacting way to do
7 it. Then we go through the analyses process and
8 determine if any one of those alternatives is better
9 than another, better than what's proposed.

10 That is what we're putting out to you all in a
11 draft stage to look at. What you'll see in the
12 document. Chapter 1, purpose and need. Obviously
13 Donlin has a purpose and need for the project. It
14 falls to the Corps of Engineers as the lead Federal
15 agency under NEPA and under our regulations to define
16 the basic and overall purpose for the project as it's
17 currently proposed. You can see the purpose that we
18 came to on the screen.

19 It is important to note that we do have an
20 error in the document as it went out. There's a half a
21 sentence added to this overall purpose that was
22 intended to be removed. That statement is that one of
23 our purposes is to maximize economic benefit for
24 Donlin's shareholders -- stockholders, I'm sorry, and
25 Calista and TKC shareholders.

1 Economics is a very important component of
2 proposed projects. It is something we take very
3 seriously. However, the Army Corps of Engineers is
4 neither a proponent for nor an opponent of this
5 project. We are required to do a middle-of-the-road
6 independent analyses that comes to a public interest
7 decision. Therefore, while economics is very
8 important, we can't place more weight on it in relation
9 to one entity or another in a manner that would mean
10 the analyses was not in a middle-of-the-road public
11 interest decision-making process.

12 The second chapter in the document covers the
13 alternatives. I won't read what's on the screen
14 because I'm going to give you a little bit more
15 information on each one of them momentarily. Obviously,
16 number 2 is what Donlin is currently proposing to do.

17 What is alternative 1, the no action
18 alternative. NEPA, the National Environmental Policy
19 Act, requires that we start from the existing baseline
20 in our analyses. The existing baseline is the no
21 action alternative. What would happen if we permitted
22 nothing and no project was built. That's the no action
23 alternative. That's the alternative we compare
24 everything to to begin with before we start comparing
25 and contrasting the alternatives to each other.

1 The rest of the alternatives, as I mentioned
2 earlier, are developed by way of trying to find ways to
3 minimize impacts to the project, find a way to build it
4 better if there is a way to build it better. Very
5 briefly, alternative 3A is LNG haul truck alternative.
6 Basically what that means is the mining equipment is
7 powered by LNG instead of diesel, which means less
8 diesel is barged, therefore there's less impacts from
9 barging, there's less impacts from diesel emissions, et
10 cetera. As you can see, it does mean the addition of
11 an LNG plant at the mine site that they're currently
12 not proposing.

13 Alternative 3B is another method by which
14 diesel consumption could be reduced. This reduces
15 diesel consumption even further. Under this
16 alternative the natural gas pipeline is replaced by a
17 diesel pipeline. So basically instead of operating the
18 mine off of diesel, the mining equipment, you're
19 operating virtually -- I'm sorry. Instead of operating
20 the mine off of natural gas, you're operating the mine
21 off of diesel.

22 What that means is, okay, we're not barging
23 diesel up the Kuskokwim River; however, we are barging
24 it through Cook Inlet. It means that we're not burning
25 LNG. We don't have the emissions related to it. We do

1 have more emissions related to diesel, more diesel
2 being burned. There's also an additional segment to
3 the pipeline running down to Tyonek that would have to
4 be constructed.

5 So, again, the whole purpose for defining these
6 alternatives and making these points under them is to
7 give you an idea of how any time we change one thing in
8 relation to one alternative, we have to modify how we
9 compare and contrast alternatives and how we weigh and
10 balance the potential impacts of those alternatives in
11 relation to each other.

12 Alternative 4, another method by which we might
13 minimize the impacts of barging. Under this
14 alternative, instead of building -- and I'll show you
15 in just a second that the port at Jungjuk, this would
16 be a port built at Birch Tree Crossing. So instead of
17 having the 30-mile road that you see at Jungjuk by this
18 little red line, we have the purple line that runs all
19 the way down to Birch Tree Crossing.

20 So obviously we have more truck traffic, we
21 have longer truck routes, a road constructed that's 76
22 miles long instead of 30 miles long, the additional
23 diesel emissions from the trucks, et cetera. So,
24 again, it's just another way to weigh and balance
25 alternatives and try to limit impacts.

1 What we need from you all, and I'll give you
2 some additional information in a few minutes, is we
3 need your comments on those things that obviously are
4 most substantive to you that are most important to you
5 that we need to appropriately weigh and balance as we
6 look at alternatives for this project.

7 Alternative 5A. The previous alternatives were
8 primarily in relation to minimizing barging impacts on
9 the Kuskokwim River. Alternative 5A is a dry stack
10 tailings alternative. I mentioned that Donlin is
11 proposing a subaqueous tailings methodology. That
12 means that the ground-up rock has some amount of water,
13 et cetera, in it when it goes into the tailings
14 facility. This alternative dries it out to a
15 substantially greater degree. I'll show you what that
16 looks like on a slide in a minute. But, as you can
17 see, once we do that, we have different impacts.

18 Okay. The original -- what Donlin is proposing
19 is a 3.5 square mile fill of a valley for tailings.
20 This one, I don't know, I don't remember the exact
21 square miles, but it's approximately half that.
22 However, what we have after that is now an operating
23 pond immediately downslope of that.

24 So instead of a tailings dam holding the
25 subaqueous tailings in place, we now have a drier stack

1 of tailings contained by two dams with an operating
2 pond down it and a subsequent hydraulic dam. So we
3 modify the spill potential, we modify the amount of
4 water that needs to be treated, when it needs to be
5 treated, timing for release, et cetera and so on.

6 Alternative 6A is the remaining alternative for
7 rerouting the pipeline. There were a number of
8 alternatives for potential pipeline routes.

9 Alternative 6A basically results in a pipeline that
10 would be a bit shorter, two miles shorter. The gold
11 route is what Donlin is proposing. Alternative 6A, the
12 Dalzell Gorge route runs the pipeline through Rainy
13 Pass up through the south fork of the Kuskokwim River.

14 When you're starting to compare these pipeline
15 alternative routes, Donlin is proposing to go through a
16 route through the Alaska Range that has somewhat more
17 impact than the Rainy Pass route, the Alternative 6A.

18 So, again, this alternative also has more impact on the
19 Iditarod Trail. There's more length of pipeline in
20 immediate proximity to or crossing the Iditarod Trail.

21 So every time we do this we change the weight
22 and balance. We need you to give us an idea of whether
23 or not we're close or not.

24 Very briefly over the next couple of slides
25 I'll give you an idea of how the barge traffic analyses

1 was done. Depending on which definition you want to
2 use, we have either 26 or 23 key resource issues
3 defined in the draft environmental impact statement at
4 this time. Based on the analyses that's been done to
5 date, 14 of these major resource areas are potentially
6 impacted by barging on the Kuskokwim River.

7 Before we talk about some of those impacts and
8 how we compare and contrast them, it's beneficial to
9 look at the existing condition in relation to barging
10 at this time. The burnt gold color you see on the
11 bottom of the slide is existing barging on the
12 Kuskokwim River. You can see that the slide is broken
13 out into construction impacts versus operation impacts.

14 It is our understanding, and we need to know if
15 we're right, that at this point in time there are
16 approximately 68 barges that leave Bethel every year.
17 That means that they go some distance upriver before
18 they turn around obviously and come back down.

19 So, in relation to what Donlin is proposing, if
20 you're standing on the shoreline anywhere between
21 Bethel and the proposed Jungjuk Port site at the
22 current, in this last summer, you would have seen in a
23 24-hour period a single tug pushing a single barge
24 going upriver or downriver once in that 24-hour period.
25 Donlin's proposed barge frequency would result in you

1 seeing a larger tug pushing four barges and you would
2 see that three times in a 24-hour period.

3 To give you another idea of what this slide is
4 representing, as you can see, the baseline condition in
5 burnt gold is the same for any alternative. In the
6 construction phase, when you look at the increase in
7 barging based on Donlin's proposal, it's the same
8 effect for all of the alternatives.

9 If we look at operations, when you go to
10 operations, you start to see some of the things we saw
11 in the earlier slides. Donlin's proposal is Alternative
12 2. So you've got Alternative 2, 4, 5A and 6A with
13 their barging impacts represented on the graph. You
14 can see that if we went to the LNG pipeline
15 alternative, we reduce diesel barging impacts to a
16 degree. Again, the diesel pipeline alternative reduces
17 it further.

18 The important thing to note is obviously the
19 chart doesn't tell you everything. If you look at
20 Alternative 2 and Alternative 4 under Operations, what
21 that isn't telling you is the barging stops at Birch
22 Tree Crossing. So, under Donlin's proposal, all the
23 fuel, all the cargo effectively goes all the way up to
24 Jungjuk. Under this alternative, the cargo only goes
25 up to Jungjuk. The diesel stops -- I'm sorry.

1 Everything -- I'm sorry. Cargo and fuel stops at Birch
2 Tree Crossing and doesn't go up to Jungjuk save for
3 some very limited amount of barging during
4 construction.

5 Very briefly, these slides are telling you the
6 same story that we've already told you. All we're
7 trying to do with this is pull out a couple of impacts
8 out of the document and give you an idea of how they're
9 compared and contrasted one against the other.

10 So in relation to river barge traffic impacts
11 on fish, obviously we can disturb habitat, we can
12 disturb fish, disturb eggs, impact their behavior,
13 cause injury or mortality. Again, this is a
14 characterization of the difference between one
15 alternative and the other. Again, it's the same
16 scenario. We expect that the draft conclusion for
17 fisheries impacts as it currently exists in the
18 document, is that barging would have a moderate impact
19 on fish with more impacts in shallow and narrow
20 segments.

21 Again, the LNG haul truck alternative, the
22 diesel pipeline alternative and Alternative 4 have an
23 effect on limiting those impacts. We have the same
24 thing depicted in a different way on this slide in
25 relation to different effects, different tradeoffs.

1 That was chapter three of the document. Chapter three
2 gives you the baseline condition and it gives you an
3 analyses of the potential impacts of the project.

4 Chapter four deals with cumulative impacts.
5 What is a cumulative impact. A cumulative impact is
6 all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future
7 activities that we use to effectively forecast the
8 effect of this project and other projects on the
9 potentially affected area. In this case, the Kuskokwim
10 and potentially portions of the Yukon River region.

11 Chapter five is mitigation. I mentioned
12 earlier some of the ways that we could potentially
13 mitigate impacts of the project. They include
14 everything from design features that Donlin has
15 included in the project, things that Donlin decided not
16 to do simply because they decided to avoid impacts,
17 other methodologies by which we might avoid, reduce,
18 minimize impacts to the potential project.

19 So, again, the whole purpose for us being here
20 is to get your comments on the project as it's
21 currently proposed and have you tell us whether or not
22 you think we're close or whether or not we need to do
23 additional work. I'm going to discuss the poster
24 session shortly, but before we go to the poster session
25 we are going to have a presentation on the 810 hearing

1 before we initiate that.

2 This is up here for you all to see that there's
3 12 posters in the room next door. Three of them in
4 relation to the project as Donlin is proposing it and
5 nine more that just give you information on potential
6 impacts of Donlin's proposed alternative. We'll have
7 this slide up again in a few minutes for you to look
8 at.

9 As I mentioned earlier, what we're here for is
10 your comments. We have until April 30 to get as much
11 information as we can and see where we go from there.
12 How do you provide a substantive comment. NEPA is not
13 a voting process. NEPA is not a popularity contest.
14 We're trying to make a decision that is in the public
15 interest. We are not subject matter experts on mining.
16 We are not subject matter experts on every possible
17 impact out there. We are not subject matter experts on
18 the lifestyle of the folks in the Kuskokwim/Yukon River
19 Regions. We need your input.

20 So if you provide a comment to us that says I
21 support the project or a comment that says I oppose the
22 project, how do we address that in the final
23 environmental impact statement, which is where you will
24 see the response to comments. If I get a comment that
25 says I support the project or I get a comment that says

1 I oppose the project, I combine all comments that are
2 very similar to that and the response will be comment
3 noted.

4 What we need are substantive comments that tell
5 us did we get it right, did we get it wrong, do we need
6 to do more, do we need to change the weight and
7 balance, et cetera. So if you tell me that when you
8 all looked at the alternatives -- and you likely saw on
9 the slide that when we looked at alternatives there
10 were 300 options looked at by which we weeded ourselves
11 down to seven alternatives at this point in time.

12 Okay. We considered those things at one point
13 in time. Did we consider them sufficiently, did we
14 consider the appropriate combinations of them. You can
15 look back at those and determine if there are things
16 that you think we need to carry forward or review again
17 as far as alternatives. You may combine them in
18 different ways than we have. You may come up with
19 alternatives that we've not thought of.

20 So the document is open for your review and
21 comment. That's what it's all about. We're not asking
22 for it because we need it or we're required to. We're
23 asking for it because, I'm sorry, we do need it and we
24 have to have it to tell us whether or not we've gotten
25 this right or not.

1 Comment on the draft EIS. Obviously you can
2 give us comments here starting in a few minutes. You
3 can give us comments via the website that you can see
4 on the screen. You can mail them to me. You can fax
5 them to us. We have a variety of public meetings
6 coming up. You're welcome to attend any other meeting.

7
8 Please note that when you go to the poster
9 session or when you talk to one of the folks in the
10 room, if they answer your question if you have a
11 question for them, that's fine, but please, if you have
12 a comment to make to us, make the comment. If we don't
13 hear the comment, we're not going to be able to
14 consider it in our analyses.

15 Our website, as you can see, is available.
16 We've got the draft EIS under the EIS documents tab.
17 Yes, the EIS is 5,500 pages without some of the
18 additional documents provided with it. You've got
19 newsletters, other project information, background
20 documents and presentation summaries.

21 My contact information here and Ms. Amanda
22 Andraschko, Alaska District's tribal liaison,
23 information is here. We're at the end of BLM's
24 introduction to their hearing. Before we start the
25 hearing we will ask all the Federal and State agency

1 folks in the room who have a role in the project, the
2 AECOM staff and the Donlin folks to state their name,
3 their role in the project, so that just before you all
4 go to the poster session you can get an idea of who you
5 want to talk to if there's somebody you want to talk
6 to.

7 So I'm going to very shortly turn this over to
8 BLM to do their introduction for the public hearing,
9 but please understand that since we're doing both
10 tonight, after they go through the 15, 20 minute
11 presentation to define what their findings are in
12 relation to ANILCA 810 potential subsistence impacts
13 and a brief discussion of what the hearing will
14 include, we will then go to the poster session where
15 you all can look at the posters in the next room.

16 However, if you're ready at that time to make
17 your comments, we will start by taking comments from
18 folks on the phone so they can get through the process
19 and get off the phone as soon as possible, then we will
20 start taking comments from in the room, those of you
21 that have numbers. If we run out of numbers before
22 8:00 o'clock, we'll start taking comments from anybody
23 that doesn't have a number.

