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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

BETHEL, ALASKA

Taken February 1, 2016
Commencing at 6:08 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 100, inclusive

Taken at
Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center
Bethel, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

Page 2

1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S

2 For U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

3 Keith Gordon
4 Project Manager

5 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

6 Alan Bittner
7 Anchorage Field Office Manager

8 Bruce Seppi
9 Wildlife Biologist

10 For U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

11 Mark Jen
12 Project Manager

13 For Alaska Department of Natural Resources:

14 Kyle W. Moselle
15 Large Project Coordinator

16 Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

17 Lee McKinley
18 Habitat Biologist

19 For AECOM:

20 Taylor Brelsford
21 NEPA Advisor

22 Nancy Darigo
23 Physical Science Lead

24 David Every
25 Biological Science Lead

26 Donne Fleagle
27 Senior Rural Outreach Lead

28 Jon Isaacs
29 Principal in Charge

30 Joan Kluwe
31 Social Science Lead

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

2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Good evening. Thank

3 you all for coming this evening. My name is Keith Gordon.

4 I'm a regulatory project manager with the United States

5 Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District. I am the Army

6 Corps of Engineers project manager for the proposed Donlin

7 Gold Mine Project.

8 As you all are aware, the project as proposed is

9 approximately ten miles north of Crooked Creek, Alaska.

10 The Army Corps of Engineers under the National

11 Environmental Policy Act is the lead federal agency for

12 development of the Environmental Impact Statement that is

13 intended to disclose potential impacts of the project to

14 the public and obtain from you comment regarding the

15 proposed project and facilitate decision making by federal

16 decisionmakers, State decisionmakers and the tribal

17 entities who are using the Draft Environmental Impact

18 Statement to inform themselves of potential impacts of the

19 project, its alternatives.

20 We started the Environmental Impact Statement process

21 in November -- I'm sorry -- December of 2012 with a Notice

22 of Intent that went out in the Federal Register. We also

23 initiated scoping at that time and went from -- in March

24 of 2013 and obtained scoping comments. Bethel is one of

25 the communities that we visited.

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1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S (Continued)

2 Cecil Urlich
3 Mining Engineer

4 Yup'ik Translator:

5 John Active

6 Taken by:

7 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

8 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken

9 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before

10 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary

11 Public within and for the State of Alaska.

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1 And in a couple of minutes I'll run you through the

2 draft EIS process, as it lays out where we are at and the

3 reason we are here, which is basically to try to find out

4 how we get the most substantive comments from you.

5 Therefore, we will be giving you examples and information

6 about how you can comment on the document and tell us

7 whether or not we have come close on the analyses that's

8 been done to date, whether we have come close on the

9 alternatives that have been analyzed to date, and where we

10 go from there.

11 So as far as this evening's presentation, I'll go

12 through approximately a 30-minute presentation of what we

13 have done to date and why we're here, after which we will

14 have a poster session that will give you some additional

15 information on the project. There is a dozen posters in

16 the room next to us; three of them on the project as

17 proposed and nine of them on key resource issues that give

18 you an example of what's been analyzed in the EIS.

19 Prior to going to the poster session, the Bureau of

20 Land Management will do a presentation on their ANILCA 810

21 hearing that we will also be doing tonight. So after my

22 presentation, BLM's presentation, those folks who want to

23 go to the poster session can go to the room next door and

24 go through the posters with the analysts who are in the

25 room that can give you information on the types of impacts

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1 depicted in those posters that would result if the project
 2 were permitted as proposed, as well as some of the
 3 alternatives that have been analyzed to date to analyze
 4 impacts.
 5 While folks who want to look at the posters are
 6 looking at posters, we will start taking comments from
 7 folks in the room who would like to just go right ahead
 8 and make comments or folks on the phone who are ready to
 9 make comments.
 10 Approximately an hour into taking comments, depending
 11 on how close we are to being done with the comments
 12 session, we may at that time initiate the ANILCA 810
 13 hearing so folks who want to make a comment via testimony
 14 to the Bureau of Land Management in relation to
 15 subsistence can do that before the evening gets too late.
 16 If we still have people who would like to comment on the
 17 DEIS, which we hope we do, we will start taking comments
 18 again after the 810 hearing.
 19 Alan, would you like to make a couple of comments
 20 about the purpose of the 810 hearing?
 21 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** I'm Alan Bittner, field
 22 manager for the Anchorage field office of the Bureau of
 23 Land Management, and I have just a brief statement to read
 24 about the ANILCA 810 hearing that we will be conducting
 25 later.

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1 In addition to the draft EIS, Section 810(a) of the
 2 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act requires
 3 that an evaluation of subsistence uses and needs be
 4 completed for any federal determination to withdraw,
 5 reserve, lease or otherwise permit the use, occupancy and
 6 disposition of public lands. Due to the proposed project
 7 affecting BLM-managed land, the BLM prepared a preliminary
 8 analysis of subsistence impacts. The preliminary findings
 9 concluded that the project may result in significant
 10 restrictions to subsistence uses for certain communities.
 11 Later tonight the BLM will conduct an 810 public
 12 hearing. This will be your opportunity to provide formal
 13 comment on the potential for this project to affect
 14 subsistence resources. Thanks.
 15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you very
 16 much. Before we start talking about what Donlin is
 17 proposing by way of this project, it's important to note
 18 that the United States Army Corps of Engineers is neither
 19 a proponent for nor an opponent of the proposed project.
 20 Our role as the lead federal agency is to facilitate
 21 unbiased analyses of the project as proposed, to disclose
 22 potential impacts to you all to facilitate obtaining your
 23 comment on the project as proposed and its potential
 24 alternatives and to, as I mentioned, better facilitate
 25 decision making by everybody involved.

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1 Before we talk about the NEPA process, let's talk a
 2 little bit about what Donlin is proposing for those of you
 3 who may not be familiar with it. What you can see on the
 4 screen and depicted by the orange No. 1 is the proposed
 5 mine site. Donlin is proposing to initiate the
 6 construction of two pits to extract gold ore that
 7 ultimately over the life of the project would become a
 8 single pit, which would consume approximately a 2.2 square
 9 mile area and be anywhere from 1,100 feet to 1,800 feet
 10 deep, depending on which side of the pit you are taking
 11 the measurement from.
 12 The second primary component of the mine site is the
 13 tailings storage facility. Tailings are basically ground
 14 ore. This is what's left, the residue that's left after
 15 it goes through the mill. So that ground rock gets
 16 deposited if the project is built as proposed to fill the
 17 valley that you can see with the tailings dam down below
 18 it. These tailings are referred to as subaqueous, so it's
 19 part water, part rock that's left over. That valley, that
 20 area that would be filled, is approximately 3.5 square
 21 miles in size.
 22 No. 3 is the waste rock facility. This is basically
 23 all the overburden, all the rock that has to be removed to
 24 get to ore or rock that may contain some small amount of
 25 gold but not enough to be worth processing through the

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1 mill. That facility also is 3.5 square miles in size.
 2 There is a variety of other related facilities that you
 3 can see around there that are described in substantially
 4 more detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 5 The second primary component of the mine site is the
 6 transportation facilities. Donlin is proposing a 30-mile
 7 road to a new port site at Jungjuk just downstream of
 8 Crooked Creek. There would be a new barge landing
 9 facility at that location to receive fuel and cargo
 10 necessary to operate the project, a 5,000-foot airstrip,
 11 and between the port site and the mine site storage for
 12 approximately 40 million gallons of diesel fuel that would
 13 be consumed annually to operate the project.
 14 You can also see along the road a bunch of little
 15 pink squares or rectangles that indicate potential
 16 material sites that might be open to fuel and to maintain
 17 the road infrastructure, as well as the port site.
 18 The third primary component of the project as
 19 proposed is a 315-mile long, 14-inch diameter buried steel
 20 pipeline that runs from western Cook Inlet to the mine
 21 site. Donlin is proposing to operate the mine site off of
 22 natural gas, primarily. The mining equipment, excavators,
 23 trucks, et cetera, would operate primarily off of diesel.
 24 The project, if constructed as proposed, takes
 25 approximately three to four years to construct, operate

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1 and store 27 and a half years. Closure -- you can see a
 2 variety of time frames for closure up there. Closure
 3 doesn't begin on a specific date when mining ceases.
 4 Closure is something that starts a number of years before
 5 mining ceases and goes for a number of years after mining
 6 ceases. Closure and reclamation are activities that
 7 typically are going to be occurring over the life of the
 8 project in relation to some small scale facilities that
 9 might be generated, operate for a few years and be
 10 reclaimed if the project is permitted and goes forward.
 11 The pit that I mentioned, the pit is expected to take
 12 50 to 55 years to fill with water that would accumulate in
 13 it. And after 50 to 55 years, any water released from
 14 that pit would have to be treated. But please also
 15 understand that effectively from the project's initiation,
 16 from at least the initiation of mining, water coming off
 17 the project for other reasons would also have to be
 18 treated.
 19 Post-closure of the project, there is water quality
 20 monitoring that takes place through the life of the
 21 project. Post-closure of the project, water quality
 22 monitoring would effectively have to take place in
 23 perpetuity because water from some of the facilities would
 24 have to be treated to be released.
 25 So the Environmental Impact Statement, what is it and

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1 where are we? As I mentioned, the National Environmental
 2 Policy Act requires that we develop an Environmental
 3 Impact Statement to disclose potential impacts, consider
 4 ways we might minimize those impacts, and then provide
 5 information to decisionmakers so they can make decisions
 6 that are in the public interest.
 7 I gave you the generic scenario that we have gone
 8 through up to the gold oval on the screen. We are at the
 9 Draft Environmental Impact stage. We are obviously here
 10 at this meeting with you to receive your comments on the
 11 project. This is not the only time or methodology by
 12 which you can comment. The comment period will stay open
 13 until April 30, 2016. And at the end of this
 14 presentation, I'll give you additional information and
 15 multiple ways that you can comment to us. You do not have
 16 to do it only at this meeting tonight.
 17 For the folks on the phone, I'll try to be a little
 18 louder. Not a problem I usually have.
 19 After we have received your comments on the Draft
 20 Environmental Impact Statement, we will go through the --
 21 what we have done to date, look at your comments,
 22 determine if the analysis to date was adequate, if the
 23 alternatives we looked at were adequate, if we need to do
 24 additional studies, close any data gaps that exist,
 25 recombine alternatives that have already been looked at

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1 into new alternatives, et cetera.
 2 After we have gone through that process, we would
 3 develop what's referred to as the final Environmental
 4 Impact Statement. That Environmental Impact Statement
 5 effectively are our final conclusions on the project. And
 6 please note that at this point in time, as I mentioned, we
 7 have draft analyses and draft conclusions. We have not
 8 made decisions yet regarding this project. The final
 9 Environmental Impact Statement, when generated, would go
 10 out for approximately 30 or 60 days for public review.
 11 The federal agencies in this case, the Army Corps of
 12 Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management and the Pipeline
 13 Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration, would use
 14 the Final Environmental Impact Statement in part to make
 15 decisions regarding whether or not they could or could not
 16 permit the project as proposed, whether it had to be
 17 modified to be permitted or couldn't be permitted at all.
 18 And those decisions are contained in what's referred to as
 19 a Record of Decision.
 20 And then as you can see on the bottom of the screen,
 21 assuming the Corps would permit the project, we would have
 22 our permit decision. If we determine we would not be
 23 permitting the project, then we are going through a
 24 process with everybody to discuss what happens. It's not
 25 uncommon that if an entity comes to a conclusion that it

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1 can't permit a project, that doesn't necessarily mean the
 2 project ends; that means something changes.
 3 Another thing that is important to understand is that
 4 neither the Army Corps of Engineers nor virtually any
 5 other entity's decision regarding permitting or not
 6 permitting a project typically constrains any other entity
 7 to make a similar or the same decision. There is over 100
 8 permits, authorizations, et cetera, required for this
 9 project. Every entity has their own authorities and makes
 10 their own decision. But typically we work together to try
 11 to define, disclose and make public interest decisions.
 12 I'll give you just a little bit regarding what's in
 13 the document chapter by chapter. And we are only going
 14 through five of them, so it won't take too long. The Army
 15 Corps of Engineers is required by regulation not only in
 16 NEPA but our own regulations to define the overall and the
 17 basic purposes for a project. Donlin, of course, has
 18 their proposed purpose for the project. It is incumbent
 19 on the Corps of Engineers to define it for the public
 20 interest decision, which you can see on the screen.
 21 I point this out in part because the Draft
 22 Environmental Impact Statement went out with half a
 23 sentence added to this that we did not get removed before
 24 it went out. That half a sentence notes that one of the
 25 purposes for the project is to maximize economic benefit

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1 for Donlin stockholders, Calista and TKC shareholders.
 2 There is absolutely nothing wrong with the economics of
 3 these kinds of projects. It is a very important component
 4 of the project. However, in the realm of the Army Corps
 5 of Engineers where we are neither a proponent for nor an
 6 opponent of the project, economics has to be addressed
 7 very carefully so we don't constrain our analyses by
 8 inflating the importance of economics in relation to one
 9 entity or another too far. So that sentence was intended
 10 to be removed before the document went out, but it didn't
 11 get removed, that half a sentence. So what you see on the
 12 screen is the overall purpose that will appear in the
 13 Final Environmental Impact Statement.
 14 As I mentioned, the economics of the project, you
 15 will see in the document how it's been analyzed to date
 16 and the weight that it carries. So it is not being
 17 discounted.
 18 You can see the need for the project on the screen,
 19 which is pretty straightforward.
 20 As I mentioned, when we go through the Environmental
 21 Impact Statement development process, we do scoping to
 22 talk to the potentially affected communities to determine
 23 what we might need to consider and what weight it needs to
 24 have. We look for data gaps that we need to fill. We
 25 then, after looking at what's proposed, look at the

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1 alternatives that are being suggested for the project by
 2 which we might minimize impacts.
 3 And that's what we are looking at in Chapter 2. We
 4 looked at over 300 options that might be developed into
 5 alternatives. In this case, we weeded it down to seven
 6 alternatives that have been carried forward for further
 7 analysis in the EIS. You can see them on the screen.
 8 I'll tell you what they are as we go through them very
 9 briefly. Please note that you won't see Alternative 2
 10 again because we have already discussed Alternative 2,
 11 Donlin's proposed action, in the earlier description.
 12 Alternative 1, the no action. Why are we looking at
 13 the no action? Well, to do unbiased analyses, we need to
 14 compare what's proposed to the existing baseline. The
 15 existing baseline is no action. It means nothing is
 16 constructed. If we are not looking at the environment,
 17 human and natural environment as it currently exists, we
 18 are not doing an unbiased, functional, comprehensive
 19 analysis.
 20 Alternative 3A, this is the LNG-powered haul truck
 21 alternative. As I mentioned, alternatives typically are
 22 defined to try to limit impacts, find a better way to
 23 construct the project if it goes forward. The next couple
 24 of alternatives we are going to look at are all related to
 25 minimizing the impacts of barging diesel on the Kuskokwim

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1 River, the potential for diesel being spilled, et cetera.
 2 The LNG-powered haul truck alternative is an
 3 alternative that would operate the heavy mining equipment,
 4 primarily the haul trucks, off of liquid natural gas
 5 versus diesel, therefore limiting the need for diesel.
 6 It's important to note that Caterpillar and some other
 7 entities are in the process of modifying fleets so that
 8 they can run off of liquid natural gas, but nobody as yet
 9 is powering these 300-ton capacity mining trucks strictly
 10 with natural gas. Thus far it's liquid natural gas and
 11 diesel in combination.
 12 Alternative 3B is diesel pipeline alternative. This
 13 alternative would replace that 14-inch, 315-mile natural
 14 gas pipeline with a diesel pipeline. Therefore the mine
 15 and virtually everything at it would operate off of diesel
 16 instead of liquid natural gas. The diesel would reach the
 17 site via a pipeline almost entirely, save for a small
 18 amount potentially barged during the construction very
 19 early in the process before the pipeline was constructed.
 20 As you can see, this alternative would require the
 21 addition of a 19-mile pipeline segment between Tyonek and
 22 the proposed initiation point for the natural gas pipeline
 23 as it currently exists. And obviously, since both the
 24 natural gas and the diesel pipelines would have the same
 25 alignment, they would -- they are not obviously both

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1 initiating at that same point, but they follow the same
 2 route, save for the 19-mile segment. It also requires the
 3 improvement of the North Foreland barge facility in
 4 Tyonek.
 5 Alternative 4, this is another alternative that
 6 limits the potential impacts of barging; however, it does
 7 it in a different way. Instead of the port being
 8 constructed at Jungjuk -- and you will see this on
 9 slide -- the next slide that gives you a graph of it. The
 10 port would be constructed at Birch Tree Crossing, a good
 11 bit downstream.
 12 What are the tradeoffs of this alternative? Well,
 13 the red line gives you a Jungjuk port site just south of
 14 Crooked Creek on the Kuskokwim River. The Birch Tree
 15 Crossing port, obviously substantially farther downriver,
 16 downriver from Aniak, it requires a 76-mile road versus
 17 the 30-mile road that Donlin would need. It substantially
 18 limits the potential for barge impacts upriver of Birch
 19 Tree Crossing, save potentially for some limited amount
 20 during construction. It also avoids five of the shallow
 21 spots where barges have in the past stranded on the upper
 22 Kuskokwim River.
 23 Now we will switch to Alternative 5A. This
 24 alternative is a dry stack tailings alternative. You
 25 remember the tailings facility that I described earlier in

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1 relation to what Donlin is proposing. This alternative
 2 dries those tailings out. Instead of this semi-moist
 3 material that goes into the valley, you have a smaller
 4 footprint of drier material going in, but when you do
 5 that, your dry stack tailings are stacked higher. There
 6 is a potential for more wind erosion carrying dust from
 7 that facility around the surrounding area.
 8 And what you have downstream of it, instead of just a
 9 single dam to hold the tailings in place, you now have two
 10 dams to hold the tailings in place and a single dam to
 11 hold the operating pond which is required because that is
 12 the water that comes out of the tailings. That water
 13 would have to be treated before it could be released.
 14 That operating pond is expected to be in place over the
 15 life of the operations if this alternative were permitted.
 16 So as you can see, when you start looking at
 17 trade-offs between one alternative and another, in this
 18 case you are not -- there is a difference in concern in
 19 relation to, well, what happens if there is some release
 20 of tailings down slope. In this case, if there is a
 21 release, the release would likely be water down slope and
 22 then potentially a release of tailings.
 23 So the point with all this is that every time we
 24 change any one thing in relation to an alternative or the
 25 analyses, we change the weight and balance of how we

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1 compare and contrast various alternatives against each
 2 other and how they are analyzed in the document.
 3 Alternative 6A is the Dalzell Gorge pipeline route.
 4 There were a variety of potential pipeline routes analyzed
 5 in the preliminary draft EIS. This is the pipeline route
 6 alternative that survived to this point. The Dalzell
 7 Gorge route is approximately two miles shorter than
 8 Donlin's proposed route. Donlin's proposed route is the
 9 yellow line on the screen. The Dalzell Gorge route is the
 10 purple route. This route, you have got more challenges in
 11 relation to the topography that it goes through, and
 12 obviously it impacts different areas, Rainy Pass, south
 13 fork of the Kuskokwim. It also has more miles of pipeline
 14 in alignment with or close to the alignment with the
 15 Iditarod Natural Historic Trail.
 16 So very briefly, I'll give you a little bit on
 17 Chapter 3. Chapter 3 contains the environmental baseline,
 18 the existing condition as it currently exists, as well as
 19 the draft analyses in relation to the major resource areas
 20 impacted. Depending on your definition, we have either 23
 21 to 26 major resource areas defined in the Draft
 22 Environmental Impact Statement. This slide is to give you
 23 an example of the major resource issues that are
 24 potentially impacted by barge. And in this case the
 25 analysts have looked at it and determined that they feel

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1 these are the 14 major resource issues potentially
 2 impacted by the proposed project.
 3 To give you an example of what Donlin is proposing
 4 and a little bit about the potential impacts of, one of
 5 the issues on the project that we get a lot of comment on
 6 to date will define the existing baseline for barging on
 7 the Kuskokwim River as we understand it, and what we need
 8 to know from you all is do we have it right. And then we
 9 will talk a little bit about the effects the project would
 10 have.
 11 The burnt gold color that you see on the bottom of
 12 the graph is barging as it exists, as we understand it, on
 13 the Kuskokwim River. In other words, during any given
 14 ice-free season, there are 68 barges that leave Bethel
 15 upstream during the year. So in other words, what you
 16 would typically see is a single tug pushing a single barge
 17 upstream for some distance, not necessarily all the way up
 18 to Jungjuk, but some distance upstream before it comes
 19 back.
 20 This slide breaks out the potential impacts of
 21 barging between construction and operations. The
 22 construction side, you can see that regardless of which
 23 alternative we are talking about, the existing barging is
 24 obviously the same under any and all alternative under
 25 construction or operations.