24 At approximately 8:00 o'clock, if we have a lot
25 of people left who want to comment, we're going to have

1 to stop and do the hearing. As soon as the hearing is
2 concluded, we'll go back to taking comments again.

3 Bruce, would you like to provide the
4 presentation on the 810 hearing.

5 MR. SEPPPI: Hello, everyone. I'm Bruce Seppi.
6 I'm a wildlife biologist and subsistence coordinator
7 for BLM Anchorage Field Office. When Keith was talking
8 about an 810 analysis, that is the analysis under
9 ANILCA for subsistence impacts. I've completed that
10 analysis based on the proposed Donlin Gold Mine EIS as
11 it's described by Keith just now. Through that process
12 I determined if a significant restriction to
13 subsistence uses and needs may result from any one of
14 the alternatives discussed in the EIS, including the
15 accumulative effects.

16 I used three factors to come to those
17 conclusions. I considered, one, if the project caused
18 a reduction in the availability of subsistence
19 resources caused by a decline in population or
20 abundance of harvestable resources. This could include
21 fish, wildlife, edible plants, house logs, firewood or
22 drinking water, for example. Factors that might cause
23 a reduction include adverse impacts to habitat, direct
24 impacts on the resource itself or increased harvest or
25 increased competition from people outside the

1 subsistence use area, non-subsistence users.

2 Secondly, I considered reductions in the
3 availability of resources used for subsistence purposes
4 caused by an alteration in the distribution or
5 migration patterns or location.

6 Thirdly, I considered limitations on access to
7 subsistence uses or subsistence resources, including
8 limitations from increased competition for resources or
9 physical or legal barriers.

10 So Donlin Gold, LLC submitted applications to
11 the Bureau of Land Management for right-of-way July
12 2012 and January 2013. Donlin Gold is proposing to
13 construct, operate, maintain and close this 315-mile-
14 long buried natural gas pipeline and an associated
15 fiber optic cable from the west side of Cook Inlet to
16 the mine site near Crooked Creek within the Kuskokwim
17 River watershed.

18 That 315-mile pipeline right-of-way would cross
19 97 miles of BLM land and those lands are mainly north
20 and west of the Alaska Range in the Kuskokwim River
21 watershed. This represents about 30 percent of the
22 total 315 miles. State of Alaska lands represents
23 about 65 percent of that and ANCSA corporation lands
24 constitute about 4 percent of that total right-of-way.
25 The pipeline, of course, is part of an energy supply

1 infrastructure for the proposed open pit mine 10 miles
2 north of the village of Crooked Creek.

3 In addition to the pipeline and mine, the
4 project will include transportation infrastructure for
5 barge transportation on the Kuskokwim River. Two of
6 the six alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS would
7 affect the pipeline component. Alternative 3B, which
8 Keith just talked about, would substitute a diesel
9 pipeline for the natural gas pipeline within that same
10 right-of-way. Alternative 6A would route a portion of
11 the pipeline along the Iditarod Trail through Dalzell
12 Gorge and Rainy Pass affecting about 46 miles of State
13 of Alaska lands.

14 The proposed Donlin Gold project is evaluated
15 using these three components, the mine site
16 transportation infrastructure and the pipeline, and
17 although the permit application to BLM focuses on our
18 lands, on BLM-managed lands, within that pipeline
19 right-of-way, the National Environmental Policy Act or
20 NEPA as we all call it, prohibits us from splitting up
21 these components into smaller components to minimize
22 the environmental effects. For that reason this review
23 of impacts to subsistence will address the whole
24 project and not just the portion subject to permitting
25 by BLM.

1 So, first, the proposed pipeline includes a
2 150-foot-wide cleared construction right-of-way, 12
3 airstrips ranging from 3,500 to 5,000 feet in length,
4 nine of which will be newly built along that pipeline
5 right-of-way during construction, nine construction
6 camps clearing 233 acres of vegetation, 65 cleared pipe
7 storage areas, an estimated 70 gravel pits ranging from
8 one acre to 50 acres in size. The pipeline would cross
9 seven watersheds involving 396 stream crossings, 77 of
10 which are anadromous streams, meaning they're salmon-
11 bearing streams.

12 This is a picture of the route of the pipeline
13 where it crosses Windy Creek within the Kuskokwim
14 watershed. The pipeline comes along here and this is
15 Windy Creek up here. BLM lands are farther down in
16 that way and then it continues on to the mine.
17 Anchorage is that way or Cook Inlet. That area is in
18 Game Management Unit 19C.

19 The mine itself includes a waste rock facility
20 that would fill in the headwaters of American Creek and
21 involve 2,240 acres, a tailings storage facility that
22 would fill in Anaconda Creek and involve 2,050 acres.
23 The tailings storage facility would be contained behind
24 a 464-foot-high dam. The mine itself would be two pits
25 by the time it was near the end of the mine

1 development.

2 The ACMA pit would be approximately 1,800 feet
3 deep and the Lewis pit would be approximately 1,600
4 feet deep. The two pits during the end of the mining
5 operations would merge at the surface into one large
6 open pit 2.2 miles long and one mile wide near the end
7 of the operations. At mine closure, runoff from the
8 tailings storage facility would have to be pumped into
9 the pit to keep it out of the watershed.

10 The pit lake is estimated to take roughly 50
11 years to fill with water naturally and pumping would be
12 required to prevent it from overflowing into Crooked
13 Creek and the Kuskokwim River watershed. This is
14 Crooked Creek right here. This would essentially be
15 pit and the waste rock would be here filling that area
16 and the tailings facility would be here all along
17 Crooked Creek, which flows into the Kuskokwim just down
18 below.

19 A water treatment plant would be constructed 50
20 years after the mine closes. Water from the pit would
21 have to be pumped and treated in this water treatment
22 plant into perpetuity to prevent untreated water from
23 flowing into Crooked Creek and then into the Kuskokwim
24 River. This entire area is also in GMU 19A.

25 The proposed transportation facilities

1 components includes construction of an expanded port
2 facility at Bethel cargo terminal, a new port site at
3 Jungjuk Creek on the Kuskokwim River which they would
4 store 2.8 million gallons of fuel right on the river, a
5 30-mile-long mine access road from the Kuskokwim River
6 up to the mine and that road itself would be 45 stream
7 crossings and an additional 13 new gravel pits, a new
8 5,000-foot airstrip at the mine itself.

9 In 2013, I was doing Peregrine falcon surveys
10 on the Kuskokwim and this is the Kuskokwim at Jungjuk
11 Creek. This is Jungjuk itself on the Kuskokwim. I'll
12 leave it to your imagination to imagine a port site
13 there.

14 Barges would supply the mine with fuel and
15 cargo and involve 64 cargo barge round trips a year and
16 58 fuel barge trips a year or a total of 122 total
17 annual round trips with barges from Bethel to Jungjuk
18 Port site during a 110-day shipping season, which is
19 basically from June 1st to October 1st.

20 River barges would be transported by tug
21 pushing a four-barge configuration each trip. Each
22 fuel barge would carry 1.29 million gallons of diesel
23 fuel. The port at Jungjuk would continue to be needed
24 for a fuel supply and cargo to supply the waste
25 treatment facility for the pit lake after mining into

1 perpetuity. Again, this is Jungjuk and where the port
2 and fuel storage facility would be. Going straight
3 back for 30 miles would be the mine road leaving from
4 there.

5 The preliminary analysis of impacts to
6 subsistence based on the alternatives outlined in the
7 draft EIS includes all six alternatives which Keith had
8 put up here before. It can be found in Appendix N of
9 the EIS. Actually in the back on page 409, if you look
10 at the page numbers of the PDF, it's in Appendix M
11 through O, although it's not labeled and it's out of
12 order. If you can't find it in the EIS, I do have 100
13 copies of it back at the sign-in table.

14 The testimony and input from 11 communities
15 where public hearings will be held on impacts to
16 subsistence by the Donlin Gold project will be analyzed
17 and included in the final ANILCA 810 analysis and
18 evaluation and that will be included in the final EIS.

19 So, for the subsistence evaluation, the
20 following is an evaluation of the effect of Donlin Gold
21 proposal and subsistence uses and needs at the mine
22 site, the natural gas pipeline and the transportation
23 infrastructure components of the project. I split them
24 up. I did an analysis for each component of it and
25 looked at the effects on subsistence uses and needs.

1 So for the mine site itself. The villages
2 closest to the mine would potentially experience the
3 most effects to subsistence, including Napaimute and
4 especially Crooked Creek. Mine activity such as ore
5 trucks in the mine, trucks on the port road, drilling,
6 blasting, power generation, port site activity would
7 likely change the distribution of wildlife species
8 important to subsistence and those are mainly moose,
9 caribou and furbearers. It would be long term and
10 would cause potential impacts during the construction
11 phases and during mining activities throughout the life
12 of the mine.

13 Areas important to Crooked Creek for berry
14 picking, wood cutting, hunting would be directly
15 affected by the mine and adjacent areas would
16 potentially be contaminated with dust emissions
17 containing various particulate materials from ore
18 processing and from trucks on the haul roads and the
19 access roads. This could make berry picking areas
20 undesirable or unuseable to subsistence users.

21 Water released from the mine during operations
22 has the potential to affect salmon and resident fish
23 populations important to subsistence as well as the
24 aquatic food web in Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim
25 River. After the mine closes in 30 years, the pit lake

1 would fill with untreated water that would not meet
2 water quality standards that potentially could impact
3 fish and wildlife.

4 Potential runoff from the tailings dam and pit
5 lake would have the potential to contaminate fish
6 resources important to subsistence in Crooked Creek and
7 the Lower Kuskokwim River into perpetuity impacting
8 subsistence fish resources important to all communities
9 from Crooked Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

10 For the natural gas pipeline, the potential
11 effects to subsistence from construction and operation
12 of a natural gas pipeline would affect the villages of
13 Tyonek, Skwentna, Nikolai, McGrath, Takotna, as well as
14 downriver villages of Sleetmute, Stony Rive, Georgetown
15 and Crooked Creek during construction. The effects of
16 the right-of-way clearing itself, trenching, drilling
17 and the presence of machinery, pipeline transport,
18 workers and construction camps and infrastructure on
19 and along the pipeline right-of-way would cause a
20 redistribution of wildlife like moose, caribou and
21 furbearers and negatively affect access and
22 availability to subsistence resources along the right-
23 of-way.

24 During operations the airstrip that would
25 remain along the pipeline right-of-way at Farewell

1 would potentially increase access to subsistence
2 resources by non-local residents using aircraft and
3 all-terrain vehicles and increase competition for those
4 subsistence resources along and adjacent to the
5 pipeline right-of-way. Villages negatively affected by
6 the increased access and competition would include
7 McGrath, Nikolai and Takotna.

8 For the transportation infrastructure and
9 mainly the barging, the potential effects to
10 subsistence from barging of cargo and fuel and the
11 construction of a port at Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim
12 River would affect all villages on the river from
13 Crooked Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
14 Impacts from barging include displacement and
15 disruption of subsistence activities by barge traffic,
16 a reduced access to subsistence fishing activities such
17 as setnets, fishwheels and processing rafts along the
18 river.

19 Subsistence fish resources like salmon and
20 resident fish species like whitefish and sheefish may
21 also be negatively affected by the magnitude and
22 intensity of barge traffic proposed in Alternative 2,
23 which is Donlin's preferred alternative.

24 Affects to fish may increase when the river
25 water levels are low and barge rafts will need to be

1 uncoupled and barges towed individually or in pairs or
2 lighter barge loads per trip would be required to
3 navigate to Jungjuk Port. This would require
4 additional barge round trips on the river and
5 potentially increase impacts to subsistence fishers on
6 the Kuskokwim River and to subsistence fish resources
7 itself.

8 So the overall findings of this evaluation is
9 that Alternative 2 may result in a significant
10 restriction to subsistence uses for the communities of
11 Crooked Creek and Napaimute in relation to the mine
12 site. The communities on the Kuskokwim River for barge
13 traffic includes Bethel, Napakiak, Napaskiak,
14 Oscarville, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Akiak, Tuluksak, Upper
15 and Lower Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Napaimute and
16 Crooked Creek. The communities of McGrath and Nikolai
17 and Takotna for increased access and competition from
18 non-local users at the Farewell airstrip along the
19 pipeline right-of-way.

20 In addition, potential spill scenarios
21 involving ocean and river barge release of diesel fuel,
22 cyanide, mercury, a tailings dam failure and release of
23 untreated water from the pit lake and tailings dam
24 after mine closure may also result in significant
25 restriction to subsistence resources for Kuskokwim

1 River communities I just listed.

2 The BLM has found from this preliminary ANILCA
3 810 evaluation that all the alternatives, that is
4 Alternative 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5A and 6, in addition to the
5 accumulative case considered in the Draft Donlin Gold
6 EIS may significantly restrict subsistence uses. These
7 findings require us, BLM, to conduct hearings to
8 solicit comments for potentially affected communities
9 and subsistence uses under ANILCA 810, Sections 1 and
10 2, in conjunction with the release of this draft EIS.

11 That's why I'm here tonight and we all know
12 that Anchorage isn't a subsistence community, but I'm
13 here because I know a lot of subsistence resources get
14 traded to Native people and subsistence users who trade
15 and share stuff within this community, so I think it's
16 good for this community to hear this analysis.

17 We will conduct an 810 hearing, as Keith had
18 mentioned, tonight and gather testimony after the draft
19 EIS comment section. Of course, you all are welcome to
20 provide testimony to that.

21 So following this public hearing a finding may
22 be revised. We may find a way that there isn't
23 significant restrictions to subsistence uses or that
24 will not significantly restrict based on things that we
25 change, like changes to alternatives or new information

1 or new mitigation measures resulting from these
2 hearings.

3 If there is a significant finding that may
4 significantly restrict can't be revised or the impacts
5 are too great and can't be mitigated, then a three-part
6 determination must be made before an action can be
7 authorized.

8 Finally, what does that mean and what happens
9 next under ANILCA. Under 810(a)(3)(A) a determination
10 section is prepared only when there is a finding of may
11 significantly restrict subsistence uses for any
12 alternative or a preferred action. The determination
13 will separately address each of the three required
14 items under 810(a) and state why that proposed action
15 is necessary and how the action complies with each
16 requirement.

17 The three items that require a determination
18 are, one, the answer to the question why, such a
19 significant restriction of subsistence uses is
20 necessary and how it is consistent with sound
21 management principals for multiple use of public lands.
22 Secondly, how the proposed action will involve the
23 minimum amount of public lands or Federal lands
24 necessary to accomplish the purpose of the project.
25 Lastly, what reasonable steps will be taken to minimize

1 those adverse effects upon subsistence uses and
2 resources resulting from that project.