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1 For construction under Donlin's proposal, the impacts
 2 are the same during construction under any alternative.
 3 However, it's important to note that graphs like this
 4 don't always tell the whole story because, for instance, I
 5 mentioned that there is no -- there is very limited
 6 barging of fuel and/or cargo upstream of Birch Tree
 7 Crossing under Alternative 4.
 8 So while everything appears to be the same on the
 9 construction side, it's important to note that, save for
 10 some pipes and a limited amount of materials to construct
 11 the pipeline, they would have to go upstream of Birch Tree
 12 Crossing. During construction, the impacts of barging
 13 under Alternative 4 largely stop at Birch Tree Crossing.
 14 If we look at the other side of the screen and look
 15 at operations, you can see Alternative 1, obviously no
 16 impact beyond what currently exists. The next bar graph
 17 gives you alternatives 2, 4, 5A and 6A. Again, keep in
 18 mind that for Alternative 4 virtually no barging takes
 19 place upstream of Birch Tree Crossing.
 20 As you can see and what you will see in the next
 21 slide is a depiction of how the alternatives can
 22 potentially limit impacts. So if we went to Alternative
 23 3A, the LNG haul truck alternative, there is a need for
 24 less diesel at the mine site; therefore, less diesel is
 25 barged upriver. It doesn't change the amount of cargo

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1 that needs to be barged, but less diesel goes upstream.
 2 Alternative 3B, the diesel pipeline alternative, same
 3 thing again. It just further reduces diesel going
 4 upstream.
 5 We wanted to give you an example of effects analyses
 6 in relation to one of the major resources that everyone is
 7 concerned with, and that is fish. And again, this is just
 8 a very straightforward breakdown of one alternative versus
 9 another.
 10 As you know, barging potentially can disturb fish
 11 habitat, fish behavior and injure or kill fish. The draft
 12 analyses and draft conclusions to date in the EIS indicate
 13 that under Alternative 2, we expect that there would be
 14 moderate impacts to fish with potentially greater impacts
 15 in shallow and narrow segments. Alternative 3A, less
 16 barge traffic upstream. It has the potential to reduce
 17 those impacts. Alternative 3B reduces it further.
 18 Alternative 4, again, almost eliminates those impacts
 19 above Birch Tree Crossing.
 20 This slide gives you another example by which one
 21 alternative versus another might modify impacts. Any time
 22 we change the amount of diesel that is burned, we are
 23 changing diesel emissions. So if we are burning more
 24 natural gas, well, natural gas tends to burn cleaner. If
 25 we are burning more diesel, it doesn't burn cleaner -- as

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1 clean as -- I'm sorry -- as natural gas does.
 2 So the point of all this is that any time we change
 3 one thing, it potentially changes another. And
 4 momentarily I'll give a little bit of information on how
 5 you can give us the kind of comments we need to tell us
 6 whether or not our analysis is going down the right path
 7 and coming to the right conclusions.
 8 Chapter 4, cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts
 9 are a combination of all past, present and reasonably
 10 foreseeable future activities. What we need you to do, if
 11 you can, is look at those activities that are defined in
 12 Chapter 4 as past; in other words, existing activities.
 13 Present activities, activities that are currently taking
 14 place. And reasonably foreseeable future activities.
 15 In other words, what we are doing is we are combining
 16 all of those and we are trying to forecast if this project
 17 were built as proposed, what happens in the Kuskokwim and
 18 the Yukon River regions for all of those various resource
 19 issues that we talked about. And then what would happen
 20 if we went with one of the alternatives.
 21 Chapter 5, mitigation, what we have been looking at
 22 partially throughout this presentation is mitigation. And
 23 that's one of the things that we have been talking about.
 24 We need to know from you, are we reasonably mitigating the
 25 potential effects of this project? Does it look like our

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1 analyses of the alternatives is accurate by way of how we
 2 might minimize impacts? So basically there isn't anything
 3 in this document that we are not looking for comments on.
 4 And you can't give us a bad comment. It's just is the
 5 comment something that we can use to make a definitive
 6 change in the document or definitively improve the
 7 document.
 8 I'll go through in a moment how you do that. As I
 9 mentioned earlier, we have the option in a couple of
 10 minutes to go to a poster session. There is three posters
 11 over there that depict the project as currently proposed,
 12 nine posters that depict some of the primary resource
 13 issues that have been analyzed in the document. And just
 14 before we go to that session, the various agency and AECOM
 15 folks will introduce themselves to give you an idea of who
 16 you can talk to about what's depicted on those posters,
 17 the analyses done to date, and where we are going in the
 18 future so that you can tell us what we need to know before
 19 we make our next steps on the project.
 20 So how do you provide a substantive comment? That's
 21 what all this has led up to. If ten people tell me I
 22 don't like the project and ten people tell me I like the
 23 project, how do we address those comments in the Final
 24 Environmental Impact Statement? Your responses to
 25 virtually all comments will show up in the Final

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1 Environmental Impact Statement. That's where we record
 2 how we address comments received on the draft EIS.
 3 Well, if ten people tell me I don't like the project
 4 and ten people tell me I do like the project, what appears
 5 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement is one comment
 6 that says I like the project, and our response is, comment
 7 noted. And then one comment that says I don't like the
 8 comment, and our response is just, comment noted. We have
 9 to have a comment that gives us something to work with.
 10 We have to have a comment that tells us we did it right,
 11 we did it wrong, how we did it right, how we did it wrong,
 12 where we need to go, et cetera.
 13 So if what someone does is looks back at some of
 14 those options that we have set aside and said, okay, you
 15 set these three options aside, I don't see any indication
 16 that you combined them in this format, and if you combined
 17 them in this way, I think it would have these beneficial
 18 effects. Whether that's for the project or against the
 19 project, we are not concerned. We need to know is our
 20 baseline right, are the draft analyses right, are the
 21 draft conclusions right; and if not, why not, to the best
 22 degree that you can define that to us.
 23 Another example might be sharing of subsistence
 24 resources. It's entirely possible that a community out
 25 there will look at the analyses in the document and say,

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1 wait a minute, you have indicated the potential impact to
 2 loss of a percentage of this fish species has very minimal
 3 impact on our sharing of subsistence resources. We need
 4 to know whether we got it right. We need to know whether
 5 or not we have accurately characterized the utilization of
 6 that species in subsistence and sharing.
 7 So there is nothing you can't comment on. We are
 8 just requesting that you give us the most detailed
 9 information you can as to what we need to do and why we
 10 need to do it and where we need to go in relation to your
 11 comment.
 12 How do you comment on the draft EIS? Obviously you
 13 can do it at this meeting. You can submit written
 14 comments to us. As I noted, the comment period ends April
 15 30th. You can email comments to this address. And this
 16 information won't be on the screen all night, but we have
 17 it in the room with you. You can mail comments to me at
 18 the address that you see. You can fax comments to that
 19 address.
 20 We have other public meetings coming up. Obviously
 21 you can see where we are tonight. You can see where we
 22 are going. The fact that you make a comment at this
 23 meeting does not mean that you or somebody else cannot
 24 come to a different meeting and make the same comment over
 25 again.

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1 We have a website that you can go to that gives you
 2 information on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 3 On this web page under EIS documents you will find the
 4 entire 5,500 page EIS, plus the other documents that
 5 relate to it. We know it's a very substantial amount of
 6 material. So please give us whatever comments you can to
 7 the best degree that you can. You can also find
 8 newsletters, project information, background documents and
 9 presentation summaries there. My contact information is
 10 it there. And Ms. Amanda Andraschko, our tribal liaison's
 11 contact information is there. If you have anything you
 12 want to address directly with her, certainly feel free to
 13 do so.
 14 So with that, Mr. Alan Bittner with the Bureau of
 15 Land Management will do the introduction to the ANILCA 810
 16 hearing. However, as I mentioned, after he's done with
 17 that introduction, we will then open it up for folks to go
 18 into the next room and go through the posters, talk to the
 19 analysts. Immediately before we go over there, we will
 20 have the folks in the room introduce themselves so you
 21 know who is who and what you might want to talk to them
 22 about in relation to the information over there.
 23 And as I mentioned, for anybody on the phone or the
 24 folks in the room who want to start making comments right
 25 away, you can immediately start making comments while

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1 other folks are looking at the posters. After an hour we
 2 will go to the 810 hearing, unless it appears that we are
 3 very close to being done with comments. And then, if need
 4 be, which we hope we will, we will reconvene for
 5 additional comments.
 6 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Good evening. Once
 7 again, my name is Alan Bittner with the Bureau of Land
 8 Management. When I came in tonight, I was lucky enough to
 9 remember to slide the little thing on my phone and mute
 10 it. I haven't always done that. And so I heard a few
 11 phones going off tonight, but if you would be kind enough
 12 to do that for the rest of us, that would be great.
 13 Also with me tonight is our subsistence biologist,
 14 Bruce Seppi, here in the front room. We will both be
 15 available during the poster session to visit with about
 16 the subsistence 810 analysis if you have any questions or
 17 comments before we go into the -- later on when we go into
 18 the hearing that we are going to conduct.
 19 As I mentioned earlier, because of our involvement in
 20 this project as a cooperating agency in the pipeline
 21 route, we are required to do an analysis of subsistence
 22 impacts, and that preliminary analysis is what we are
 23 going to present this evening. There are also copies of
 24 it on the back table if you would like to refer to that or
 25 read it for yourself. It's back there on that back table.

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1 Through the process of the analysis of subsistence
 2 impacts for the proposed Donlin Gold Mine, BLM determined
 3 if a significant restriction of subsistence uses and needs
 4 may result from any one of the alternatives discussed by
 5 Keith earlier in the Donlin Gold draft EIS, including
 6 their cumulative effects. And BLM used three factors in
 7 that analysis in considering the project cause.
 8 No. 1, the reduction in the availability of
 9 subsistence resources caused by a decline in population or
 10 abundance of harvestable resources. This may include
 11 fish, wildlife, edible plants, house logs, firewood,
 12 drinking water, for example. Factors that might cause a
 13 reduction include adverse impacts on habitat, direct
 14 impacts on the resource, increased harvest and increased
 15 competition from nonsubsistence users.
 16 No. 2, reductions in the availability of resources
 17 used for subsistence purposes caused by alteration of
 18 their distribution, migration patterns or location.
 19 And No. 3, limitations on access to subsistence
 20 resources, including limitations from increased
 21 competition for the resources or physical or legal
 22 barriers.
 23 Donlin Gold, LLC submitted applications to the Bureau
 24 of Land Management for a right-of-way grant in July of
 25 2012 and January of 2013. Donlin Gold is proposing to

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1 construct, operate, maintain and close a 315-mile long,
 2 14-inch diameter buried natural gas pipeline and
 3 associated fiberoptic cable from the west side of Cook
 4 Inlet to the mine site near Crooked Creek within the
 5 Kuskokwim watershed. A proposed 315-mile long pipeline
 6 right-of-way would cross about 97 miles of BLM land north
 7 and west of the Alaska Range in the Kuskokwim River
 8 watershed. This represents about 30.7 percent of the
 9 total right-of-way length of State of Alaska lands
 10 constituting 65.5 percent, and ANCSA Corporation lands,
 11 Calista, Kuskokwim Corporation and Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
 12 constituting about 3.7 percent.

13 The pipeline is part of the energy supply
 14 infrastructure for a proposed open pit gold mine located
 15 approximately ten miles north of the village of Crooked
 16 Creek. In addition to the pipeline and the mine site, the
 17 Donlin Gold Project would include transportation
 18 infrastructure for barge transportation on the Kuskokwim
 19 River. Two of the six alternatives analyzed in this draft
 20 EIS would affect the pipeline component.

21 Alternative 3B would substitute a diesel pipeline for
 22 the natural gas pipeline within the same planned
 23 right-of-way.

24 Alternative 6A would route a portion of the pipeline
 25 through the Dalzell Gorge, affecting 46 miles of State of

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1 Alaska land.

2 The proposed Donlin Gold Project is evaluated in
 3 three components: The mine site, the transportation
 4 infrastructure, and the pipeline. Although the permit
 5 applications for the BLM focuses on the BLM-managed
 6 portions of the pipeline, the National Environmental
 7 Policy Act, or NEPA, prohibits splitting the project into
 8 smaller components in order to minimize the estimate of
 9 environmental impacts. For this reason, this project's
 10 review of impacts to subsistence will address the entire
 11 project and not just the portion that's on BLM land.

12 The proposed pipeline includes 150-foot wide cleared
 13 construction right-of-way; 12 airstrips ranging from 3,500
 14 to 5,000 feet, nine of which would be newly built along
 15 the pipeline right-of-way during construction; nine
 16 construction camps; 65 cleared pipe storage areas; an
 17 estimated 70 gravel pits ranging from one to 50 acres in
 18 size. The pipeline would cross seven watersheds involving
 19 396 stream crossings, 77 of which are anadromous, or
 20 salmon-rearing streams.

21 This is the proposed pipeline route in the Windy Fork
 22 portion of the Kuskokwim watershed in Game Management Unit
 23 19C. So on this picture, the pipeline would be coming
 24 from the Cook Inlet approximately right through here. And
 25 BLM lands would be in the foreground, and this would be

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1 coming from the Cook Inlet off of State land and the
 2 Alaska Range.

3 The proposed mine includes a waste rock facility that
 4 would fill in 2,240 acres of American Creek, a tailings
 5 storage facility that would fill in 2,351 acres of
 6 Anaconda Creek. The tailings storage facility would be
 7 approximately 1,850 feet deep from the high wall, and the
 8 Lewis pit would be approximately 1,653 feet deep from the
 9 high wall. The two pits would merge at the surface into
 10 one open pit about 2.2 miles long and one mile wide near
 11 the end of mining operations.

12 At mining closure, runoff from the tailings storage
 13 facility would be pumped into the open pit. The pit is
 14 estimated to take roughly 50 years to fill, and pumping
 15 would be required to prevent it from overflowing into
 16 Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River watershed. The pit
 17 may not meet water quality standards -- or the pit water
 18 may not meet water quality standards and would need to be
 19 treated before it could be released into Crooked Creek.

20 A water treatment plant would be constructed 50 years
 21 after mine closure. Water from the pit lake would have to
 22 be pumped and treated in the wastewater treatment plant
 23 into perpetuity to prevent untreated pit water from
 24 flowing into Crooked Creek and into the Kuskokwim River.

25 This photo is the proposed site of the pit, the

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1 wastewater -- the waste rock facility and the tailings
 2 storage facility in Game Management Unit 19A. So on this
 3 aerial photo of the area, the mining pit would largely
 4 encompass this area right here, including the existing
 5 landing strip right now. Anaconda and American Creeks are
 6 back here where the tailings storage and waste rock
 7 facilities would be. And in the foreground of this photo
 8 is Crooked Creek right here on down to the Kuskokwim River
 9 off to the right of this photo.

10 The proposed transportation facilities component
 11 includes construction of expanded port facilities at the
 12 Bethel cargo terminal, a new port site at Jungjuk Creek on
 13 the Kuskokwim River with 2.8 million gallons of fuel
 14 storage, a 30-mile long mine access road from the
 15 Kuskokwim River to the mine with 45 stream crossings and
 16 13 gravel pits and a 5,000 foot airstrip at that mine.
 17 This is the Kuskokwim River at Jungjuk in Game Management
 18 Unit 19A.

19 Barges would supply the mine with fuel and cargo and
 20 involve 64 cargo barges round trip and 58 fuel barges
 21 round trip for a total of 122 round trips annually from
 22 the Bethel port to Jungjuk port during a 110-day shipping
 23 season, which is June 1 to October 1.

24 River barges would be transported by a tug pushing a
 25 four-barge configuration during each trip. Each fuel

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1 barge trip would carry 1.29 million gallons of diesel
 2 fuel. The port at Jungjuk would continue to be needed
 3 into perpetuity to supply fuel and cargo to the wastewater
 4 treatment plant that would treat water from the pit lake.
 5 This is Jungjuk Creek where the proposed port and
 6 fuel storage facility would be located and constructed in
 7 Game Management Unit 19A.
 8 So the preliminary analysis of impacts to subsistence
 9 based on the alternatives outlined in the draft EIS
 10 includes all six alternatives outlined. They can be found
 11 in Appendix N of the draft EIS on page 409 of the .pdf.
 12 It's also in the section that's labeled Appendix M through
 13 O on the table of contents. So it's not -- you have to
 14 look at that particular section to find Appendix N. And
 15 like I said before, there are copies in the back if you
 16 would like to get a hard copy of it.
 17 The testimony and input from 11 communities where
 18 public hearings will be held on impacts to subsistence
 19 from the Donlin Gold Project will be analyzed and included
 20 in the final ANILCA 810 subsistence impact evaluation and
 21 will be included in the final EIS.
 22 So after that overview, the evaluation now of the
 23 three components that we did, the evaluation of the effect
 24 of the Donlin Gold Project proposal on subsistence uses
 25 and need for the mine, the natural gas type and the

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1 transportation infrastructure of the project, the
 2 subsistence evaluation is done for each of those
 3 components and looked at the effects of subsistence uses
 4 and needs.
 5 So for the mine site, villages closest to the mine
 6 would potentially experience the most effects to
 7 subsistence, including Napaimute and Crooked Creek.
 8 Mining activities -- ore trucks in the mine, trucks on the
 9 road, drilling, blasting, power generation, port site
 10 activity -- would likely change the distribution of
 11 wildlife species important to subsistence, like moose,
 12 caribou and fur bearers. It would be long-term and would
 13 cause potential impacts during the construction phases and
 14 during mining activities throughout the life of the mine.
 15 Areas important to Crooked Creek for berry picking,
 16 wood cutting and hunting would be directly affected by the
 17 mine, and adjacent areas would potentially be contaminated
 18 with dust emissions containing various particulate
 19 materials from ore processing and from trucks on haul
 20 roads and access roads. This would make the berry picking
 21 areas undesirable or unusable for subsistence users.
 22 Any water released from the mine during operations
 23 has the potential to affect salmon and resident fish
 24 populations important to subsistence, as well as the
 25 aquatic food web in Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River.

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1 After mine closure, the pit lake would fill with
 2 untreated water that would not meet water quality
 3 standards that could potentially impact fish and wildlife.
 4 Potential runoff from the tailings dam and pit lake would
 5 have the potential to contaminate fish resources important
 6 to subsistence in Crooked Creek and the lower Kuskokwim
 7 River into perpetuity, impacting subsistence fish
 8 resources important to all communities from Crooked Creek
 9 to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 10 Next for the natural gas pipeline, the potential
 11 effects to subsistence from the construction and operation
 12 of the natural gas pipeline would affect the villages of
 13 Tyonek, Skwentna, Nicolai, McGrath, Takotna, as well as
 14 downriver villages of Sleetmute, Stony River, Georgetown
 15 and Crooked Creek.
 16 During construction, the effects of clearing the
 17 right-of-way, trenching, drilling and the presence of
 18 machinery, pipeline transport, worker and construction
 19 camps, and infrastructure on and along the pipeline
 20 right-of-way would cause a redistribution of moose,
 21 caribou, and fur bearers and negatively affect access to
 22 subsistence use areas and availability of subsistence
 23 resources.
 24 During mine operations, the airstrip that would
 25 remain along the right-of-way at Farewell, would

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1 potentially increase access to subsistence resources by
 2 nonlocal residence using aircraft and increase competition
 3 for those subsistence resources along and adjacent to the
 4 pipeline right-of-way. Villages negatively affected by
 5 increased access to and competition in the area include
 6 McGrath, Nikolai and Takotna.
 7 And last, for the transportation infrastructure, the
 8 potential effects to subsistence from transportation
 9 infrastructure, including barging of cargo and fuel and
 10 the construction of a port at Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim
 11 River would affect all villages on the river from Crooked
 12 Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 13 Impacts from barging include displacement and
 14 disruption of subsistence activities by barge traffic or
 15 reduced access to subsistence fishing activities and sites
 16 such as set nets, fish wheels, and processing rafts along
 17 the river. Subsistence fish resources, salmon, and
 18 resident fish species population may also be negatively
 19 affected by the magnitude and intensity of barge traffic
 20 proposed in Alternative 2.
 21 Effects to fish may increase when river water levels
 22 are low as barge rafts will need to be uncoupled and
 23 barges towed individually or in pairs or lighter barge
 24 loads per trip would be required to navigate to Jungjuk
 25 port. This would require additional barge round trips on

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1 the river and potentially increase impacts to subsistence
 2 fishers on the Kuskokwim River and to subsistence fish
 3 resources.
 4 So the findings for those, this evaluation concludes
 5 that Alternative 2 may result in significant restriction
 6 to subsistence uses for the communities of Crooked Creek
 7 and Napaimute in relation to the mine site and the
 8 communities on the Kuskokwim River from barge traffic on
 9 the river, which include Bethel, Napakiak, Napaskiak,
 10 Oscarville, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Akiak, Tuluksak, Kalskag,
 11 Lower Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Napaimute and Crooked
 12 Creek, and the communities of McGrath, Nicolai and Takotna
 13 for increased access and competition from nonlocal users
 14 at the Farewell airstrip along the pipeline right-of-way.
 15 In addition, potential spill scenarios involving
 16 ocean and river barge release of diesel fuel, cyanide,
 17 mercury, tailings dam failure, and release of untreated
 18 water from the pit lake and tailings dam after mine
 19 closure may also result in significant restriction to
 20 subsistence uses for the Kuskokwim River communities
 21 listed above.
 22 The BLM found in this preliminary ANILCA 810
 23 evaluation that alternatives 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5A and 6 and
 24 the cumulative case considered in the draft Donlin Gold
 25 EIS may significantly restrict subsistence uses. These

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1 findings require that the BLM conduct hearings to solicit
 2 public comments from potentially affected communities and
 3 subsistence users under ANILCA 810(a)(1) and (2) in
 4 conjunction with the release of the draft EIS. That's why
 5 we're here tonight and why this analysis will be presented
 6 in 11 communities that will potentially be impacted by the
 7 Donlin Gold proposal. We will conduct an 810 hearing and
 8 gather testimony tonight, and we welcome your testimony at
 9 that hearing.
 10 So following the public hearing, a finding may be
 11 revised to will not significantly affect restricted based
 12 on changes in alternatives, new information, or new
 13 mitigation measures resulting from the hearings.
 14 And thirdly, if the finding of may significantly
 15 restrict subsistence uses is not revised or impacts can't
 16 be mitigated, a three-part determination must be made
 17 before the action can be authorized.
 18 So this next slide goes into those three parts if we
 19 are still at a determination of may significantly affect
 20 after the hearings and after more input. Of course, we
 21 still arrive at that in the final -- or in conjunction
 22 with the final EIS.
 23 So what these findings mean and what happens next
 24 under ANILCA is that a 810(a)(3) determination section is
 25 to be prepared only when there is a finding of may