3 After that process and if it can be determined
4 that there's a compliance with the 810 process, a
5 manager could proceed with the action and BLM's action
6 would be to grant a right-of-way for 97 miles of that
7 pipeline.

8 So we're going to comment tonight and when you
9 comment on impacts, please consider what additional
10 specific information on how the proposed mine would
11 affect abundance or availability of subsistence
12 resources or how it would affect access to subsistence
13 resources. Those are really key things for an 810
14 analysis.

15 Comments can be given tonight publicly or if
16 you don't like talking in front of people, you can
17 write them by good old paper and pen and send it in the
18 mail. You can email it, you can fax it. We're opening
19 that period just like the EIS until April 30th when
20 they'll be closed, but I would encourage everyone here
21 to comment.

22 Thanks. That's all I have.

23 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much, Bruce. We'll
24 get going here with comments shortly. One
25 clarification. I noted that in relation to Donlin's

1 proposed route through the Alaska Range that their
2 route went through an area that had less impact than
3 the other route. In reality, Donlin's route goes
4 through an area that has more human impact versus the
5 Dalzell Gorge route. So I wanted to clarify that.

6 Before we go to the comment session.....

7 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: You're going to have to
8 clarify that again.

9 MR. GORDON: Okay. I'll have to pull up the
10 slide. Donlin's proposed route through the Alaska
11 Range goes through an area that has more human impact,
12 albeit limited impact, than the proposed Dalzell Gorge
13 route. I'm not trying to get into a real detailed
14 discussion of the two alternatives. Just giving you an
15 idea of why they're bouncing one alternative in
16 relation to another. The Dalzell Gorge route also has
17 to deal with more difficult engineering in relation to
18 the steepness of the route, et cetera. The document
19 will give you a clear explanation of one alternative in
20 relation to another.

21 One of the things we wanted to do before we go
22 to the comment session is have the Federal agency folks
23 in the room introduce themselves to you so that you can
24 understand if you want to talk to anybody from that
25 Federal agency, who that person is. They'll define

1 their role in the project as well.

2 We'll ask the State agency folks to do that.

3 We'll then ask AECOM to identify a couple of
4 their key people that you'll be able to talk to in the
5 poster session. As I mentioned, the AECOM folks are
6 largely developing the EIS at this point, so if you
7 have questions about the analyses done to date, they
8 can give you individuals to talk to who quite probably
9 have had a role in something you're interested in
10 talking about. And then we'll ask Donlin to identify a
11 couple of their key people here so they can give you
12 information on the proposed project if you want to talk
13 directly to Donlin.

14 Bruce, Alan, do you all want to introduce
15 yourselves and your role and we'll go from there.

16 MR. BITTNER: Hi. Once again, my name is Alan
17 Bittner. I'm the Anchorage Field Manager for the
18 Bureau of Land Management.

19 MR. SEPPI: Of course, I'm Bruce Seppi, a
20 wildlife biologist and subsistence coordination for
21 Anchorage Field Office BLM.

22 MR. GORDON: Would the remainder of the Federal
23 employees in the room just stand up and introduce
24 yourselves.

25 MS. NEWMAN: I'm Sheila Newman. I'm the

1 Special Actions Branch Chief for the Corps of Engineers
2 Regulatory Division. I oversee the EIS projects and
3 the Compensatory Mitigation Program.

4 MS. ANDRASCHKO: Good evening. I'm Amanda
5 Andraschko and I'm the Tribal Liaison for the Corps of
6 Engineers.

7 MR. JEN: Good evening. I'm Mark Jen. I'm
8 with the Environmental Protection Agency here in
9 Anchorage, Alaska and I manage the project on behalf of
10 EPA.

11 MR. JOHNSON: I'm Tom Johnson with the U.S.
12 Department of Transportation, Pipeline Hazardous Safety
13 Material Administration, Office of Pipeline Safety.
14 That was a long one. We deal with the natural gas
15 pipeline and specifically related to a special permit
16 that may be issued related to strain based design with
17 the pipeline.

18 MS. THORPE: Good evening. My name is Laurie
19 Thorpe. I'm with the Bureau of Land Management,
20 Anchorage Field Office, and I'm addressing the non-
21 native invasive species for the project.

22 MR. SPENCER: Good evening. My name is Mark
23 Spencer. I'm the Anchorage District Manager, Bureau of
24 Land Management. Staff and us are one of the
25 cooperating agencies.

1 MR. GORDON: Would the State folks in the room
2 please stand up and go through the same process.

3 MR. ASHTON: Hi, I'm William Ashton with the
4 Department of Environmental Conservation looking at the
5 water quality issues on the project.

6 MR. MCKINLEY: I'm Lee McKinley with the Alaska
7 Department of Fish and Game out of the State Pipeline
8 Office and I'm the lead on the pipeline portion of the
9 project for the State, Fish and Game.

10 MS. YODER: Hi, I'm Sarah Yoder. I'm with the
11 Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and the
12 Health Impact Assessment Program. We provided some
13 input to the human health sections of the EIS.

14 MS. HERROY: I'm Cathe Heroy. I'm with the
15 Department of Natural Resources, State Pipeline Office.
16 My branch of the Pipeline Office handles the land use
17 right-of-way lease.

18 MS. LONGAN: Good evening. I'm Sara Longan of
19 the Office of Project Management and Permitting or OPMP
20 in DNR. My colleague is the State's lead on NEPA. His
21 name is Jeff Bruno and he's unable to attend here
22 tonight. We offer permit coordination for the overall
23 project and we do that in concert with the State
24 Pipeline Coordinator's Office who, on the State side,
25 oversees the pipeline portion.

1 MR. GORDON: Bill, would you introduce a few of
2 your key AECOM people.

3 MR. CRAIG: Sure. I'm just going to run real
4 quick through the group that's going to be available to
5 you in the poster session next door. Cecil Urlich on
6 project components, Steve Rusak on water quality, Jim
7 Munter on water flow, Michelle Pearson on project
8 components, Jessica on barging, Paul Meyergen (ph) on
9 project components, Amy Rosenthal on socioeconomics,
10 Dave Every on fisheries, Joan Kluwe on subsistence. I
11 think that's good, Keith. And then we've got Taylor
12 Brelsford up at the front of the room. He will be
13 there as well. And Nancy Durego (ph) will be on air
14 quality.

15 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Bill. Patty, will you
16 introduce a few of your folks from Donlin. We have
17 some Donlin staff here who can give you a detailed
18 description of their proposed project. We'll start
19 with Mr. Stan Foo.

20 MR. FOO: Thanks, Keith. My name is Stan Foo,
21 General Manager for Donlin Gold. We have a number of
22 Donlin employees here today. This is the agency's
23 meeting. Any questions really should start with the
24 agencies and their technical experts, but if there's
25 something they need help with, you can go to the

1 agencies and they'll know who to come to with my staff
2 or come to me and we can direct it from there. I will
3 point out Patty McGrath, our acting permitting manager,
4 is here as well and a number of others. So thank you.

5 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Stan. In a couple of
6 minutes we're going to start the comment session with
7 the folks that are online on the phone, but for those
8 of you who would like to review the posters, they're in
9 the next room. As I mentioned, there's a dozen of
10 them. Three on the proposed project, nine on key
11 environmental or human impact issues. So feel free to
12 go over there and start that. Jessica, if you want to
13 start us with the folks on the phone.

14 (No response)

15 MR. GORDON: Okay. For everybody who is going
16 to make a comment, please understand that due to the
17 number of folks that would like to comment this evening
18 we're going to have to restrict folks to three minutes.
19 So, as we start going through the process, I know the
20 folks on the phone can't see what's going on in the
21 room. For the folks in the room, Tara has three cards,
22 green, yellow and red. She'll use those to indicate
23 when you're getting close to your time limit.

24 For the folks on the phone, we don't have any
25 mechanism by which we can keep you from interrupting

1 each other, so we're simply going to have to ask that
2 the folks on the phone start to make your comment and
3 if we have any cross talk over each other we'll just
4 have to deal with that the best we can. Would someone
5 on the phone like to initiate the comment process.

6 MR. WASSILIE: It's hard to hear.

7 MR. GORDON: Okay, go ahead.

8 MR. WASSILIE: Yeah, this is Carl Wassilie.
9 Can you hear me?

10 MR. GORDON: Yes, Carl. Please continue.

11 MR. WASSILIE: Yeah, today I'll be speaking on
12 behalf of Center for Water Advocacy, formerly known as
13 Center for Tribal Water Advocacy. I just wanted to --
14 you know, I mean it's hard to do any type of comments.
15 There's 5,500 pages of information, technical
16 information. Three minutes, of course, doesn't do
17 justice for the amount of information, considering that
18 the State of Alaska had already recognized at the
19 beginning of this project that they could barely even
20 be able to develop enough -- they could not be able to
21 technically handle this mine and it was solely
22 dependent upon Canadian mining companies that formed
23 Donlin Gold.

24 So, you know, in that capacity, I think it's
25 important to recognize the sovereignty of the water and

1 the long-term impacts of water should not be -- and
2 protection of those waters are critically important.
3 Not only for the citizens of Alaska, but also for the
4 residents, inhabitants of the Kuskokwim River Drainage
5 as well as the Yukon River Drainage.

6 The baseline data doesn't seem to be adequate
7 as far as like understanding the Kuskokwim River. I
8 see there's a lot of work been done on the Crooked
9 Creek. So if there's long-term impacts to the
10 watershed from acid mine drainage because there is rock
11 that will react with the environment and expose to
12 water and air that will release acid into the
13 environment for indefinitely.

14 One of the biggest concerns immediately would
15 be ensuring that there's at least a couple billion
16 dollars to address the indefinite impacts of water from
17 acid mine drainage on this project. So I want to make
18 sure that this comment is heard for sure. I'm not sure
19 -- I'm guessing I'm getting close to three minutes just
20 addressing that.

21 The economic analysis is the short-term
22 analysis. It doesn't really address intergenerational
23 standard of living, so it's only addressing the
24 standard of living based on a short-term analysis. I
25 would say that also needs to be addressed, is really

1 looking at beyond the mine, the economic impacts of
2 subsistence and water and health. The detriments are
3 definitely stronger over a longer period of time and
4 with chronic exposure to toxins as a result of the
5 mining activities.....

6 MR. GORDON: Carl.

7 MR. WASSILIE:and that needs to be taken
8 into account, those economic figures beyond just what's
9 being projected and the very difficult reading that
10 I've been able to address and I'm a scientist, so this
11 is -- I'm not sure how the common person can even deal
12 with this let alone anybody dealing with limited
13 English proficiency and where English is only the first
14 language.

15 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Carl. I'm sorry to
16 interrupt you.

17 MR. WASSILIE: Okay. Thank you. And I'm
18 having trouble hearing you, so just so you know.

19 MR. GORDON: Okay. I understand. I'm sorry to
20 interrupt you, but with the number of commentators we
21 have tonight, we're going to have to try to stay pretty
22 close to the three-minute limit.

23 One thing for those of you who are commenting,
24 this is a comment session, so we're not doing comment
25 and responses unless there's something we feel we

1 specifically need to address. It's not
2 point/counterpoint. It's not comment/rebuttal.

3 So thank you very much, Carl. I know you're
4 aware of the processes by which to submit additional
5 comments to us and please do so. You're giving us some
6 very good information. Is there someone else on the
7 phone who would like to make a comment?

8 (No response)

9 MR. GORDON: Okay. Is the person in the room
10 that has number one here?

11 (No response)

12 MR. GORDON: Okay. Is the person in the room
13 that has comment two here?

14 (No response)

15 MR. GORDON: How about number three? Go ahead.

16 DR. STEVENS: Good evening. I'm Don Stevens, a
17 consulting economic geologist and I live here in
18 Anchorage. I'm a certified professional geologist,
19 have a Ph.D. in geology from University of Alaska
20 Fairbanks and I've worked full time in minerals
21 exploration in Alaska since 1970. I have conducted
22 field projects in the central Kuskokwim and have
23 visited the Donlin project several times.

24 I strongly support Alternative 2, Donlin Gold's
25 proposed project. The people of Alaska cannot afford

1 not to support this project. The State of Alaska is
2 too dependent upon a beleaguered oil industry for
3 revenue and low oil prices are forcing the State to cut
4 back. This results in a strongly negative social and
5 economic impact on all Bush Alaska, but particularly in
6 the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region where even average-paying
7 jobs are scarce.

8 The quality of all of our children's futures
9 depend on the opportunities they have. The Donlin Gold
10 project will provide jobs and a strong financial future
11 for several generations of Alaska Natives who want to
12 work close to home.

13 In 2014, Alaska's mining industry provided some
14 of the state's highest paying jobs with an estimated
15 average annual wage of \$100,000, over twice the state
16 average for all sectors of the economy. The decision
17 regarding the Donlin Gold project Alaskans make in the
18 near future will impact the destinies of generations of
19 Alaskans who may never have another chance for a great
20 job.

21 Donlin Gold Mine will also have a huge impact
22 on the quality of life for those who work there.
23 Several years ago I was waiting on the apron of the
24 Russian Mission airstrip for a flight to Bethel along
25 with a guy from the village. We got to talking and I

1 asked him where he worked. He probably said at Donlin.
2 I asked him what was so good about the job. He
3 replied, for the first time in my life I have a reason
4 to stay sober and drug free. I get a good paycheck and
5 I'm fixing up my house. My wife and kids get new
6 clothes and we can afford things we never had before.
7 This same bright future awaits future employees of the
8 Donlin Gold Mine.

9 The Donlin Gold Mine land and resources belong
10 to the Kuskokwim Corporation and Calista Corporation.
11 Because of ANCSA 7(I) and 7(j) revenue sharing
12 provisions, all Native regional and village
13 corporations and their shareholders will benefit from a
14 profitable mine. The resultant cash flow through the
15 Alaskan economy will benefit all Alaskans as the
16 economy is sustained by demand for goods and services.

17 As carefully planned in Alternative 2, the
18 Donlin Gold Mine will be a world-class operation,
19 exemplary in every aspect, protecting the environment,
20 providing high-paying jobs for local people and
21 providing significant tax revenue to the state of
22 Alaska.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Don.

25 (Applause)

1 MR. GORDON: Okay. We'll go on to number four.

2 (No response)

3 MR. GORDON: How about number five?

4 MR. HOOLEY: Good evening. My name is Stan
5 Hooley. I'm the CEO of the Iditarod Trail Committee.
6 I've served in this capacity on behalf of the
7 organization for a bit of time. Pre-gray hair to be a
8 little bit more specific. We do appreciate the
9 opportunity to comment today on the Donlin Gold project
10 draft EIS.

11 Very early on in this process Donlin Gold asked
12 us for our input on their project plans and to listen
13 to any concerns we might have relative to their plans
14 to build a pipeline. As an organization, I think we
15 would say we learned a lot about what the proposed
16 pipeline is and also perhaps equally importantly what
17 it is not.