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1 significantly restrict subsistence uses for the selected
 2 alternative or action. The determination will separately
 3 address each of the three required items under 810(a)(3)
 4 and state why the proposed action is necessary and how the
 5 action complies with each requirement.
 6 So the three items listed here that require a
 7 determination are why such a significant restriction of
 8 subsistence uses is necessary and how it is consistent
 9 with sound management principles for multiple use of
 10 public lands. Secondly, how the proposed activity will
 11 involve the minimal amount of public lands necessary to
 12 accomplish the purposes of the project. And last, what
 13 reasonable steps will be taken to minimize adverse effects
 14 on subsistence uses and resources resulting from the
 15 project.
 16 After compliance with the 810 process that's listed
 17 here, a manager may proceed with the action of
 18 authorization of the action. And what's in front of us,
 19 in front of the BLM, again, is an application for a
 20 right-of-way for 97 miles of pipeline across BLM land and
 21 also for a concurrent fiber optic cable.
 22 When commenting on subsistence impacts, please
 23 consider what additional specific information about how
 24 the proposed mine would affect abundance and/or
 25 availability of subsistence resources important to you and

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1 how it would affect access to subsistence resources
 2 important to you, as well.
 3 Now a word about comments. You can address comments
 4 on the 810 preliminary analysis to subsistence impacts.
 5 You can address them to BLM at this address via snail
 6 mail. You can fax comments to us. Also our subsistence
 7 biologist, Bruce Seppi, is here tonight. He's over
 8 against this far wall. You can email comments to him.
 9 And we are going to accept comments concurrently along
 10 with the draft EIS, so we will be accepting them through
 11 April 30th of this year.
 12 Now, any comments that are also delivered to the
 13 draft EIS via the Corps of Engineers that relate to
 14 subsistence, they will also be available to us to impact
 15 our further analysis as we write a final analysis to
 16 subsistence resources that will also be concurrent with
 17 the draft EIS. So in other words, if you supply comments
 18 to the draft EIS via the Corps of Engineers, those are
 19 available to us, as well. But if you would like to
 20 contact us directly, that's the information that's on the
 21 screen right there. You are also welcome to write
 22 comments to us today in the back, as well, if you prefer
 23 to do that.
 24 So at this time I'll turn it back over to Keith and
 25 we'll move into the next sections. Bruce and I will be

1 available for comment during the poster session. And then
2 in approximately an hour or so we will conduct an 810
3 hearing where you can come up and give testimony directly
4 on subsistence impacts related to this preliminary
5 analysis that we have done. So thank you.

6 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much,
7 Bruce. We have been asked to make a change, and that
8 change is to give everybody at least 20 minutes to just
9 take a look at the posters, et cetera, before we start
10 taking comment on the draft EIS. So before we give
11 everybody a 20-minute break and after 20 minutes we will
12 see if folks want more time, and we will go from there.

13 Before we do that, however, what I'd like is all the
14 federal agency personnel, State agency personnel, tribal
15 cooperators that are working on the Draft Environmental
16 Impact Statement to just stand up and introduce
17 yourselves. We will also introduce the AECOM staff
18 members who are here who helped develop the analyses of
19 the draft EIS to date. So why don't we start with federal
20 agencies.

21 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Once again, Alan
22 Bittner, the field manager for the Anchorage field office
23 for the Bureau of Land Management.

24 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** Good evening. I'm Bruce
25 Seppi with Anchorage field office BLM.

1 but I couldn't hear what he said. I thought you guys
2 already mentioned Napaimute. I'm a member of the Native
3 Village of Napaimute, and I know that they already talked
4 with Napaimute, so I want to -- for myself personally I
5 want to find out what's going on because I think over the
6 years I have been to a lot of meetings with BLM, and with
7 all you guys, in fact; even the big guys from Donlin
8 Creek.

9 And I'm getting my mind changed that I don't think --
10 with subsistence our way of life is going to be affected
11 by what's going on. So I'm thinking to turn the other
12 opposite direction and say, goodbye, Donlin Creek.

13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you.

14 **MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** Any of the other
15 tribal cooperators? Knik tribe has joined in the
16 Anchorage meeting. I don't believe they are here tonight.
17 Native Village of Aniak, a meeting was held in Aniak two
18 weeks ago. And the Akiak Native community. We will
19 actually be traveling to Akiak tomorrow, so they will be
20 well represented, I'm sure.

21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. At this
22 point we will introduce the folks here from AECOM who will
23 be giving you some assistance with the posters.

24 **MR. JON ISAACS:** Hi. I'm Jon Isaacs from
25 Anchorage, Senior Environmental Specialist with AECOM.

1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** And the Pipeline
2 Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration, as well as
3 the Bureau of Land Management, are also cooperators, but
4 their staffs couldn't make it this evening.

5 **MR. MARK JEN:** Good evening. My name is
6 Mark Jen. I'm with the Environmental Protection Agency
7 based in Anchorage, and it's good to be here tonight.
8 Thanks.

9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** How about if we go to
10 the State of Alaska?

11 **MR. LEE MCKINLEY:** Hi. I'm Lee McKinley
12 with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game and the State
13 Pipeline Office, and I'm the Fish & Game lead for the
14 pipeline portion, but I'm certainly available to answer
15 your questions about any other aspect of the project as
16 well. Thanks.

17 **MR. KYLE MOSELLE:** Hi. Good evening. I'm
18 Kyle Moselle. I'm with the Alaska Department of Natural
19 Resources. I'm a large project coordinator.

20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Taylor, why don't we go
21 to our tribal cooperating representatives.

22 **MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** Village of Crooked
23 Creek, I don't believe there is anybody here from the
24 tribe. Native Village of Napaimute?

25 **MS. BEA KRISTOVICH:** I'm from Napaimute,

1 With the poster session, I'll be giving you some
2 information on the analysis that's in the document,
3 including looking at some of the effectiveness of the
4 mitigation measures to reduce impacts. With me tonight is
5 Taylor Brelsford, who is one of our senior social
6 scientists. He will be at the posters regarding hazardous
7 materials and spills. Dave Every, who is in the back, is
8 a senior biologist. He will be looking at the barge trips
9 and I think fisheries issues.

10 Joan Kluwe, who is senior social scientist will be
11 talking about subsistence and socioeconomics at those
12 posters. Nancy Darigo, who is our senior physical
13 environment mental lead will be looking at water quality,
14 air emissions and water flow. And Cecil Urlich is one of
15 our senior mining representatives and will be at the
16 posters regarding tailings dams. We also have Donne
17 Fleagle, who is our senior social outreach and community
18 coordinator. And Mary Vavrik is also with our team doing
19 the court reporting. So I think that's it, unless I've
20 missed anybody.

21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you.

22 Until 7:35 if you folks would like to take a look at the
23 posters or ask us any questions you have. At 7:35 we will
24 reconvene and start taking comments.

25 (Off the record.)

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1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay, folks. If you
 2 have No. 1 and No. 2, if you can cue up at a microphone,
 3 we will go ahead and get started and start taking
 4 comments.
 5 Okay. Before we get started, I need make one note.
 6 Because we are documenting the proceedings this evening
 7 for our administrative record -- in other words, so we
 8 have your comments -- Mary, our court reporter, is keeping
 9 a transcript for us. When you begin to speak, please
 10 state your name clearly, and then just speak clearly as
 11 you go through your comments. Due to the number of people
 12 that we have wanting to comment this evening, we are going
 13 to have to apply about a three-minute time limit to that.
 14 And if we have any exceptions, I'll note those.
 15 Please go ahead.
 16 **MR. VERNON CHIMEGALREA:** My name is Vern
 17 Chimegalrea. And for the interpreter, I will be speaking
 18 first in Yup'ik and then in English translating what I've
 19 said.
 20 (Speaking in Yup'ik.)
 21 **MR. VERNON CHIMEGALREA:** I'm Vern
 22 Chimegalrea. I was born in Bethel, and I'm a part of the
 23 Donlin Gold community relations team, and I want to thank
 24 you for the opportunity to say a few words. I have been
 25 working with -- this project has been going on since

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1 1995, '96. And in 20 years we have met regularly with the
 2 communities to discuss the project and answer questions
 3 and, most importantly, to listen.
 4 Personally, I have worked on a glossary for the
 5 Yup'ik-speaking community to further understand the mining
 6 terms and other things that need to be translated; for
 7 instance, the project update, and also developed a Yup'ik
 8 and Athabaskan page for our website. And we have been
 9 working on this, talking to the communities about all the
 10 different projects, the project details as we travel to
 11 the communities and, of course, talking about subsistence
 12 and how it will be affected because this is important to
 13 me and to others from this region.
 14 I'd like to say to the communities that are listening
 15 on the radio this evening that they should follow the EIS
 16 comment period and please join us when we travel
 17 throughout the -- or when the EIS team travels out to the
 18 communities, that they should definitely be involved and
 19 comment because their comments are important.
 20 Quyana.
 21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir. If you
 22 have your comments in writing, if you don't mind, if you
 23 could give those to Mary. We can get them back to you.
 24 It just helps her transcript if she's got anybody's
 25 comments in writing.

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1 Go ahead, sir.
 2 **MR. FRITZ CHARLES:** Thank you. My name is
 3 Fritz Charles. I was born and raised -- well, I was
 4 raised in Tuntutuliak, which is about 40 miles downriver
 5 from here. These impact studies that you guys are doing,
 6 it's going to take quite a few years to establish, but on
 7 behalf of Donlin Gold, I -- we took a trip up to Fort Knox
 8 a few summers ago and got a slight idea of what is to
 9 happen over here in the Kuskokwim. And for the tailings,
 10 there is no -- no price that you can put on our
 11 subsistence way of life. It is going to impact everybody
 12 for hundreds and thousands of years. And there is no
 13 price that Donlin Gold can pay for each individual to
 14 cover our expenses. There is no price for our fish, for
 15 the moose, for the wildlife and the waterfowl that we take
 16 each year. There is no price whatsoever, none.
 17 Then the only -- the only acceptance that I have to
 18 the Donlin Gold, they dig up everything and ship them to
 19 Canada and then take the gold out. That is the only way I
 20 will accept digging the gold here and Donlin Gold. No way
 21 else. That is the only way we here at the Kuskokwim area
 22 will accept the gold being taken out, processed in Canada.
 23 That is the only way that I will accept it.
 24 Yes, there might be jobs, thousands of jobs for,
 25 what, 30, 40, 50 years? But then there is the

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1 environmental impact. There will be an earthquake. There
 2 will be a disaster. It's not if. There is one too many
 3 ifs here. There will be a natural disaster if we go
 4 through with this on Donlin Gold. Not if. It will be
 5 when. Floods, earthquake, tornadoes are coming around.
 6 What else? There is no way in heck that we will approve
 7 this Donlin Gold out here.
 8 Thank you.
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you.
 10 **MS. GLORIA SIMEON:** Gloria Simeon,
 11 S-I-M-E-O-N. I feel like I should quote Lillian LLIaban.
 12 I should have brought my high heels.
 13 My obvious concerns about mining development is I
 14 think we need to think long and hard about our water. To
 15 date I have not gotten a number from anyone on what
 16 water -- what water is going to be needed to operate this
 17 mine. We know that once that water is used at the mine,
 18 it cannot be used again unless it's heavily treated, and I
 19 don't think I'd want to drink it even after that. Our
 20 rivers and lakes are our life's blood, just as our land is
 21 our life's blood. We must protect our water.
 22 In too many other places around the country, our
 23 tribal brothers and sisters have lost their rights to
 24 their water. Their water is contaminated by gold mining
 25 companies that have not done what they promised to do.

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1 Despite all the research and -- despite all the
 2 reassurances that we have from the company that the mine
 3 can and will be operated without jeopardizing our land
 4 resources and lives, and recognizing that there is a need
 5 for jobs and economic development in our region, I believe
 6 the risks are just way too great. Recent examples are the
 7 Polley Mine in Canada, the cleanup breach of the Gold King
 8 Mine releasing three million gallons of water in the
 9 Animas River.
 10 And I happened to Google Barrick Gold's international
 11 record. Their human rights violations and environmental
 12 damage is atrocious. We are so lucky to be living in
 13 America where we can protest against a gold mine without
 14 being shot. And this is what the company has done in
 15 other countries.
 16 And I also wonder about the tailings lake liners and
 17 the reassurances we received that they can withstand
 18 extreme anything while this summer we were faced with
 19 extreme weather, the likes of we have never seen before.
 20 I wonder how these indestructible liners will stand up to
 21 lightning strikes and fires. We had lightning strikes
 22 like we have never had before in this region. We were
 23 with smoke encompassing the whole region, and it was
 24 looking like it was going to be that way for all summer.
 25 Every village downriver from the mine must be

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1 prepared for the unexpected. Donlin isn't. They are only
 2 prepared for what is expected. The environment is
 3 changing so fast, can we allow this development on a
 4 maybe?
 5 The water is already low on our river. We depend on
 6 rainfall to get that water level up so that people all the
 7 way up to McGrath can get what they need by March. Can we
 8 risk a fuel barge spill, a 1.29 million gallons in one
 9 shot because a barge got stuck.
 10 So it looks like my time is up. I'd like to thank
 11 you, everyone, and I sure welcome this opportunity to
 12 speak against the mine.
 13 I saw Elko. I don't want to see it in Alaska.
 14 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thanks very
 15 much.
 16 **MR. EDWARD WASSILIE:** Good evening. My
 17 name is Edward Wassilie, and I am currently a student over
 18 at UAF KUC. How are you planning to prevent any future
 19 spills on the Kuskokwim River where the majority of the
 20 people depend on it for food?
 21 Just this past year we heard of a spill on the Animas
 22 River where the water is contaminated and it cannot be
 23 used. They said it would be safe, and you are telling us
 24 the same. Can you please tell us your plans to prevent
 25 such a spill on this wonderful land of the Kuskokwim area?

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1 That's my question. Thanks.
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Folks, as I mentioned,
 3 we have about a three-minute time limit for everyone.
 4 Mr. Fairbanks, who is No. 7, had approached us earlier.
 5 Mr. Fairbanks, how many folks gave their time to you?
 6 **MR. GRANT FAIRBANKS:** I've got 7, 8, 9,
 7 10, and 21 and 26.
 8 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:** And I'll
 9 give you two minutes. I'll just take a minute.
 10 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. So that, I
 11 believe, exceeds the amount of time you said you needed.
 12 But for the rest of you, I mentioned that if we are
 13 exceeding the time limit specifically, I would mention it.
 14 Mr. Fairbanks is the one who thus far has requested to
 15 exceed it, so please go ahead.
 16 **MR. GRANT FAIRBANKS:** I'm Grant Fairbanks,
 17 and I live part time in Bethel and part time in my
 18 homestead on the Holitna River. Our Holitna home is 54
 19 miles southeast of the proposed Donlin mine. I set up all
 20 the Donlin EIS booklets, 13 of them. In the last two
 21 months, I have been able to go through four of them. I
 22 probably have read this more than anybody in Southwestern
 23 Alaska. And I haven't even scratched the surface.
 24 My first and main concern is that there is not ample
 25 time for this public review. I request that the timeline

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1 be pushed out an additional six months and that there be
 2 another Bethel meeting in April. This is too rushed for
 3 such a large amount of material to be read and studied and
 4 for citizens to contact outside experts to review and then
 5 disseminate to us.
 6 Since 1974 I have been involved in many land, water,
 7 moose, salmon issues concerning the Kuskokwim watershed.
 8 I have attended many meetings concerning the Red Devil
 9 mercury mine Superfund site.
 10 I first heard of the Donlin Creek prospect in the
 11 1980s, and I have been closely studying it ever since. I
 12 myself have elevated mercury levels in my body, and I
 13 attribute this to eating lots of pike during our years
 14 living a subsistence lifestyle on the Holitna.
 15 Members of my family have been involved in the placer
 16 mining industry, and it's from this that I've learned the
 17 big difference between placer and lode mining. Placer
 18 mining has had a great positive influence here in the
 19 Kuskokwim area. Many mom and pop placer mines have helped
 20 the local economy. This new lode gold mining industry
 21 will have a new impact in this area. Using acids and
 22 large equipment to open up ground in the Kuskokwim mercury
 23 belt has me very concerned. It's not going to be small
 24 family mines washing the rocks near streams, but a large
 25 multinational mining company from Canada and beyond

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1 extracting massive amounts of mercury and arsenic-laced
 2 rock.
 3 This new type of mining promises jobs and economic
 4 and windfalls for our region, but with the caveat of
 5 possible pollution to our wind, earth and watersheds,
 6 including changes to our local culture and its associated
 7 subsistence lifestyle.
 8 This type of mining doesn't produce minerals to make
 9 cars and hospital beds, but to produce gold for the
 10 world's market. 80 percent of all the lode gold mine is
 11 ultimately shipped to China and India and used to make
 12 jewelry and bling.
 13 In 2010 I read in a technical paper submitted to the
 14 EPA, and a very important sentence caught my eye. "While
 15 it is likely beyond the scope of the current proposed rule
 16 making, the eight-year review should consider regulations
 17 that disallow mine permits on grounds of mercury release.
 18 That is, given that gold prospects exist both within the
 19 high mercury areas, consideration should be given to
 20 denying permits or limiting the number of mines in high
 21 mercury areas in order to achieve an overall national goal
 22 of reducing mercury emissions."
 23 This paper also states that if Donlin were permitted
 24 it would be allowed under current EPA regulations to emit
 25 as much or more mercury than the State of Alaska's total

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1 release from all sources. This doesn't take into
 2 consideration all the mercury coming from China into our
 3 state from the airstream. Donlin itself has the
 4 possibility of doubling the state's mercury release into
 5 the atmosphere.
 6 One item that continues to hit me over the head is
 7 the idea that it's not always about proper science or
 8 biology, but sometimes about politics. Countless issues
 9 have been studied by professionals and their honest
 10 science, only to be waylaid by some unforeseen political
 11 force urged on by some unseen power. I have been a
 12 witness to this many times on issues dear to my heart, and
 13 it happens all too often.
 14 A case in point, Holitna Energy and the Department of
 15 Natural Resources versus the Village of Sleetmute, a case
 16 of shallow bed methane proposed for early power to this
 17 Donlin project, is a case to study. Holitna Energy was
 18 owned by a geologist who was involved with the early
 19 Donlin prospect. He started a company and applied to DNR
 20 for a shallow bed methane permit in the lower Holitna
 21 River.
 22 After many years of meetings and hearings, the permit
 23 was changed to a natural gas permit due to unfavorable
 24 public review. The State DNR did not allow public review
 25 of this new changed permit, and the Village of Sleetmute

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1 had to hire a lawyer to stop the illegal action by DNR.
 2 It's cases like this that concern me.
 3 I asked for my very own copy of the Donlin EIS in
 4 late November paper form and received it just before
 5 Christmas. I picked up a 50-pound box at the post office
 6 and wondered what the hell my wife had bought that was so
 7 damn heavy. To my surprise, it was over 7,000 pages of an
 8 EIS. There is not enough time for me to read this, much
 9 less figure out what it means before today.
 10 I prefer to orally address my concerns so that others
 11 can hear some of what I've discovered. This region has
 12 become very apathetic when it comes to meetings, hearings
 13 and such. The people of this region generally don't have
 14 a sphere of reference when it comes to industrial
 15 pollution, smoke stacks and just general mining problems.
 16 I was born in an industrial zone, and I do have direct
 17 knowledge of impacts from these types of projects.
 18 I had hoped that the Corps of Engineers and Donlin
 19 would have provided the public with a third-party reviewer
 20 group to study the preliminary EIS and break it down into
 21 language we could understand and then allow public
 22 discussion on these alternatives. This EIS is too
 23 technical for the majority of the people in the region in
 24 the time allowed.
 25 I ask by a show of hands who here in this room has

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1 had a chance to look at this EIS.
 2 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:** In its
 3 entirety, read every -- 5,000 pages?
 4 **MR. GRANT FAIRBANKS:** Look at it -- I ask
 5 who here would like enough time to discuss this among
 6 ourselves, this enormous technical work. One of the
 7 largest mining companies on this planet, Barrick, owns
 8 half the project. And I have studied their mines
 9 extensively and they have a questionable track record in
 10 terms of being a good steward of the planet. I know this
 11 doesn't have anything to do with this EIS, but maybe it
 12 does. Past practices don't make for trusting neighbors.
 13 I know we have federal and State agencies as our
 14 watchmen and all of their acts and policies to protect us,
 15 but shoot happens, and it happens every day.
 16 We read stories of very recent mining dam failures,
 17 and one of what about those hundreds of Alaska mining
 18 water quality guidelines that have been exceeded and the
 19 mines just keep on operating.
 20 I would like to see language in this EIS stating that
 21 whenever a permit or standard is not followed or exceeded,
 22 then the permitter shuts the mine down, a cease and desist
 23 order is issued and until it's corrected instead of
 24 letting them pay the fines. We are told that safeguards
 25 are in place, but shoot happens. State governments and