18 Donlin Gold's current plan, which is identified
19 in the draft EIS as Alternative 2, is a revision to the
20 original plan and is a plan that we, as an
21 organization, support. There are a number of reasons
22 for this. First of all, it has the least amount of
23 overlap to the Trail.

24 Another alternative, and I'll comment on it as
25 well as another alternative identified in the draft EIS

1 in a moment, would overlap the trail by an additional
2 34 miles. In the case of Alternative 2, only four
3 miles of the 315-mile pipeline are co-located with the
4 Iditarod Trail and only another 10.5 miles of the
5 pipeline would be within a range of 1,000 feet of the
6 Trail itself.

7 Secondly, we believe that the intent is the
8 pipeline will be designed for minimum impact as it has
9 a relatively narrow footprint and will be buried to
10 reduce visual impact. We understand that the proposed
11 pipeline consists of a 14-inch buried pipe, which makes
12 this project a much different animal than the 800 miles
13 of 48-inch above-the-ground pipe that runs from Prudhoe
14 Bay to Valdez.

15 As to viewing any footprint of the pipeline
16 from the Iditarod Trail right-of-way itself, in those
17 few areas where the trail and pipeline would be in
18 relatively close proximity, we believe users would find
19 it to be minimal because of the fact that dense
20 visitation along much of the route would greatly
21 restrict visibility. In a treeless area, visual
22 impacts would be negligible because of the snow cover.

23 All things considered, this doesn't seem like
24 much of an impact when you consider that nearly the
25 entire Iditarod National Historic Trail right-of-way

1 between Seward and Portage, a distance of about 60
2 miles, is co-located with the Alaska Railroad.

3 We also understand and very much appreciate
4 that the construction season would be scheduled to
5 limit impacts to sport and subsistence hunting, which
6 is an important consideration for many of our friends
7 and supporters in various communities along the Trail.

8 Thanks for the opportunity to comment this
9 evening.

10 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. For those of
11 you who have written comments, if you're not able to
12 finish your comments, please feel free to leave those
13 with us because we can get the remainder of your
14 comment in or you can submit it by one of the other
15 means.

16 Stan, I believe you had number one.

17 MR. FOO: Good evening. My name is Stan Foo.
18 I'm general manager for Donlin Gold. We will be
19 sending written comments to the Corps on the draft EIS
20 and to the BLM on the draft 810 analysis. However,
21 there are a few words I'd like to say tonight.

22 First, I want to emphasize a long history that
23 Donlin Gold has had in working with communities in the
24 Yukon-Kuskokwim Region that goes back to 1995. Through
25 20 years of working in the area we have met regularly

1 with communities to discuss our project, we have
2 answered questions and most importantly we've listened
3 to the people of the region. We have made significant
4 changes to the project plan over the years based on
5 this input.

6 We respect that subsistence is a core value of
7 the local communities and protecting subsistence is a
8 core value of Donlin Gold and we have designed our
9 project with this in mind. As it relates to
10 subsistence, BLM's preliminary 810 analysis is not
11 factual and mischaracterizes the project. We strongly
12 disagree with the assertion that some aspects of our
13 project may result in significant restrictions to
14 subsistence uses. These conclusions conflict with the
15 draft EIS analysis and are not justified.

16 Here's one example. The 810 analysis states
17 that water releases from the mine have the potential to
18 affect fish in Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River.
19 However, water discharged from the mine will be treated
20 in a permitted water treatment plant before it is
21 discharged into Crooked Creek. The treated water will
22 meet water quality standards that are protective of
23 fish. Therefore, contrary to the BLM analysis,
24 discharge water will not adversely affect fish or
25 subsistence.

1 This conclusion is supported by nearly 30 years
2 of operating history for the five existing hard rock
3 mines in Alaska. None of these mines have had any
4 adverse impacts on the fisheries resources. The
5 discharged water will be regularly monitored to ensure
6 that this is the case.

7 Any impact analysis must also address the
8 benefits that jobs in the regions would have on
9 subsistence, which would increase income for funding
10 fuel and supplies needed to practice subsistence.
11 Donlin Gold has a reputation for local hire and is
12 committed to local hire within the Y-K Region.

13 In closing, I'd like to thank the Corps and the
14 other agencies for the extensive outreach being
15 conducted on this draft EIS, which is going to include
16 meetings in 15 villages. That's quite an effort really
17 for that kind of travel.

18 Donlin Gold is committed to developing a safe
19 and environmentally-responsible project that respects
20 subsistence and cultural values in the region. Public
21 comments from the people in the Y-K Region have helped
22 us shape this project and continued public involvement
23 will help make it a better one.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 MR. GORDON: All right. I believe number six
2 is next. Five? Okay, go ahead.

3 MS. WILSON: Good evening. My name is Carol
4 Wilson. I am the executive director for Excel Alaska.
5 Excel Alaska is a Federally recognized 501(c)(3)
6 nonprofit providing supplemental educational
7 opportunities and career education enrichment
8 activities for the five school districts within the
9 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region. The districts include
10 Kashunamiut, Kuspuk, Lower Kuskokwim, Lower Yukon and
11 St. Mary's.

12 Donlin Gold has been critical in forwarding the
13 mission and success of Excel Alaska. They are
14 committed to investing in the youth in the region and
15 have provided funding for the Excel Alaska Academic and
16 Trades Decathlon and have provided in addition
17 scholarships for many of the career development and
18 employment activities that we provide for high school
19 students.

20 The goal of the decathlon is to bring approximately 200
21 students into Aniak to learn about careers in the high
22 growth and priority industries within Alaska.

23 Though the Y-K Delta Region resembles other
24 areas in rural Alaska in some respects, the isolation
25 that characterizes the Y-K Delta is reflected in

1 extreme economic indicators. Poverty and unemployment
2 rates in the region, excluding the village of Bethel,
3 are among the highest in the nation. Similarly,
4 average wages per capita income were among the lowest.
5 The Wade Hampton Census Area per capita income was
6 \$22,000 in 2011. The lowest in Alaska and less than
7 half of the state average.

8 Employment opportunities are scarce, government
9 employment is the largest source of income and it has
10 become tenuous and potentially unsustainable.
11 Employment rates in the region have been flat for
12 decades. The percentage of families receiving public
13 assistance range between 68 percent and 91 percent.

14 Given the state's current economic crisis and
15 of course the dismal statistics for the region, I fully
16 support Donlin Gold's effort in bringing income through
17 viable and sustainable employment that will provide
18 economic growth in the region and bright futures to the
19 youth across the Y-K Delta.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 MR. GORDON: Number two, please go ahead.

24 MR. FITHIAN: Good evening. My name is Robert
25 Fithian. I'm a conservationist, miner, guide, forester

1 and rancher. I have a significant involvement history
2 with all these industries within Alaska, including
3 being a past statewide president of the Alaska Miners
4 Association.

5 For many years I have supported conservation-
6 based development and operation of the Donlin Creek
7 Mine. I continue to do so. I do not support the
8 proposed footprint of the pipeline between Mile Points
9 150 and 220, the Upper Kuskokwim Region for a number of
10 important environmental, cultural, social and economic
11 factors.

12 My previous comments within the EIS scoping
13 regarding this concern have been dismissed as well as
14 comparable or similar comments and recommendations
15 submitted by ADF&G and a number of Upper Kuskokwim
16 residents.

17 In short, the pipeline as proposed in that area
18 will force forfeiture of a sustainable industry and
19 ways of life which have proven conservation basis and
20 will substantially and negatively affect the culture,
21 long-established businesses, subsistence of the people
22 of the Upper Kuskokwim in exchange for development of a
23 pipeline through the near entire heart of a vitally
24 important and critical transitional wildlife habitat
25 corridor.

1 This development, which is non-sustainable,
2 will eliminate the other ways of life which has been
3 there for and could be there for centuries to come.
4 This should not happen. The Donlin Creek operator and
5 the Corps of Engineers should know that a viable and
6 respectful alternative routing exists by just moving
7 the footprint of the pipeline further to the west and
8 out into the floor of the Kuskokwim Valley proper from
9 Mile 150 and tying it back in at the 220 point.

10 The EIS must work to establish this alternative
11 known as the Upper Kuskokwim Reroute to respect the
12 people, resources and ways of life that have long
13 existed within this region. Social license to operate
14 within any rural region is easily defined by having
15 sincere respect for the people, their way of life, the
16 fish, wildlife, land and water resources in the region
17 you intend to operate within. I think Donlin has done
18 an exceptional job of that in the Lower and Mid
19 Kuskokwim.

20 The most effective way to accomplish this
21 license is to turn together with those that will be
22 most affected by your activities ahead of time and
23 develop a plan which can work for both. To turn away
24 from the people and long-established businesses and say
25 this project is going to happen, we're going to be

1 there, just prepare for it works against everybody's
2 best interest.

3 There should not have to be a fight between
4 miners or guides or local residents or other ways of
5 life. There should be a respectful turning together
6 with sincere effort to communicate, collaborate and
7 cooperate for the best interest of Alaska as a whole,
8 not an after-the-fact series of actions within a
9 permitting process depicting comments or
10 recommendations.

11 The EIS agencies involved within the pipeline
12 permitting have a serious responsibility to not allow
13 for these negative and dividing impacts to occur,
14 especially when viable alternatives exist.

15 That's it. Thank you for allowing me to
16 testify.

17 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much.

18 (Applause)

19 MR. GORDON: Okay. Number six.

20 MR. KUBALL: My name is Erich Kuball. I'm the
21 student services director for Kuspuk School District
22 and Excel Alaska, Inc. I've lived in Aniak for the
23 past 20 years and have been a teacher, district-wide
24 counselor and part of the administrative team at Kuspuk
25 School District. These are the villages from Stony

1 River down to Lower Kalskag.

2 I've worked with high-school-age youth in
3 Kuspuk School District villages for the last 18 years
4 to provide career guidance and post-secondary
5 transition activities. In my experience, I've
6 discovered that the kids need much more than just what
7 they can get in the classrooms in the villages.

8 Thanks to Donlin's support and the development
9 of Excel Alaska, Kuspuk youth as well as other youth in
10 the Y-K Region are getting such experiences, preparing
11 them for the world of work, job shadowing, vocational
12 programs, driver's education, completion of university
13 credits and reinforcement of employability skills.
14 Because of their support for the youth in the Y-K
15 Region, I support the Donlin Gold Mine project.

16 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. GORDON: Number seven.

19 MS. BROWN: Hi. I'm Lucy Brown. I'm
20 originally from the Kuskokwim area. I'm an elder. So
21 today I'm going to -- bear with me, okay. I had some
22 deep thoughts about the issue of mining and the process
23 of its effect on our land, water, air and the
24 livelihood of our people, both short term and long
25 term.

1 Also with Donlin I see a vision of short term
2 that would help our people to obtain jobs that looks
3 really good. The thoughts of scholarship, grants in
4 our youth is very inspiring. These will create
5 hopefully our leaders for our communities. Truly,
6 these are gifts.

7 However, it is a small amount when one compares
8 the upheaval of the lands, possible contamination to
9 our environment via extremely hazardous chemicals that
10 could damage the land, air and people. I would
11 encourage Donlin to provide monies to each community
12 for the schools and community centers to assist in
13 building improvements.

14 One can see when you visit the schools and the
15 community centers they're in dire need of improvements,
16 so that would help the whole environment within the
17 community of the Kuskokwim villages.

18 As I vision the future and see the lands
19 stripped, storage of toxins and unreclaimed
20 environmental damages, my thoughts are deeply
21 disturbed. What are the steps in prevention of
22 contamination to Mother Earth short and long term?
23 Will monies be set aside down the road when things
24 start to break down, deterioration and spill? Who will
25 be responsible then? How will this affect our

1 lifestyle?

2 Another thought of the mine is how the process
3 of storage of toxins be stored. Has this method used
4 in the past? Has it been effective? When I was in
5 Colorado, I saw the spill. I'm sure testing of the
6 air, lakes, streams, creeks and our beloved Kuskokwim
7 will be tested. Will it be tested monthly, yearly,
8 infinity?

9 I hear often how stories of gas and oil
10 containers are upgraded often. Since the mining area
11 is isolated, who will be the advocates out there
12 besides the TKC shareholders? Will there be a natural
13 long-term goal in writing with the environmental laws
14 or regulations to prevent that and to make sure that is
15 being checked?

16 I also heard that the barging fuel up the mine
17 will happen again. My deepest concern is a spilling
18 and the barges getting stuck. What types of prevention
19 and systems will be used to prevent accidents from
20 occurring. I know that this organization is working on
21 standards for prevention with the Federal, State and
22 Native corporations. However, my utmost feeling still
23 remains unsettled, conflicted about mining.

24 Here's a saying I'd like to say to end this.
25 Mother Earth, the giver and sustainer of life, there is

1 beauty in the sounds and sights of nature, the sounds
2 of birds, the howls of wolves, the sight of the salmon
3 swimming upstream, moose and calf feeding and the
4 whispers of the tree and hope that our life continues.

5 Thank you very much.

6 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 MR. GORDON: Number eight.

9 MS. MATTHIAS: Thank you for this opportunity
10 to testify in support of the Donlin Gold project and
11 offer some comments on the draft EIS alternatives. For
12 the record, my name is Karen Matthias and I'm the
13 managing consultant for the Council of Alaska
14 Producers, which is a nonprofit statewide trade
15 association for the large metal mines and major metal
16 development projects.

17 I understand that people have concerns about
18 mining and I would really recommend that they have a
19 look at the practices, the impacts and the benefits of
20 the five large operating mines that are working here in
21 Alaska. Two of them started operations in 1989. They
22 have been operating for more than 25 years and there's
23 a real story there that can provide a lot of answers to
24 the concerns that people have who aren't familiar with
25 mining in their region.

1 Donlin has been a member of my organization
2 since the mid 1990s and without exception all of the
3 company representatives I have worked with over the
4 last 10 years have been reliable, responsible people
5 with long histories in Alaska, who are generous with
6 their time and expertise. They are truly guided by
7 their values to develop a safe and environmentally
8 responsible project, to provide jobs and opportunities
9 for families and businesses in the Yukon-Kuskokwim
10 Region and the state, and to communicate with
11 transparency and to respect subsistence and cultural
12 values. I think their 90 percent local hire record at
13 the camp during the exploration period is a real
14 example of that commitment.

15 One of the most important things generally is
16 that the land and the resources belong to the
17 shareholders of TKC and Calista, which selected the
18 mineral rights at Donlin Gold, so their shareholders
19 and dependents could benefit from the development and
20 production of the mine. Donlin Gold would also benefit
21 all Native corporations in Alaska through revenue
22 sharing under 7(I) and 7(j) of ANCSA.

23 What's really impressed me about this project
24 is the emphasis on safety and environmental
25 responsibility. Whether it's the synthetic liner under

1 its entire tailings impoundment, the downstream
2 construction method for the dam, the commitment to dry
3 closure of the tailings storage facility or the fact
4 that they changed the plan after listening to concerns
5 that were raised by people in the region. I think that
6 shows a real commitment to both listening and to best
7 available practices.

8 Some specific comments I have on the
9 alternatives. I strongly support Alternative 2, which
10 is Donlin Gold's proposed project. Having no project
11 would have a negative impact on the region and Alaska.
12 This project means new jobs, local and state revenue,
13 revenue sharing to Native corporations and, of course,
14 the opportunity for a natural gas pipeline bringing
15 cheaper energy and cleaner energy to the region. A
16 lack of development will have a negative social and
17 economic impact on the region, particularly given the
18 fiscal challenges of the State and also the Federal
19 government.

20 Alternative 3B, the diesel pipeline -- sorry,
21 just one last thing. You know, there's a lot of talk
22 about dry stack tailings, but I think it's important to
23 note that every mine has to be tailored to reflect the
24 unique circumstances of the location and the geology.
25 Dry stack is one best practice, but it's not always the

1 best option. In this case, it would increase fugitive
2 dust emissions. There's also a lot of feasibility
3 questions with dry stack for this particular area.

4 To sum up, I think there could be major
5 benefits from Donlin. I appreciate the opportunity to
6 make comments and I will submit written comments.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. GORDON: Thank you. We'll incorporate the
9 rest of your comments.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. GORDON: Number nine.

12 MS. CAREY: Good evening. Can you hear me? My
13 name is Maver Carey and I'm the president and CEO of
14 the Kuskokwim Corporation. I'm also a shareholder.
15 I've been with the Kuskokwim Corporation for 22 years,
16 the CEO for 12 years and I can honestly say that in
17 working with Donlin it has been a positive experience.
18 I can commend them for going up and down our region to
19 our 10 villages within the Kuskokwim Region and
20 communicating way before they thought that they would
21 start mining in our region.

22 I can tell you that protecting our subsistence
23 is a huge issue for our board of directors. We have 12
24 board of directors who are assisting with managing a
25 million acres of land from Kalskag all the way up to

1 Stony River, which includes the mine site. We are the
2 surface owners and Calista Corporation is the
3 subsurface owners.

4 I am also very concerned about the 810 analysis
5 and the factual information that has been brought to
6 our attention by BLM. I would like to see factual
7 information about that subsistence analysis. The
8 people in our region are the best qualified to address
9 the subsistence issues that will be affected within our
10 region.

11 Donlin is following State and Federal
12 permitting regulations that are very clear that are
13 different than were in the state of Alaska many years
14 ago. For example, we have Red Devil Mine in our region
15 and BLM is supposed to be cleaning that up. They have
16 not been cleaning that up and they are not even
17 following State regulations at this time.

18 The impacts to our region from Red Devil is
19 much higher than the impacts that are going to be
20 provided from Donlin Gold because they are following
21 State and Federal regulations. They're also working
22 closely with Calista Regional Corporation and the
23 Kuskokwim Regional Corporation along with many leaders
24 up and down the region and communicating the impacts
25 within our area.

1 We strongly support Donlin and we strongly
2 support the impacts to number two. Our region is the
3 poorest in the entire state of Alaska. Donlin has been
4 beneficial in already providing communicated support to
5 our region through scholarships, through funding
6 mechanisms and community support that is much needed in
7 an area where we have still no flush toilets in some of
8 the villages.

9 We look to the future through Calista, the
10 Kuskokwim Corporation and Donlin in providing
11 employment opportunities where there are no jobs in the
12 Kuskokwim area. We have a strong financial future and
13 viable opportunities if Donlin moves forward with
14 producing the mine. Our region is the poorest in the
15 entire state and we strongly support and recommend that
16 Donlin move forward with option number two.

17 Thank you very much.

18 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. GORDON: Number nine. Sorry, 10.

21 MS. LIMOGÉ REEVE: Good evening. My name is
22 Renee Limoge Reeve and I'm the deputy director with the
23 Alaska Support Industry Alliance. The Alliance is a
24 37-year-old nonprofit trade organization made up of
25 more than 500 members providing over 50,000 Alaskan

1 jobs related to the oil, gas and mining industry. Our
2 mission is to advocate for safe, environmentally
3 responsible development of Alaska's oil, gas and
4 mineral resources for the benefit of all Alaskans.

5 On behalf of our 500-plus member companies,
6 including Calista Corporation, the Alliance is here
7 today to offer our full support for the proposed Donlin
8 Mine project. Draft environmental impact statement
9 Alternative 2, which ensures the project occurs, is the
10 alternative plan for the project supported by the
11 Alliance.

12 According to the State Department of Labor,
13 Southwest Alaska is besieged by the highest
14 unemployment rates in the entire state ranging from 10
15 to 20 percent unemployment. Unfortunately, the number
16 of Alaskans without a job in this region of Alaska is
17 likely higher because to be considered unemployed one
18 must actively be looking for a job. The sad reality in
19 Southwest Alaska is there are very few jobs to search
20 for.

21 The dreary picture could change dramatically
22 for the better because of the Donlin Mine project. It
23 is critically important for the social and economic
24 health of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region that the Donlin
25 Gold project progress and be allowed to enter the

1 development and production stage.

2 There are two fundamental reasons why the
3 Alliance supports the project. First, the economic and
4 job benefits that will flow to local residents and all
5 Alaskans. Secondly, the Alliance fully believes that
6 throughout the life of the mine Donlin Gold will engage
7 in environmentally responsible development of Alaska's
8 mineral resources. Both reasons are completely aligned
9 with the Alliance's mission.

10 To our first point, it is estimated that
11 roughly 3,000 jobs would be created during the
12 construction phase of the project. As it moves forward
13 into the operation phase with an expected life of 28
14 years, 600 to 1,200 high-paying, full-time jobs will
15 exist because of Donlin Gold Mine. The ripple effects
16 from these direct jobs will benefit Alaskans and
17 Alliance members across Alaska working in the
18 logistics, transportation, workforce training and
19 financial service industries.

20 With a 90 percent Alaska hire at their camp
21 during exploration efforts, the Alliance thanks Donlin
22 for their commitment to employing Alaskan workers. The
23 jobs and valuable training provided to local residents
24 by the Donlin Gold project will help stave off social
25 ills like unemployment, suicide, sexual abuse and

1 substance abuse, all too common in rural Alaska. The
2 Alliance believes there's no better welfare program
3 than a job that provides a person with dignity and a
4 sense of purpose.

5 As our state deals with declining oil
6 production from the North Slope, Alaska's mining
7 industry should be a bright spot in our economy for
8 decades. It is the Alliance's hope that Donlin Gold
9 will be a part of this picture.

10 As stated earlier, we know that the Donlin Gold
11 project will develop Alaska's mineral resources in an
12 environmentally responsible manner. Examples of this
13 include the proposal to build a 300-mile natural gas
14 pipeline from Cook Inlet to the project site for power
15 generation rather than barging ships loaded with diesel
16 fuel up the Kuskokwim River. This proposal will not
17 only reduce emissions, but will also spur further
18 development of oil and gas resources in Cook Inlet,
19 generating more economic benefits to Alaska including
20 jobs.

21 To reiterate, the Donlin Gold project has the
22 full support of the Alaska Support Industry Alliance in
23 its entirety and recommends the Army Corps of Engineers
24 select Alternative 2 in the draft EIS.

25 Thank you.

1 (Applause)

2 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Number 11.
3 Folks, we have about 10 more minutes for comments
4 before we're going to have to start the hearing. I
5 don't know what the total number of comments out there
6 is. The highest number I saw was 56. So, to get
7 comments in after the hearing, we're probably going to
8 have to cut the comment period down to about two
9 minutes and I'm going to have to get a lot more strict
10 with it.

11 Go ahead.

12 MR. OLDS: I'll keep it short then. I'm Chris
13 Olds. I'm a construction project manager. I've been
14 doing environmental construction projects in Alaska for
15 over 25 years. I strongly support safe and
16 environmental responsible development in Alaska. This
17 is why I support Alternative 2. This will have a huge
18 impact economically and socially in the region and
19 within Alaska. The impact will not only be short term
20 but long term in a positive way. A sense of purpose of
21 having jobs. This will support numerous local jobs.
22 The sense of well being in the area.

23 I also, as an Iron Dog racer, this Alternate 2
24 will have minimum impact on the Iron Dog and Iditarod
25 Race and race trail. The pipeline will have minimal

1 impact as opposed to Alternative 3B with the petroleum
2 pipeline and potential spill. The construction would
3 have minimal impact.

4 Donlin has been a supporter of Alaska and I
5 strongly support Alternative 2.

6 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much.

7 (Applause)

8 MR. BRUNE: For the record, my name is Jason
9 Brune and I'm the senior director of land and resources
10 for Cook Inlet Region Incorporated. CIRI is an Alaska
11 Native regional corporation formed under the Alaska
12 Native Claims Settlement Act, ANCSA, and one of the
13 largest private landowners in Southcentral Alaska.
14 CIRI's comments today are in support of Alternative 2,
15 Donlin's proposed project.

16 The proposed 315-mile-long 14-inch-diameter gas
17 pipeline will cross CIRI lands for approximately seven
18 miles. Donlin worked very closely with CIRI to
19 identify potential options and we support the route
20 that was selected. We do not feel there will be any
21 conflicts with subsistence users in the region arising
22 from the pipeline's construction or use of the Farewell
23 airstrip.

24 Along with a stable source of energy for the
25 Donlin project, CIRI supports the potential this

1 pipeline has to provide energy for local communities
2 and other development opportunities along the pipeline
3 corridor in the future. In addition, Donlin will
4 provide a market for Cook Inlet natural gas, which will
5 help lure more exploration investment, including to
6 CIRI land.

7 While we are supportive of a natural gas
8 pipeline to energize this project, we have concerns
9 with the alternative that suggests building a diesel
10 pipeline. We also have concerns that many of the non-
11 project proponent alternatives if adopted are not only
12 technologically impossible, but they do not consider
13 the financial implications and may lead to the project
14 not being constructed. The agencies should give
15 special care to make sure proposed alternatives are
16 actually realistic.

17 When approved, the Donlin Gold Mine will
18 provide thousands of well-paying jobs in a region that
19 possesses some of the highest unemployment rates in the
20 state. These economic opportunities can help revive
21 rural communities and ultimately preserve cultures.
22 The economic benefit of Donlin will not be limited to
23 Southwest Alaska. In fact, Donlin's effects will be
24 felt statewide.

25 Located on Calista land, Donlin will ultimately

1 benefit not only Calista and its shareholders, but all
2 of the other ANCSA regional corporations and village
3 corporations and their shareholders through 7(I) and
4 7(j) distributions. This type of project is ultimately
5 what ANCSA envisioned and CIRI recognizes that both
6 Calista's and the Kuskokwim Corporation's support for
7 the project as the landowners.

8 We appreciate that Donlin has worked with them
9 and us to ensure subsistence resources and the
10 subsistence way of life along the proposed project
11 footprint are not only considered, but likely enhanced.
12 Subsistence is not free. We recognize that by
13 providing economic opportunities and jobs for
14 shareholders and residents of the region subsistence
15 opportunities will be maintained and Alaska Native
16 cultures will ultimately be preserved.

17 The no-build alternative that is envisioned in
18 this EIS will have a major effect on the region leading
19 to fewer jobs in the area, outmigration of people and
20 ultimately Alaska Native cultures that could disappear.
21 This is unacceptable.

22 In conclusion, CIRI enthusiastically supports
23 Donlin's plan outlined in Alternative 2 and we urge the
24 Corps of Engineers and the coordinating agencies to
25 expeditiously approve this project. Thank you for the

1 opportunity to deliver comments.

2 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MS. JAMES: My name is Monica James. I am a
5 Calista shareholder as well as a Bethel Native
6 Corporation shareholder. I am the chief operating
7 officer for Calista Corporation as well. Calista
8 Corporation is an Alaska Native corporation, ANC,
9 organized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement
10 Act, ANCSA, and is pleased to provide the following
11 comments on the Donlin Gold draft EIS.

12 The Kuskokwim Corporation, TKC, owns the
13 surface estate within the project footprint and Calista
14 owns the mineral estate, which is the focus and driver
15 for the Donlin Gold project. Calista is mandated under
16 ANCSA to manage its lands for maximum benefit to all of
17 its shareholders, many of whom who live in the region
18 and in the vicinity of the project.

19 Not only will Calista and TKC shareholders
20 benefit from the project, but this project provides a
21 singular opportunity to satisfy the intent of the all-
22 important Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to the
23 benefit of all Native corporations in this struggling
24 state economy. As an ANCSA corporation, Calista has
25 two primary goals; generate profit for the corporation

1 and its shareholders and provide other socioeconomic
2 opportunities to benefit the shareholders and their
3 descendants.

4 The Donlin Gold project has in the past and to
5 the much larger extent in the future is anticipated to
6 provide vocational training and employment
7 opportunities that otherwise do not exist in the
8 economically-challenged Kuskokwim region and
9 surrounding areas.

10 As stated in the draft EIS, an estimated 1,600
11 to 1,900 individuals from the Yukon-Kuskokwim
12 communities will be employed during construction.
13 During operations, an estimated 500 to 600 regional
14 residents would be employed. Employment income would
15 help to offset the current trend of decreasing income
16 from commercial fishing.

17 For each year the project is operational, an
18 estimated 650 jobs and \$40 million in annual wages will
19 be generated statewide while sales within the state
20 would increase by \$150 million per year. Beyond these
21 benefits, the landowners will receive substantial
22 royalty payments that will be shared with other ANCSA
23 regional and village corporations. State and local
24 governments would receive tax revenue that currently
25 doesn't exist.

1 Improved transportation and communication
2 infrastructure to support this mine, including the port
3 and pipeline facilities, can potentially provide better
4 services and lower the cost of goods to local
5 residents. Ultimately, economic development in such a
6 large project would help fulfill the broader goal of
7 self-determination by allowing residents and the
8 Calista shareholders to significantly participate in
9 the world economy.

10 Calista intends to be an active involved
11 participant in the development of our land and the
12 mineral resources at Donlin Creek. Calista encourages
13 the Corps of the Engineers to permit Alternative 2 and
14 the applicant's proposed action. Calista believes that
15 the proposed action is designed to minimize
16 environmental and negative social impact and will
17 provide long-standing socioeconomic benefit to not only
18 Calista shareholders and descendants, but to all the
19 residents that choose to live in the region and in the
20 state as a whole.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Folks, I
24 appreciate that having to rush through these comments
25 due to the time limit is somewhat of a burden, but

1 please understand that whether you submit your comments
2 orally to us in writing via email, however, they will
3 carry the same amount of weight with us.