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1 physical government budgets are cut every day and those
2 smaller budgets still have to monitor the permits and
3 regulations.
4 I worry that 92 years from now the possibility of
5 harming our fish and watersheds could happen because a
6 subcontractor for a large-scale mine with lots of toxic
7 water contained in the pit lake failed to have the right
8 tools to prevent an event or they didn't have the budget.
9 With perpetual projects such as this, as time goes on, the
10 possibility of failures increase.
11 The following are my preliminary statements and
12 observations as to specific alternatives.
13 Alternative 1, no action. This alternative is my
14 choice as opposed to Alternative 2, Donlin's proposed
15 action, for the following reasons. I support no action,
16 meaning no permits being issued for this mine for the
17 following reasons: Economic uncertainties with the price
18 of gold and Donlin's recent restating of a break-even
19 point. Years ago Donlin stated that \$540 an ounce was
20 their break-even point, but recently in one of the owners'
21 quarterly reports, the price of break-even is now 900. At
22 today's current gold price of \$1,100 an ounce, the margin
23 of profit is shrinking, and if the price continues to
24 drop, this mine might not be able to operate at a profit.
25 Both partners of Donlin mine do not have the money

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1 that it takes to build this mine, looking at the current
2 stated balance sheets. This has been illustrated by
3 Barrick's statement that they are at a wait-and-see stage
4 as to whether to move this mine to the development stage.
5 They only have indicated to their partner the plan to just
6 get through permitting.
7 NOVAGOLD's recent balance sheet shows that their
8 available cash to go to build for this project and their
9 50 percent pay in is very lacking to the tune of 90
10 percent.
11 Granted, both of these companies might find
12 financing, but since they do not have -- since they have
13 not illustrated these capabilities, then I feel that they
14 are not able or ready to commence this project, and we are
15 just turning our wheels here.
16 Some of Barrick's mines that have a break-even point
17 of around 1,000 an ounce have been recently suspended from
18 operation. NOVAGOLD has never built a mine and, as such,
19 their ability to operate a mine is in question, in my
20 book.
21 Due to falling gold prices, I worry what would happen
22 to all the safeguards if the proposed mine were built and
23 the price of gold went below the break-even point. Under
24 the financial assurances concerning bonding, Donlin
25 proposes to have a yearly pay in to their bonding

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1 indebtedness, but what would happen if the mine were built
2 and the pit lake was used; and let's say that at year
3 three the economic break-even point were such that the
4 partners suspended mining? There would not be enough
5 funds available to correct a major environmental problem
6 such as a dam breach, and toxic water and tailings were to
7 flow down Crooked Creek.
8 On page 1-27, it states that the State of Alaska has
9 not developed regulations or guidance on how to implement
10 the trust fund statutory language. In fact, if the Corps
11 finds that the State of Alaska isn't ready or capable to
12 develop, implement or monitor their duties, it would be
13 prudent to issue a no action.
14 Having briefly studied the State's responsibilities
15 to this proposed mine, I feel at this time they are not
16 ready. This is also important considering the State's
17 financial problem and the governor's budget reduction. On
18 page 1-27, it states that the State of Alaska is not
19 required to offer a public comment period on reclamation
20 and closure plan and dam certificates and associated
21 financial assurances. I would hope the federal government
22 and its agencies would not go forward with this EIS until
23 the State of Alaska was committed to a full transparency
24 and public scrutiny.
25 The Corp of Engineers has had many meetings and

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1 reviews of their permitting process, but the State of
2 Alaska might not allow the citizens to review some of
3 their actions concerning this mine. I feel that the
4 financial assurances needed for this mine should be in
5 place and reviewed before any permitting be allowed. I
6 see quite a few mitigating measures spelled out that would
7 be dealt with once the construction were started, but what
8 hope does a Corps have after permits are issued that would
9 assure these items were dealt with.
10 It seems as to me that because certain items are not
11 detailed out well enough and that these items will be
12 decided on at a later date, but I don't see the framework
13 spelled out. For example, barging and erosion. I have
14 read the science and the modeling for tug prop wash and
15 bank erosion, but there is not details for actual barge
16 configuration and observations of the actual boats used
17 and erosion observations. It's stated that mitigating
18 measures will be addressed when the actual barge traffic
19 commences.
20 I can tell you that after traveling on this river for
21 over 10,000 miles and passing quite a few barges, that the
22 formulas used in this EIS don't touch the problem. Our
23 small river barges and tugs now used cause a very big
24 wake, and you can observe this for well over a mile and a
25 half away. My observations of wave heights are higher

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1 than those stated in this paper. Donlin should have used
2 real barges and in configurations stated, and with both
3 shore observations being done for the whole length of
4 their proposed operation. Mitigating these after
5 permitting doesn't seem right. In all the meetings I've
6 attended time after time, this barge and erosion issue was
7 brought up lots. On page 3.5-103 it is stated that
8 increased barge traffic would not majorly impact bank
9 erosion. I greatly question this.

10 I would like to see mercury deposition modeling at
11 least reviewed by third parties before this goes to
12 permitting, and we have the public need to have time to
13 review this information. This is very important.

14 The State of Alaska hasn't released its health impact
15 statement for this mine, and that should have been
16 included in this EIS before permitting is done.

17 I have many more reasons that I have to support
18 Alternative 1, but these will be stated later.

19 Alternative 2, Donlin's plan, I'll list my concerns
20 that were not detailed out where I could see them or items
21 that need more work. Due to limited time to review, these
22 concerns might have been addressed. I didn't see fugitive
23 gas and dust monitoring detailed out. I would assume that
24 monitoring would be throughout the plant and the work
25 site.

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1 The prevailing winds for a portion of the year will
2 be in the ETA and the Crooked Creek area. I would assume
3 that downwind residents should have a baseline reading of
4 mercury and/or other problem materials possibly released
5 from the proposed mine.

6 The second largest source of fugitive mercury would
7 be from volatilization off the tailings pond. Having
8 looked at the dust modeling for the mine, I would assume
9 that this dust would reach Crooked Creek residents, and
10 they need to be aware and tested yearly, as I have stated,
11 and have a baseline on file with the proper agency.

12 Stream flow. Have the residents been fully aware of
13 the informative and direct method as to possible stream
14 flow and/or stream flow reductions? If I read the
15 predictive modeling correctly, there could be stream flow
16 reductions of 18 to 100 percent of Crooked Creek waters at
17 some times. Granted, these modelings were written by
18 scientists and I, a boiler guy, might not understand them
19 fully. This is another reason why a third party needs to
20 look at these studies and refine them down to information
21 we can understand, and this information needs to be
22 presented to each village that might possibly be impacted.

23 In the ecological risk assessment for the pit lake,
24 3.12.2.11 only four birds were identified as receptors and
25 as residents of the immediate area. I find that there is

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1 a model lacking. Waterfowl observations were noted on the
2 area's small streams, but there was little modeling
3 concerning having a very large pit lake, now called Lake
4 Calista, that would be possibly unfrozen in the spring and
5 fall during migratory waterfowl season. It was stated
6 that there might be a potential for perceived impact.

7 There should have been references as to a Nevada mine
8 problem where white fronted geese landed on a mine pit
9 lake, and the outcome wasn't good due to the chemicals and
10 pH levels. I know for a fact that these birds will land
11 anywhere. This pit lake will be the biggest lake in the
12 immediate area and not frozen and with a possible pH to do
13 damage to these ducks and geese. This needs more research
14 and correlation to other mines that have had this problem.

15 I didn't see any details for deterrents to the
16 waterfowl from landing, and if this is a perpetual lake,
17 then this needs to be reflected in the budget.

18 In one place it was stated that the TSF -- that's the
19 tailings storage facility -- would not be an attractant or
20 exclusive source of water for birds. Apparently whoever
21 wrote this didn't know mallards like I do.

22 In the waste rock facility, there was mention of
23 possible soil instability deeper than core drilling went,
24 and I would like to know how this will be addressed.

25 There were assumptions about the bedrock that might change

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1 the design.

2 Earthquakes. Earthquakes. Alaska is the most
3 seismically active place in the world. And looking at
4 Chapter 3, environmental analysis section 3.3 concerning
5 geohazards and seismic conditions, figure 3.3.1, regional
6 earthquakes and active faults, I noticed a splay fault
7 trending south of the Iditarod-Nixon fault in the
8 direction of the proposed mine. It's noted as black or
9 questionable, a class B fault. This should be looked at
10 and addressed in the hazards assessment.

11 There is a new data set that President Obama
12 announced recently while in Alaska, and this should be
13 studied in terms of access tilting. There is a lack of
14 information concerning blind earthquakes in this area.
15 The recent earthquake in Haiti shows this in that there
16 was no surface event, as this was a blind rupture.

17 An example of splay fault recently here in Alaska
18 that was never mapped was the Susitna Glacier fault that
19 preceded the Denali fault quake of 7.9. The unknown
20 Susitna Glacier fault preceded the 2002 Denali fault by
21 7.2 seconds and was at a magnitude of 7.2. This
22 Iditarod-Nixon fault splay needs more study and addressed
23 by Donlin.

24 I must compliment the work by the Corps and Donlin as
25 being a multitude times better than the Pebble Mine fault

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1 work. They completely missed the boat there.
 2 Having this proposed mine with perpetual water
 3 treatment needs the highest safety factor available. The
 4 dry stacking alternative will help this perceived risk.
 5 I have many more reasons for not supporting Donlin's
 6 Alternative 2, such as pit lake water quality and their
 7 perpetual water treatment. No one that I've talked to can
 8 support this idea, and all the experts I have talked to
 9 say it just won't work. I don't trust the State's bonding
 10 and financial assurances that should protect this area. I
 11 wonder if the Calista Corporation and The Kuskokwim
 12 Corporation understand that if Donlin can't meet their
 13 responsibilities of reclamation or possible cleanup, then
 14 the landowners under State law will be responsible.
 15 I've consulted two Alaska lawyers concerning this
 16 issue. One stated that the possibility of these mining
 17 companies being solvent in 70 years was laughable and
 18 mining letters of credit used by government agencies for
 19 reclamation are only good if these companies are still in
 20 business. A recent operating gold mine that closed
 21 upriver of Donlin has a toxic pit lake ready to overflow
 22 its banks, and only had a \$6,000,000 bond. I'm sure they
 23 went through an EIS, and now possibly the taxpayers will
 24 foot the bill for the cleanup and the remediation.
 25 Under employment, in the economic section, they talk

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1 about inflow and outflow of employees. Donlin has promised
 2 jobs and other positive benefits. I believe that we will
 3 see an outflow of our best, our brightest and many future
 4 leaders that receive jobs at Donlin. I didn't see any
 5 tables or statistics concerning this issue. I know in
 6 Sleetmute that almost 80 percent of the Donlin workers
 7 have moved to Anchorage. There is talk from the Kotzebue
 8 area concerning the Red Dog Mine, and this is this very
 9 occurrence.
 10 Alternative 3, LNG haul trucks. This will have a
 11 possible 32 percent reduction in diesel fuel barging.
 12 This will lessen subsistence fishing impacts due to barge
 13 traffic. Shore erosion will be less, and possible barge
 14 fuel spills will be less. I'd like to see the addition of
 15 an alternative where there is a LNG pipeline alongside a
 16 diesel pipeline, thus reducing barge traffic
 17 significantly. This diesel pipeline could have a tank
 18 farm at the Kuskokwim crossing below Devil's Elbow, and a
 19 third party could supply heating and diesel fuel to the
 20 whole Kuskokwim River at a very reduced rate from what we
 21 are doing now.
 22 Alternative 4, Birch Tree Crossing port. I support
 23 this alternative. I would support this alternative due to
 24 the 39 percent reduction in distance. There would be a
 25 reduction to barge-caused salmon impacts, barge erosion to