4 At this point in time we need to move to the
5 public hearing, the ANILCA 810 hearing. We'll take
6 testimony in that hearing until testimony concludes.
7 In other words, we don't have anybody else who wants to
8 give testimony. Then we'll continue taking comments on
9 the draft environmental impact statement. I'll turn it
10 over now to Mr. Alan Bittner with the Bureau of Land
11 Management.

12 MR. BITTNER: Hi. Once again my name is Alan
13 Bittner, the field manager for the Anchorage Field
14 Office of the BLM. Because of our involvement in this
15 project and the application for a right-of-way we were
16 required to do a subsistence analysis under ANILCA and
17 because of that analysis finding there is the potential
18 for significant impacts to subsistence we're required
19 to hold hearings in potentially affected communities.

20 As Bruce said earlier, because Anchorage has a
21 lot of individuals living here that may be residing in
22 subsistence communities and be affected with regard to
23 subsistence. That's why we decided to hold a hearing
24 here in Anchorage as well to give people opportunity to
25 comment.

1 MS. OTTE: Excuse me. Can I make one quick
2 comment?

3 MR. BITTNER: Sure.

4 MS. OTTE: Is this thing on?

5 MR. BITTNER: I don't know.

6 MS. OTTE: I don't mean to interrupt, but I
7 just went through a major snow storm out in Wasilla to
8 come in here to testify tonight. I worked for days on
9 my testimony. I'm number 47 and you cut us off?

10 MR. GORDON: Ma'am, we don't have any intention
11 to cut you off. We have the facility until 11:00
12 o'clock tonight. We'll be here until 11:00 o'clock
13 tonight.

14 MS. OTTE: So how long does this last?

15 MR. GORDON: It will be as long as people want
16 to give testimony, but we are going to do.....

17 MS. OTTE: So are we still doing this then?

18 MR. GORDON: Yes, we will be back to that.
19 What we are going to do once we start taking testimony
20 on the public hearing in a couple minutes, we'll go
21 through whoever wants to give testimony. We're going
22 to cut the time limit to two minutes. Then, once we
23 come back to the public comment session on the draft
24 environmental impact statement, we'll have to cut that
25 time limit to two minutes.

1 We will consider whether or not we need to have
2 another public meeting in Anchorage for those folks, if
3 there are a sufficient number of folks, who want to
4 give us oral comments. I'll ask you all to give us an
5 opinion on that before we end.

6 Let me give this back to Mr. Alan Bittner so we
7 can continue with the hearing and get that taken care
8 of.

9 (ANILCA .810 Hearing)

10 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Alan. We'll return to
11 the draft environmental impact statement comment
12 session. Number 14.

13 (No response)

14 MR. GORDON: Okay, 15.

15 MR. MOORE: Sorry, I didn't hear you say 14.
16 My name is Ben Moore. I'm here just speaking on my own
17 behalf. To speak directly to the EIS, right up front
18 I'll say support Alternative 2 that's looked at in the
19 document.

20 The value exhibited by Donlin so far have been
21 those that we expect in Alaska from people that have
22 responsible development. They've provided careers for
23 local families, they've had open and transparent
24 communications with communities locally and here in
25 Anchorage. Everything that I've seen and heard tells

1 me that they've been respectful of the culture. I
2 could be corrected on that, but what I've seen tonight
3 and what I've seen in visiting folks in the region
4 tells me that they've been responsible operators and I
5 think they deserve the shot to build the mine.

6 I would like to speak directly to the EIS on a
7 couple of points. It was mentioned earlier Alternative
8 5A on operations and tailings about dry stack
9 impoundments. Dry stack is a good way to go in certain
10 places, certain places in the country, and for certain
11 scopes, but I think the dry stack that's offered in
12 Alternative 5A just wouldn't work up here. It's far
13 too large. You're going to have too much issues with
14 wind blowing dust around and I don't think it's a good
15 alternative, which is again why I supported Alternative
16 2. Dry stack tailing works great in Utah and Nevada,
17 Arizona, not so much Alaska.

18 The other thing I'll mention is the barging
19 analysis. I think bringing Dutch Harbor into the
20 analysis about barging is a ridiculous and almost
21 comical overreach of scope. Where the boats or barges
22 come from before they get into the project area
23 shouldn't really matter in the EIS. So I'd remove
24 anything related to Dutch Harbor and before the river
25 before you get into this.

1 The other thing that I would quickly mention is
2 I wonder how a buried pipeline would have more impact
3 or more negative impact than an existing RS2477 on much
4 of the pipeline route. The Iditarod Historic Trail
5 runs right through there. A buried pipeline isn't
6 going to do much more to impact the land than that
7 trail already does.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 MR. GORDON: Okay. Since we're rapidly running
11 out of time, if 15, 16 and 17 could come up to the mic,
12 we'll just try to keep going. Bill or Taylor, how soon
13 -- we have to be out of here at 11:00 o'clock, so how
14 soon before 11:00 do they want us to wrap up so we're
15 out of here by 11:00.

16 MR. BRELSFORD: I think we can continue until
17 we're done. They will give us some latitude.

18 MR. GORDON: Okay. Go ahead, sir.

19 MR. BIEBER: I'm 17. Thank you very much. I
20 just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Bill
21 Bieber. I'm here on behalf of myself, but in full
22 disclosure I was the operations manager for Donlin Gold
23 from the years 1996 through 2013. So it's real
24 difficult to talk about what I'm going to talk about in
25 two minutes.

1 I'm not here to talk about the project itself,
2 I do know it intimately, but I'm here to talk about
3 some of the other aspects that went along with the
4 project, a lot of which you heard tonight. That is
5 simply the question that I always got asked, was how
6 come there isn't so much controversy evolving around
7 this project. How come this project has gone in that
8 region for 20 years without any controversy. I'm here
9 to kind of explain that to you.

10 We talked a little bit about the local hire,
11 yes. We had 90 percent local hire. Within two years I
12 was the only non-Native person working on the onsite
13 project. All my supervisors were from the local area.
14 We had an onsite counselor to help us through the
15 workforce development. One of the things you hear
16 about in all these projects is the word jobs. You
17 know, to all of us out here that have one doesn't have
18 a lot of impact, but I can tell you this. It has a
19 whole different turn when you don't have one.

20 Having been out there in the region and spent
21 those many years working out there within the region
22 and working with the folks out there, I have learned a
23 lot of tremendous things that have made me a better
24 person for that fact. I can't tell you how many times
25 as a company we sent cargo planes into town and

1 returning with bodies of people that were unable to fly
2 their bodies back home after death.

3 I can't tell you how many times we sent meals
4 from our own kitchen to potlatches for funerals and
5 weddings so that these folks could have a decent
6 celebration. I can't tell you -- I personally bought
7 two caskets myself. I personally sent several people
8 through school and I can't tell you how many times we
9 had to put out all these different flights for elders
10 to get to hospitals because there wasn't any.

11 I do want to reflect back on May 8th, 2011,
12 3:00 a.m., when I got a phone call from the lady in the
13 back of the room, Crooked Creek. She called and said,
14 Bill, this village is flooding, our power is about to
15 go out, can you help us. Immediately we got into
16 action. I didn't need permission from the corporate
17 office because the culture that we had established and
18 the relationship that we had established throughout the
19 region over the years I didn't need that permission. I
20 knew I had it.

21 We evacuated 70 percent of that village to our
22 site, to our project. We shut the project down. We
23 housed those folks and they showed up with no shoes, no
24 jackets. We had kids with no parents, we had parents
25 with no kids, but the touchingest part about that whole

1 thing was our admin person Tina got on the phone to
2 that region -- who, by the way, doesn't have a whole
3 lot -- but within three hours half of our gymnasium was
4 full of clothes, diapers, shoes, all of the things that
5 these folks needed. That's what the true culture of
6 that region is. A lot of people ask, well, how come
7 there isn't so much controversy. A lot of it had to do
8 with the fact that we have been partners in this for a
9 long time.

10 One of the things I do want to point out is
11 when you're next door and you're looking at those
12 posters of Donlin, understand something. That little
13 mountain behind the camp there, that little mountain
14 has fed over 200 or 300 families for over 20 years.
15 That little mountain over there behind camp has the
16 potential to feed another several thousand for many,
17 many years.

18 I have no personal gain in this. I have
19 nothing to gain. I don't work for the project, but I
20 can tell you this. Those folks out there they need
21 that employment. Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 MR. BOOMERSHINE: Good evening. I'm not a
24 professor, I'm not a Ph.D., not a scientist, I'm an
25 electrician, but I can tell you something. I came to

1 Alaska in the '70s and I fell in love with it and I've
2 loved it ever since.

3 I was working in the oil field when the Exxon
4 Valdez happened and my heart sank. I can't think of
5 any one single person that thinks because of what
6 happened we should have shut down Prudhoe Bay and
7 stopped the oil from flowing.

8 With any kind of gain there's risk. Is there
9 risk with this? Absolutely. So when you do anything,
10 even when we do our own little personal adventures,
11 like rafting and snowmobiling, I've ridden the Iron Dog
12 a few times, there's risk involved, but there's gains
13 on the other end. You do your homework, you get
14 educated, you get the best equipment you can get to
15 minimize the risk. I believe in my heart that Donlin
16 Gold has been doing that here and I think the potential
17 gains from this development outweigh the risk. That's
18 my personal feelings about it.

19 I heard directional drilling under the streams.
20 Enstar Natural Gas directional drilled under the Big Su
21 with a 20-inch natural gas pipeline. I don't know of
22 any incidents that's happened from that since it's been
23 there and that's been a long time ago, okay. So I
24 absolutely think that directional drilling and the
25 technology in that has gone way past that. I've been

1 in construction here in Alaska all of my adult life, so
2 I know that the risks are minimized there.

3 I know how many jobs this mine is producing. I
4 know that -- the plan that Donlin is proposing right
5 now, Alternate 2, it isn't something that they just
6 walked in here with. It's been an evolutionary process
7 and they have been seeking input from the people that
8 live here in the state and they've been -- and I
9 realize the dollars that are involved and that's a lot
10 of the driving forces, but they've been listening to
11 the people and they've been changing the plan even when
12 it costs them more dollars to try to minimize those
13 risks to be more responsible in their development.

14 In today's world and today's society, you can't
15 take the big risks like that and you can't throw
16 caution to the wind. You have to do it right. I
17 believe Donlin Gold is doing that and I support
18 Alternate 2.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. GORDON: Thank you. Can you give us your
22 name for the record.

23 MR. BOOMERSHINE: Oh, I'm sorry. My name is
24 Skip Boomershine.

25 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

1 MR. PORTMAN: Good evening. My name is Carl
2 Portman. I'm a lifelong Alaskan and I'm here tonight
3 to express my support for the Donlin Gold project.
4 First I would like to applaud Donlin Gold for its
5 exhausting work in developing a safe and
6 environmentally responsible project.

7 From the earliest stages of this project Donlin
8 has provided critical jobs for families in the Y-K
9 Region while respecting subsistence and cultural
10 values. Donlin has also worked hard on creating
11 business opportunities that benefit the region and the
12 Alaska economy. When in production, the Donlin Gold
13 Mine will provide revenue to all Alaska Native regional
14 and village corporations and shareholders through their
15 revenue sharing provisions of ANCSA. The jobs and
16 economic benefits provided by the Donlin Gold project
17 will help sustain communities throughout the region and
18 fund subsistence activities just as Congress intended
19 over 40 years ago.

20 Like the Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska,
21 Donlin will provide high-paying, year-round jobs that
22 allow residents to stay in the region, prosper and
23 continue to participate in their traditional
24 subsistence way of life. Donlin is committed to local
25 hire, as residents accounted for 90 percent of the

1 workforce during the exploration phase of the project.
2 Overall, the project is expected to generate over 3,000
3 construction jobs and 1,200 permanent jobs.

4 Other economic benefits include the project's
5 proposed natural gas pipeline, which has been designed
6 to help accommodate local energy needs should residents
7 have an interest in bringing natural gas to the region.
8 The improved infrastructure to support the mine,
9 including port communications and energy facilities
10 will provide better services and lower the cost of
11 energy and goods in the region.

12 The Donlin project has been designed to reduce
13 the overall footprint of the mine and allow for safe
14 and efficient management of water. The proposed
15 natural gas pipeline itself was part of an effort to
16 address local concerns about diesel barge traffic on
17 the Kuskokwim River. Moreover, the Donlin project will
18 include a water treatment plan to ensure that
19 discharged water meets water quality standards and
20 protects fish.

21 I strongly support Alternative 2 and urge the
22 Corps to move forward. This is a vital project for the
23 Y-K Region and Alaska, especially as the economy
24 retracts from declining oil production and low oil
25 prices impacting both rural and urban areas of our

1 state. We need to diversify our economy and this is an
2 ideal project to help us do so.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 MS. BECKHAM: For the record, my name is
7 Marianne Beckham and I'm here representing the board of
8 directors for the Iron Dog Snowmobile Race. We are
9 strongly in support of the efforts of Donlin Gold to
10 develop the gold mine in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region.
11 We recognize the development of the region would bring
12 improvements to the residents of the area and the
13 entire state of Alaska, while offering multiple
14 positive outcomes and reducing negative consequences,
15 of course, is very important.

16 The current proposed route outlined in
17 Alternative 2 minimizes impacts to important regional
18 features such as the Historic National Iditarod Trail
19 and results in virtually no impacts on the Iditarod
20 Sled Dog Race. This plan considers timing sensitivity
21 needed during construction to further reduce impacts to
22 the dog race and important hunters and users of this
23 region.

24 During summer and fall, dense vegetation
25 practically eliminates visibility of the pipeline,

1 especially since the majority of the pipeline if not
2 all of it is going to be underground. In the more
3 sparse areas, the snow cover, if we get some snow,
4 during the winter and the early spring accomplishes the
5 same result. Almost all of the pipeline or
6 approximately 98 percent of it is outside of the
7 Historic Trail and less than 4 percent of it is within
8 1,000 feet.

9 We do not endorse Alternative 6A through
10 Dalzell Gorge as it presents very specific dangers and
11 dramatically increases negative impacts to the Trail.
12 Going through the Gorge is much riskier than the
13 proposed route and puts workers at greater risk of
14 injury. We commend Donlin Gold for its forethought in
15 choosing a safer route for both the building and future
16 maintenance periods.

17 For the above reasons, the board of directors
18 of the Iron Dog Snowmobile Race support the pipeline
19 route as proposed in draft EIS in Alternative 2. As an
20 aside, I know that it's your job to hold these public
21 hearings. I appreciate the fact that you've been so
22 patient, stayed awake, stayed attentive and that you
23 did give us this opportunity to speak our minds no
24 matter if we're for it or against it. It's your job to
25 bring it forward, to follow the rules, to follow the

1 permit process and for that, as a citizen of Alaska, I
2 thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Okay. We're
5 kind of past the numbering system, so whoever is next,
6 whoever would like to comment, please just start moving
7 up to the microphones. Okay, 20 is the number I'm
8 being told. How about 21?

9 MR. HOWELL: My name is Larry Howell. I'm a
10 47-year resident of Alaska. After attending college,
11 my wife and I returned to Anchorage where we live,
12 work, and we raised our family here. We live here to
13 this day.

14 My testimony today is in support of the Donlin
15 Gold project Alternative 2. I think I might offer
16 perhaps a unique perspective on a project such as the
17 Donlin Gold project. In my early twenties I met a guy
18 named Senator Ted Stevens and he hired me as a 21-year-
19 old to work on Capital Hill. My specific task was to
20 work on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, that
21 became ANCSA.

22 I'm here today to state that the Donlin Gold
23 project is exactly what was envisioned in ANCSA. As a
24 young Senate staffer, I was present on Capital Hill
25 when the testimony was given. I remember Alaska's

1 leaders, both Native and non-Native, espousing a vision
2 for projects like Red Dog, Ambler Access, pipeline
3 projects and projects like the Donlin Gold Mine.
4 Alaska's Native people, through ANCSA, were to be
5 allowed to responsibly develop their resources.
6 Responsible development and maintenance of subsistence
7 values were primary tenets of the ANCSA.

8 Based on my review and knowledge of the
9 development plan and careful attention to the Donlin
10 public outreach program, I'm confident that Donlin Gold
11 will respect the subsistence and cultural values of the
12 region. The employment opportunities and economic
13 benefits provided by Donlin Gold will sustain the
14 communities in the Y-K Region and fund traditional
15 subsistence activities for decades.

16 In my review of the project, it is clear that
17 Donlin Gold has conducted very extensive studies to
18 develop an environmentally and socially responsible
19 gold mine project. The over footprint of the mine has
20 been reduced to allow for safe management of water over
21 the life of the mine and well beyond reclamation. The
22 proposal to use a synthetic liner under the tailings
23 impoundment is a prime example of best practices of an
24 environmentally responsible mine project.
25 Additionally, their proposed water treatment plan will

1 ensure that water discharge from the site will meet or
2 exceed water quality standards.

3 In summary, I urge the Corps to support
4 Alternative 2 of the Donlin Gold project.

5 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. GORDON: Number 22.

8 MS. SIMON: Good evening. My name is Lorali
9 Simon and I'm on the board of directors for the Alaska
10 Miners Association. This is a very exciting project
11 for the state of Alaska and for the region. I support
12 Alternative 2 primarily because of the details of the
13 natural gas pipeline proposal. Impacts to the Iditarod
14 Trail will be minimal and the benefits to the region
15 will be great in the form of jobs and economy.

16 Alternative 2 contains appropriate barging
17 plans, but the draft EIS mischaracterizes barge
18 traffic. Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative
19 because mitigation of impacts is clearly described.
20 Not all mining projects will result in the worst case
21 scenario.

22 I firmly believe that an HIA-based approach to
23 address human health issues is a horrible approach and
24 is easily misconstrued and misapplied. The EIS should
25 be guided by and focus on the specific issues

1 identified during scoping as required by NEPA.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much.

4 (Applause)

5 MR. GRAY: I'm Howard Gray. I'm here today to
6 just be for myself. I've been in Alaska, resided in
7 Alaska for about approximately 50 years. During that
8 time I've owned several companies. I've been involved
9 with Geological Services as a consultant, et cetera. I
10 currently work for a company as a manager. Again, I'm
11 here on my own.

12 I'd like to first of all say that I support
13 Alternative 2. I have some comments. I'm going to
14 present written comments, so I'm just going to try to
15 get through this very briefly so we don't stay here all
16 night.

17 I think that so far -- I remember when Donlin
18 started and I can, I think, say safely that so far
19 they've had a very positive impact to the area.
20 They've purchased goods and services both from
21 surrounding communities as well as Anchorage and other
22 areas in Alaska.

23 Local hire has always been a priority with
24 them. They went out into the communities and solicited
25 people to sign up to go to work for the operation.

1 They went one step further. They instituted very good
2 training programs and this is for drilling and some
3 services of that sort. I can tell you that as a result
4 of that they had a very good safety record. They've
5 also shown that they have the ability to provide a good
6 environmental stewardship. I think they've paid
7 attention to their permits, et cetera, throughout their
8 tenure.

9 I guess I'm hoping that as we go forward,
10 hopefully we'll go forward with this, into the
11 construction and mining phase that the same hiring
12 practices will prevail and that the economic impact to
13 that area is going to be extremely significant. It's
14 an area that needs employment, I'm sure as you all
15 know.

16 I remember, it hasn't been that long ago, there
17 was a problem with Federal employment and there was a
18 furlough system, I think, that was instituted and the
19 newspapers blew it up kind of out of proportion. In
20 thinking back, it had amounted to a few days. Let's
21 hope that when we start this process that the people
22 out there in the communities aren't waiting for us to
23 process the paper year after year when they need to get
24 to work.

25 That's all I have. Thank you. I will be

1 submitting comments.

2 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. GORDON: Number 25. Evelyn, go ahead.

5 MS. THOMAS: I'll try to be quick, okay, but
6 it's something I've been wanting to say in a group like
7 this for a while. I think probably some of you have
8 probably heard me say it before. I was born before
9 this country became a state, okay. I remember a lot
10 different things out there than it is now. I remember
11 things like -- bear with me for just a minute, okay. I
12 remember how all of us kids in the house would be so
13 excited when my dad was coming home. Who was going to
14 help him off with his winter clothes, who's going to
15 unload the sled, who's going to unhook the dogs, who's
16 going to help him pull off his shoes. We'd be all so
17 excited. Okay.

18 When I was 13, I left home for the BIA school
19 to finish the assimilation process that was put into
20 place out there. All right. I returned home 10 years
21 later when I was 23 years old when my parents retired.
22 I was appalled at the difference in our families out
23 there.

24 There had been social services programs put
25 into place where the father could not be home with his

1 children. His spirit had been totally and absolutely
2 crushed, so they turned to drugs and alcohol and
3 suicide. Every year I watch it and it breaks my heart.

4 I will get nothing out of this mine personally.
5 If anything happens at the mine, my home is right at
6 the mouth of the Kusk -- the Crooked Creek and right on
7 the banks of the Kuskokwim. But we keep telling our
8 kids go to school, you'll come home and help your
9 villages, but they would come home and there's nothing.
10 They get a few dollars, they go get drunk, they get
11 into a fight, they go to jail or they commit suicide.
12 I saw some kids in Aniak who had been away to school,
13 gotten their training and returned home. There was no
14 job. I would watch them walking with their heads down,
15 their shoulders slumped.

16 Then here came these people who wanted to do
17 this mine and they made good on their promise because
18 when they came to talk to me in my home in Crooked
19 Creek, this was one of the things we asked them, if
20 they would consider a training program for our people.
21 And when we said local hire, we didn't mean just the
22 Kuskokwim, we meant the entire western Alaska. All the
23 56 Calista villages because we have really good people
24 there. I was thinking more of our men than anyone else
25 because some of those kids that went to work at Donlin

1 after walking and only drinking any time I saw them,
2 they had their shoulders back, their heads up and they
3 were proud.

4 The day I walk into a room like this after
5 these boys and girls have been working at Donlin say
6 for five to ten years and the men of our villages, our
7 Native men, stand up and say I provide, I don't have to
8 drink to feel better, I provide a good living for my
9 children and my family, that's the day I will be so
10 happy for and I will finally see what I set out to do
11 when I was 23 come to be.

12 If we don't have some sort of economic
13 development out there, okay, we have no more fish. We
14 can't get anybody from Seattle to come up and address
15 the fact that they come up to Area M in Bristol Bay
16 year after year and take the best fish out of it before
17 it even gets to the Kuskokwim or to the Yukon or to the
18 Kenai. They won't talk to us. So we have very little
19 fish out there now. We must have a cash economy.

20 But our people, most of you probably don't even
21 know too many of us. I bet you don't know much of our
22 men either. But they want more than anything to be
23 able to stand up and take care of their families too,
24 just like you do. If we can do that in our home
25 villages, we can come back to where our people are not

1 dying in droves, especially from awful things like
2 suicide because that kills everyone in their soul.

3 We do support the Donlin Mine because they have
4 kept their word. I'm not afraid of it. If anything
5 happens back there, it's going to be my place that gets
6 it first and I have seven great-grandchildren. The
7 seventh one will be here in the next few days. They
8 will be taught what I know and what I can still teach
9 them of what I was lucky enough to know and be taught.
10 But I want to see our men proud and I don't want to see
11 them die anymore.

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause)

14 MS. HALL: Hi. Good evening. My name is
15 Marleanna Hall. I'm the executive director for the
16 Resource Development Council for Alaska. RDC is a
17 statewide business association comprised of individuals
18 and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining,
19 fishing, tourism and forest products industries. Our
20 membership also includes Alaska Native corporations,
21 local communities, organized labor and industry support
22 firms.

23 Our purpose is to encourage a strong,
24 diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the
25 state's economic base through the responsible

1 development of our natural resources. I'm here to
2 support Alternative 2 for the Donlin draft EIS.

3 Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act,
4 Calista selected the mineral rights at Donlin Gold and
5 the Kuskokwim Corporation selected the surface estate,
6 both in efforts to benefit shareholders from the
7 development and production of mineral resources. This
8 economic opportunity for shareholders and descendants
9 of Calista is precisely the purpose behind Congress's
10 grant of entitlement of these lands to Calista and TKC.

11 There are many social and economic benefits of
12 this project to the region, state and to the nation
13 including the 7(I) and 7(j) through ANCSA revenue
14 sharing provisions. The Donlin Gold project will
15 provide revenue to all of the Alaska Native
16 corporations and many village corporations and the
17 shareholders. The jobs and economic stimulus provided
18 by the project would help sustain communities in the Y-
19 K Region and fund traditional and subsistence
20 activities.

21 There's also potential for lower cost energy
22 options to the region as the proposed natural gas
23 pipeline will have excess capacity should there be an
24 interest in accessing natural gas to address the energy
25 needs of the Y-K Region.

1 Additionally, an estimated 3,000 jobs will be
2 created during the approximate four-year construction
3 phase and up to 1,200 jobs for the estimated mine life
4 of 27.5 years. These jobs will have a significant and
5 positive impact on the economy of the region and the
6 state, especially in a region that, as you've heard,
7 experiences some of the highest unemployment rates.
8 This will likely lead to reduced outmigration, helping
9 to maintain rural schools and culture, including the
10 traditional way of life you've heard about. An example
11 to compare the positive potential benefits of a project
12 like this to would be the Red Dog Mine in Northwest
13 Alaska.

14 Going back to Donlin, through the exploration
15 stages, they've shown a strong commitment to local hire
16 and for supporting communities and cultures in the
17 region. A project like this is truly a rare
18 opportunity to improve the local economy where few
19 other opportunities exist.

20 If developed, RDC believes it will be done in a
21 way that creates opportunity for local employment and
22 economic growth while protecting the subsistence
23 resources and culture of the region and protecting the
24 environment.

25 RDC supports the rigorous permitting process

1 that has already permitted the six large mines under
2 the review of NEPA and the scientifically-based process
3 which includes over 60 major State and Federal permits
4 and authorizations. Alaska's existing mines are
5 operating to the higher standards and in harmony with
6 our renewable resources. Donlin's project description
7 demonstrates an understanding of environmental concerns
8 and features vigorous environmental management
9 principals.

10 We look forward to further participating in the
11 public process for this project. We believe the EIS
12 process gives Alaskans adequate time to fully review
13 the project documents and to provide input on plans.

14 As I've mentioned, this is just some of the
15 highlights of the project. We will submit
16 comprehensive comments before the April 30th deadline.
17 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

18 (Applause)

19 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. 25, 26. Go
20 ahead.

21 MR. KASTNER: My name is Kevin Kastner. I'm
22 the -- well, those who know me I wear many hats, but
23 tonight I'm representing the Iron Dog and I'd like to
24 just speak very quickly about personal experience.
25 Start with the fact that I recognize there's been a lot

1 of passionate discussion, but I'd like to speak from a
2 point of pragmatism based on what I've observed from
3 the character of Donlin Gold.

4 As a partner, we've worked on quite a few
5 projects especially involving community. Even today in
6 Bethel there was a high school basketball event. Iron
7 Dog people were there and participating with them,
8 engaging the community, giving them an opportunity to
9 understand the values of hard work, honesty and
10 perseverance and we share those values. Much like
11 Donlin Gold, Iron Dog, we understand the importance of
12 safety and what risk people take and how to mitigate
13 that. So we share a lot of values with regard to
14 safety.

15 I'd like to just simply close with regard to
16 the Trail. Number one, I'm in support of the
17 Alternative 2 in the draft EIS, which I've read. That
18 one specifically, with relation to our event, not
19 necessarily in relation to the character, is definitely
20 the one with the least impact, I think the least risk
21 and some of the greatest opportunities for the
22 communities who are already struggling with employment
23 options. I mean I know Iditarod could probably echo
24 this, the difficulty of even finding a volunteer in
25 those communities because they just get smaller and

1 smaller and smaller.

2 With that, I'd just like to close by saying
3 again that from my point of view that Alternative 1 and
4 no option would really be the ultimate detriment to the
5 region, both economically and culturally. So, again, I
6 support Alternative 2 in the draft EIS.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. GORDON: Okay. Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 MR. GORDON: 27 through 30.

11 (No response)

12 MR. GORDON: How about 31 to 35.

13 MS. CROCKETT: Good evening. My name is
14 Deantha Crockett and I'm the executive director of the
15 Alaska Miners Association. I want to thank you for the
16 opportunity to provide comments this evening. I
17 thought the woman with the Iron Dog characterized it
18 very well. You guys have been sitting up here all
19 night. We greatly, greatly appreciate it.

20 AMA is a professional trade association whose
21 mission is to promote responsible mineral development
22 in Alaska. Our members include small family mines,
23 major mining companies and the businesses that support
24 Alaska's mining industry. These are individuals and
25 companies who live in Alaska or employ Alaskans who

1 live and play in Alaska in addition to work. These are
2 fishermen, hunters, skiers, pilots, gardeners, youth
3 coaches, you name it.

4 I'm belaboring this point because I think it's
5 imperative for us to remember that Alaska's miners are
6 passionate about clean water and healthy fisheries and
7 we want to continue to enjoy those and pass along that
8 enjoyment to future generations. Alaska miners are
9 phenomenal stewards of our environment and I strongly
10 disagree that our industry cannot coexist with the
11 environment.

12 I'm here this evening to offer AMA's full
13 support for the Donlin Gold project, specifically as
14 outlined in Alternative 2 of the EIS. The Donlin
15 project was designed to reduce the overall footprint of
16 the mine and offer safe management of water over the
17 mine life and after operations finish.

18 Alternative 2 proposes an active water
19 treatment plant to ensure that water discharged from
20 the site is treated to meet water quality standards.
21 In addition, Donlin will employ state-of-the-art
22 mercury emission controls to ensure mercury emissions
23 are below quality standards.

24 Donlin has employed a number of above and
25 beyond project designs, including using a synthetic

1 liner to fully line the entire tailings impoundment and
2 planning dry closure of the tailings storage facility
3 at the end of the mine life.

4 Donlin has concluded that a tailings dam
5 constructed of engineered rock fill using a downstream
6 construction method is the most stable design for the
7 project area and will mitigate factors like fugitive
8 dust and technical challenges that may come.

9 I think it's important to note that storage of
10 tailings at any mine operation should be planned site-
11 specific criteria in mind. What is right for one mine
12 location can be quite different than another. The most
13 important factor being the use of mining engineering
14 standards to determine the most environmentally
15 responsible design, as the project has done in this
16 case.

17 I have some lengthy comments here about the
18 proposed pipeline route, but I think that's been well
19 hit on by those that are most affected by it;
20 recreation, hunters, subsistence and the Iron Dog and
21 Iditarod Trail users. I think Donlin should be
22 commended for the work they've done to reroute that
23 natural gas pipeline route.

24 Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't talk
25 about the impeccable and incredible compelling economic

1 reasons like 600 to 12,000 jobs at operation and jobs
2 right now that Alaskans are being trained to fill those
3 jobs. Job skills that have come -- you heard Bill
4 Bieber talk earlier. The job skills that have come to
5 the residents of this region that is very economically
6 depressed is not something to be overlooked.

7 Donlin Gold has a proven record of discussing
8 the project plans with the people of the region and
9 listening to feedback. The company has exercised
10 extreme diligence and proposed a project that is
11 environmentally responsible and consistent with values
12 of the region.

13 I'm sure I've already made it abundantly clear,
14 but AMA supports Donlin Gold project Alternative 2.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. GORDON: 36 to 40.

19 (No response)

20 MR. GORDON: 41 to 45.

21 (No response)

22 MR. GORDON: Okay. 45 to 55.

23 MS. DONHAUSER: I've got 53. This is just
24 incredible. If this were a court of law, there are a
25 lot of people who would be charged with perjury. An

1 indicator of what I'm talking about is what happened on
2 who the number one speaker was and this is what Donlin
3 does in general. The number one speaker scheduled to
4 speak was Donlin LLC general manager Stan Foo. He's
5 cavalier about the agenda, he doesn't have to wait his
6 turn. When number six or was it five was ready to come
7 up here to speak, all of a sudden, oh, I want to talk.
8 It's his agenda. He doesn't have to follow the rules.

9

10 The reason I bring this up is because if
11 Donlin's general manager behaves in that manner at this
12 formal and important of an event where he can be
13 cavalier and make up his own rules, that's indicative
14 that Donlin is in that region, they're cavalier about
15 the laws and the rules and they'll make up whatever
16 they want to make up whatever best suits them and they
17 don't give a flying fudgesicle about what happens to
18 anybody.

19 All they want to look at is the bottom line
20 dollar and that's one million gallons of diesel that's
21 going to be going up Alaska's second largest river and
22 you folks don't give a flying fudgesicle how that would
23 affect the entire state of Alaska's fisheries. Those
24 fisheries aren't just Donlin Creek or TKC's fisheries.
25 Those resources belong to everybody in this state.

1 They belong to everybody in this world because our
2 salmon is a global resource.

3 It just angers me that somebody -- that a
4 Donlin general manager can come into an event that's
5 this formal and this important and just make up his own
6 rules. But it's really good he did that in a public
7 forum because it indicates in general how Donlin is.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. GORDON: Could I get your name for the
10 record.

11 MS. DONHAUSER: My name is Louise Donhauser.
12 There is one more thing I wanted to say. Here in
13 Anchorage, Alaska they have poverty, low income housing
14 and all these things that are being said about how many
15 jobs it will create, it will create, there are 70
16 residents in a poverty, low-income housing unit here in
17 Anchorage. Three out of those 70 people are TKC
18 shareholders. Where are those Donlin Creek jobs for
19 those three residents of that poverty, low-income
20 housing unit? Those people can't live in there if
21 they're not poverty income. You have to be poverty
22 income to live in there.

23 Again, it just goes to show, you know, there's
24 so much that gets said and done. It is not true. If
25 this was a court of law, you would be charged with

1 perjury.

2 MR. GORDON: Thank you for your comments. I
3 would note that moving through the record is my issue.
4 I'm trying to follow the number sequence, but since
5 we're not typically staying in order I move back and
6 forth based on the number I see somebody having in
7 their hand.

8 Go ahead.

9 MR. JENKINS: It gives me great pleasure to
10 support option 2 of this EIS. It also gives me
11 pleasure to comment that Donlin Gold is actually at an
12 EIS potential. It's several billion dollars away from
13 ever coming to fruition. In this economic times, it's
14 going to be very hard. But this mine would change the
15 Kuskokwim valley.

16 I spent the last 20 years as a city
17 administrator and utility manager in the Upper
18 Kuskokwim. There is truly a subsistence way of life,
19 but in the Upper Kuskokwim there is not a subsistence
20 economy. It's maybe some fish in the summertime and a
21 moose in the fall. Other than that, the more Donlin
22 Gold can be brought to fruition in this state, the
23 better off we are.

24 I came to this state a long, long time ago and
25 when I came here, we had 27 of 29 major elements that

1 needed to be bought. Then along came the Alaska Lands
2 Claim and three-quarters of the properties that were 1
3 in 10 of becoming a mine were put in National Parks.

4 We have five major mines in this state today.
5 Each of them are engines of unbelievable things. When
6 they were originally found, like Pogo, they figured
7 they had 10 years. Now they got probably 15, 20 years
8 more. That's what happens. The first state is to keep
9 this going because it could be number six and it would
10 be great.

11 I'm Roger Jenkins, that's my story and I'm
12 sticking with it.

13 (Applause)

14 MR. GORDON: Thank you. 56 through 60.

15 MR. THAYER: Good evening. My name is Curtis
16 Thayer and I represent the Alaska State Chamber of
17 Commerce. The Alaska State Chamber of Commerce is an
18 organization dedicated to improving the business
19 environment of Alaska. We represent almost 700 members
20 from Ketchikan to Barrow and we share one common goal.
21 It has to make Alaska viable and a competitive place to
22 do business.

23 The Alaska Chamber supports Alternative 2 for
24 the Donlin Creek proposed mine. The proposed project
25 would be a huge boom for the economy in this region of

1 the state. We understand three to four thousand jobs,
2 six to twelve hundred jobs for the estimated life of
3 the mine. In addition to these direct jobs, the
4 project will create indirect jobs through logistics,
5 transportation, training, education, health care and
6 all related projects across not only the region but
7 pretty much all of Alaska.

8 While the economic benefits are important, it
9 is also important that this project is done
10 responsibly. Donlin Creek is committed to operating
11 such an environmentally responsible project. They will
12 employ state-of-the-art technology and bring in
13 practices that do so and, in some cases, have never
14 been used in large mining operations here in Alaska.

15 Donlin Creek has a proven track record and that
16 should give the Corps of Engineers the confidence for
17 selecting Alternative 2. While the industry is
18 suffering from low prices and potentially delayed
19 development, this project will give Alaska an economic
20 boost.

21 I thank you for tonight.

22 (Applause)

23 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. 58 was the
24 highest number I saw out there. Anybody else who would
25 like to speak, if you'd move up to the microphone.

1 MR. PASTOS: I had number 59. I'll try to be
2 quick. My name is Nikos Pastos and I work as an
3 environmental officer with the Alaska Inter-Tribal
4 Council. I'm also a board member of the Center for
5 Water Advocacy. We're a conservation organization.
6 Our entire board of directors are indigenous people.
7 I'm an environmental professional and I'm here to
8 deliver a few concise comments on behalf of the Alaska
9 Inter-Tribal Council.

10 Alaska Inter-Tribal Council supports a no
11 action alternative. I think it's Alternative 1. We
12 would hope that would be put on the record, the Alaska
13 Inter-Tribal Council endorses the no action
14 alternative.

15 I'm a lifelong Alaskan. My father was a
16 fishing guide and a teacher and an amateur geologist.
17 He flew around in the Brooks Range carrying ore
18 samples. His summer job was carrying backpacks full of
19 rocks. I grew up with a lot of geologists and
20 fishermen. I had been a commercial fishermen before.
21 I did oil spill cleanup. I'm an environmental
22 sociologist.

23 In my family, we've had uranium miners and a
24 Ph.D. geologist and an environmental engineer. The
25 reason I say that is I'm from here. The members of my

1 family worked for mineral extraction industries. I do
2 not. It's with great respect to all the Federal agency
3 personnel and our neighbors that this is a very -- you
4 know, I'm trying to explain that this is a very serious
5 matter and I appreciate that people are willing to stay
6 up late. This is a huge project. This is one of the
7 biggest in the world as far as what they're proposing
8 to do.

9 Alaska Inter-Tribal Council has profound and
10 grave concerns that we think are based in careful
11 reflection. We have a lot of Yup'ik tribal people that
12 work with the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council. There's 100
13 different tribal governments. Mining was a big part of
14 Alaskan history. It's a big part of our future
15 economy. Yeah, responsible mining can take place, but
16 it's very expensive. Almost to the point of
17 prohibiting projects of this size.

18 You know, a couple of big concerns that we have
19 are the barge traffic. The activities that would be
20 associated with that much traffic will definitely
21 change the character of the environment as well as the
22 activities of the peoples who have relied on this river
23 for their livelihood since time immemorial.

24 Cyanide is very poisonous. It says here that
25 there won't be any spilled. Well, you should talk to

1 the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine people at Fort Belknap
2 Indian Reservation in northern Montana. They're in
3 about their fifth generation of birth defects in one of
4 the worst cyanide heap-leach disasters in history. The
5 Animus River, there's a tailings dam that spilled in
6 Colorado last summer in 2015.

7 There's too many concerns here. Like the
8 amount of mercury that will be released is phenomenal.
9 How will that be transported and where will it go.
10 That's unclear. The same with oil spill response
11 preparations.

12 Yes, jobs are important, but the history of
13 some of these companies, they go to some of the poorest
14 places, pay a lot of people, help support races on our
15 traditional sled dog -- our traditional Iditarod Trail,
16 our transportation routes. They're paying a lot of
17 people. That's fine and well, but that's not the only
18 way to have jobs is to create one of the most toxic
19 mineral extraction industries in the world.

20 So, in summary, Alaska Inter-Tribal Council
21 will be submitting more substantive comments. We've
22 been involved with the scoping process all along. It's
23 just not a good idea. NEPA is important, the National
24 Environmental Policy Act. There's 26 different Federal
25 statutes having to do with tribal cultural properties.

1 Primarily the National Historic Preservation Act, which
2 triggers NEPA review.

3 My final comment is we believe that the
4 socioeconomic cultural impact studies should be -- I
5 mean if we're going to go to this much length of time
6 and money to create something of this magnitude,
7 probably there is grounds for triggering a more in-
8 depth sociocultural impact analysis and Alaska Inter-
9 Tribal Council will be calling for that.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Do we have
12 anybody else who would like to make a comment on the
13 Donlin draft environmental impact statement this
14 evening.

15 MS. MCKAY: I'll keep it very short. My name
16 is Charlotte McKay. I worked in the mining industry
17 for almost 30 years as an environmental manager. I've
18 watched the Donlin Mine for some time and it is solidly
19 designed. It involves a lot of strong precautions and
20 good preparedness and I think it will be a very good
21 project for the region.

22 Thank you.

23 (Applause)

24 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Is there
25 anybody else?

1 (No response)

2 MR. GORDON: All right. We meant what we said.
3 We need your comments and we're not done. The comment
4 period is open at least until April 30th both for the
5 draft EIS and for BLM's 810 analysis.

6 We thank you for your patience with an
7 imperfect process and if you need any further
8 information, you can contact myself, Ms. Amanda
9 Andraschko, our tribal liaison, and we'll be more than
10 willing to give you information on how you can comment
11 to us in more than one way.

12 Go ahead.

13 MS. GAMACHE: Can I ask you a question. I know
14 that we comment -- you had said about submitting
15 comments on the subsistence presentation. Does that go
16 to the same place? I know on the subsistence paper
17 that was back there on the table there's no name of who
18 gave the presentation or where to comment or anything.
19 So do the comments all go to the same draft EIS website
20 under the comment section?

21 MR. GORDON: Yes, all.....

22 MS. GAMACHE: I think that that subsistence
23 report should have a name and something if somebody
24 wants to ask questions, where to address those to. My
25 name is Sue Gamache and I work for Donlin Gold, but I'm

1 a Crooked Creek tribal member and a Calista and a
2 Kuskokwim shareholder.

3 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. I'll turn
4 this over to Bruce. Before I do, there's multiple
5 analyses going on. NEPA is an over-arching analyses --
6 it's an analyses in and of itself and it's an over-
7 arching analyses that brings in a variety of other
8 analyses. The 810 analyses is a separate law. Bruce
9 will give you more information on who to contact for
10 the 810. Frequently we don't always put the name of
11 every individual who performed an analyses on it
12 because they're representing an agency, an entity, et
13 cetera.

14 Bruce, did you want to add anything else?

15 MR. SEPPI: Well, out on the sign-in table
16 there is a page for BLM subsistence comments to be
17 written, but there's an email and regular mail and
18 contact numbers on there out on the table. The
19 subsistence analysis thing itself does not have that.
20 That's an ANILCA document, but we do have them out on
21 the table. I can show you at the end of the meeting
22 here.

23 MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. As far as
24 your comments overall, we recognize that we're not
25 expecting you to absolutely define for us exactly how

1 and where your comments should be used. If your
2 comment portends to more than one point in the
3 analyses, we will attempt to apply it appropriately
4 everywhere it belongs.

5 Is there anything else before we conclude
6 tonight?

7 (No response)

8 MR. GORDON: All right. Again, I thank you
9 very much for your patience. Have a good evening.

10 (Applause)

11 (Off record)

12 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Salena A. Hile, hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 123 are a true, accurate, and complete transcript of proceedings IN RE: DONLIN GOLD MINE DEIS PUBLIC MEETING, transcribed under my direction from a copy of an electronic sound recording to the best of our knowledge and ability.

DATE

SALENA A. HILE

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