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1 riverbanks, less air pollution from tug engine emissions
 2 and potential fuel spills. Since the river is shallow
 3 above this point, the possible need for river dredging
 4 will be less.
 5 Alternative 5, this is the most important in my book.
 6 Alternative 5A, dry stacking of tailings. This is
 7 possibly the most important alternative in this EIS, and
 8 this should be addressed by outside experts available to
 9 the Corps. This will lessen the risk of dam failure and
 10 the potential release of toxic slurry into Crooked Creek.
 11 I really like the verbiage of the second line in the
 12 introduction where it states, "This was developed to avoid
 13 the perceived risk of accidental release from tailings
 14 dams."
 15 Under this alternative, there are two options. A
 16 lined option and an unlined option. I favor the lined
 17 option. Alternative 5 would have an SRS, or seepage
 18 recovery system, decommissioned in post closure. Option
 19 one would be after 200 years. Option two would be after
 20 10 to 50 years. This would provide the additional
 21 advantage of lowering groundwater impacts.
 22 Areas that were not addressed or that I could not
 23 find in the time allotted: During construction of the
 24 pipeline, barge traffic below Devil's Elbow could cause
 25 salmon habitat and salmon passage restrictions due to

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1 traffic and shallow waters. This should have been studied
 2 and mitigated.
 3 My last area of concern is the State's role in this
 4 project. This EIS doesn't cover their permitting and
 5 bonding if the federal government knew bonding. But if
 6 the federal government knew that the State might not be
 7 able to carry out their part of this mine in a proper way,
 8 then it's up to the Corps to detail this out. The EPA has
 9 deferred to the State DEC and DNR to permit many federal
 10 water and air regulations. Under reduced state budgets,
 11 this must be talked about and taken into consideration.
 12 My biggest worry is the bonding and post closure financial
 13 assurances that the State of Alaska and DNR are tasked
 14 with.
 15 Donlin has submitted their proposed amounts and with
 16 a mine that could potentially have a 27-year profit of 1.5
 17 trillion dollars, it seems to me that the Donlin plan only
 18 proposes 300,000,000. We are talking perpetual water
 19 treatment and monitoring for the next hundreds of years.
 20 The Corps of Engineers and the cooperating agencies need
 21 to take this into consideration before any alternatives
 22 are selected and before permitting. Thank you.
 23 **MR. TERRENCE HAAS:** I'm afraid I don't
 24 have Grant's laudable in-depth knowledge of the
 25 Environmental Impact Statement here. Terrence Haas, local

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1 citizen.
 2 I rise to make a pretty simple point, and to do that
 3 I would direct everyone present to the year 1923. And if
 4 you were alive, go ahead and raise your hands. I'd be
 5 curious if there was anybody around.
 6 It was an auspicious year for Alaska. Warren Harding
 7 was the first president to visit. It's the first year
 8 that we collected weather data in Bethel. Just a year
 9 later the Congress gave Native Alaskans the right to vote.
 10 1923 was the last year that the Gold King Mine in Colorado
 11 was operating. So it's not surprising nobody was around.
 12 That's 92 years ago.
 13 And in 2015 the Environmental Protection Agency
 14 working on the tailings dam for that mine breached it and
 15 let millions of gallons of contaminated water into the
 16 Animas River and ultimately onto the Navajo Reservation
 17 and impacted the grandchildren, the great grandchildren,
 18 indeed the great, great grandchildren of the last people
 19 to work at that mine long after the investors were dead
 20 that originally participated, long after the profits were
 21 long gone.
 22 \$150,000,000 was how much money that mine made. None
 23 of it cleaned up the Animas River or will clean it up.
 24 It's all gone.
 25 I would like to see an Environmental Impact Statement

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1 that speaks not to me, but to my great grandchildren.
 2 Thank you.
 3 **MR. JOHN WALLACE:** My name is John
 4 Wallace. I'm rising in support to the mine. I know it's
 5 probably -- this is a tough crowd, but -- in any case.
 6 But I would like to kind of echo some of the things that
 7 Grant talked about.
 8 I just looked at the Executive Summary, and I took
 9 the time to do it. And it -- and I guess I think that
 10 what he was talking about as having some more time to
 11 digest is -- that that point is very valid.
 12 But I also think that until tonight when I saw the
 13 slide show, I didn't think that -- I mean, the Executive
 14 Summary is a distillation of 5,500 pages. I think that it
 15 really needs to be distilled down to the level of the
 16 folks that will be impacted. And so -- you know, there is
 17 a lot of language in there that I had to look up and
 18 Google and all those kind of things. And I really -- I
 19 think -- I'm not -- I think overall it's a very
 20 well-prepared EIS -- not that I've seen one before. But
 21 the majority of folks that are in my conversational group,
 22 number one, wouldn't take the time and, number two, would
 23 be very confused.
 24 I was very confused with the Executive Summary with
 25 the alternatives and I didn't quite understand how they

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1 all worked, and I still am kind of confused about that.
 2 So I just wanted to preface that by saying I think that it
 3 needs less engineer speak and more people speak so that we
 4 can understand it. And then I think that people can make
 5 their value judgment, whether it's for or against, based
 6 on something we can read. And you know, there is a lot of
 7 folks that won't be able to go through the posters and
 8 stuff like that.
 9 As one of the things that I -- when you do an
 10 Environmental Impact Statement, you would think it's some
 11 sort of a cost/benefit analysis. And also echoing what
 12 Grant was talking about, we are talking about a 14-inch
 13 line and fiber optics and some of these things. If we are
 14 going to go to the extent of making that impact, it would
 15 seem that we would upscale that to provide derivative
 16 impacts to those villages and organizations and such that
 17 are very energy dependent and really struggle with costs.
 18 So that would be something that we would get out of it if
 19 you upscaled it.
 20 If you were already going to make that route through
 21 whichever route you take from Cook Inlet to here, you
 22 would seem to think we would get an impact from that.
 23 One of the things that I did not like that I -- I
 24 know you are going comment, whatever, I didn't like the
 25 idea of burying vehicles and that kind of thing. I think

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1 if you bring it in, it should go out if it's at all
 2 possible. I didn't like that at all.
 3 The other thing that I was talking to one of the
 4 engineers that I think should be on there is comparatives.
 5 I didn't see comparatives between other Arctic mines that
 6 would make sense to me: Red Dog and others. I spoke to
 7 the engineer and, of course, there are comparatives, but I
 8 didn't see them. That would make my judgment a lot easier
 9 if I was able to look at Red Dog or look at the one up
 10 in -- Fort Knox and say, okay, you are already in the
 11 Arctic. You can prove that you can do this.
 12 And then lastly, I am for this because of the
 13 economic impact. We don't have an economy. I want to see
 14 a culture where work is the culture. And I really want to
 15 see a culture where everybody is going to work and
 16 everybody is making their own way and they are off the
 17 dole. So that's why I'm supporting it.
 18 Thanks.
 19 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. I mentioned
 20 earlier that we were going to need to take a break to do
 21 the hearing. After comment on No. 13, what we are going
 22 to need to do is break until 9:00 or 9:05 and do the
 23 public hearing. And then we will run -- I'm told we only
 24 have the facility until 9:30 at the latest. So after we
 25 do the hearing, we will return to taking comments.

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1 And please note that if you have a subsistence
 2 comment that is made in the 810 hearing, we are also
 3 considering that when we review the DEIS. So we will take
 4 commenter No. 13 if you are still out there. Okay. And
 5 after this gentleman is done commenting, Alan will
 6 initiate the hearing. The hearing will go until 9:00 or
 7 9:05. Then we will resume taking DEIS comments.
 8 But please note that somewhere between 9:10 and 9:15
 9 we are going to have to start pulling down the posters and
 10 everything else so we can give the facility back at 9:30.
 11 That won't affect this room, but it will affect the room
 12 next to us. Go ahead, sir.
 13 **MR. ERIC WHITNEY:** My name is Eric
 14 Whitney, resident of Bethel. I'm going to have pretty
 15 general comments of the -- I was happy to see the
 16 alternatives, such as the Birch Tree Crossing, reducing
 17 the amount of river travel that's required and potential
 18 impacts to the river itself.
 19 Also, after I hear the alternative for LNG and with
 20 the thought that hopefully you could then maybe transport
 21 liquefied natural gas down to other villages and
 22 communities, it would prove to be an economic alternative
 23 to the fuel oil people are using now.
 24 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:** We can't
 25 hear you back here.

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1 **MR. ERIC WHITNEY:** I was just saying I was
 2 happy to see Birch Tree Crossing option and then the
 3 liquefied natural gas option to be considered.
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
 5 very much. Alan.
 6 (Off the record.)
 7 **MS. SUSAN TAYLOR:** I'm No. 15. Susan
 8 Taylor. One thing that wasn't mentioned here, but it's
 9 been mentioned before, and Pat Samson mentioned it. The
 10 ballast water that's bringing invasive plants into other
 11 areas, and these are plants that are foreign. They mess
 12 up the food chain. They mess up the -- choke up a stream.
 13 There has been studies about what foreign plants do when
 14 they are brought into another environment. So I wanted to
 15 mention that again. And he has studies about what that's
 16 done in other parts of the world and the state.
 17 So you are dealing with unloading and loading up
 18 water when you are raising and lowering these barges to
 19 the different depths of the river. So ballast water
 20 bringing in foreign plants is another concern I wanted to
 21 put out there.
 22 Thank you.
 23 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
 24 Before we go on to No. 16, Ms. Hoffman, you had a couple
 25 of questions. Executive Summary page ES-15 talks about

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1 proposed barging on the Kuskokwim River, and you are
 2 correct that during operations there is expected to be
 3 about 58 barge tows per year. So a tug pushing four
 4 barges up the river 58 times, and that's 58 round trips.
 5 There would be a Coast Guard navigation study required for
 6 the Bethel yard dock facility if it's done to look at
 7 navigation. It's up to the Coast Guard to define that
 8 study and conduct it.
 9 When we look back at the document, we see that the
 10 proposed sheet pile structure for expansion of the Bethel
 11 yard dock facility would extend 150 feet out into the
 12 river and be 1,000 feet long. And to my knowledge, I have
 13 not heard a final conclusion or proposal as to which tank
 14 farm in Bethel might be expanded to deal with some of the
 15 fuel that would temporarily be stored. In some cases,
 16 before being barged upriver it would be transferred in
 17 some cases from marine to riverine, in some cases from
 18 marine barges to an onshore facility then to riverine
 19 barges. And that's based on current information versus
 20 what may be proposed at some point in the future.
 21 **MS. ANA HOFFMAN:** Thank you for the
 22 information. So that would be 150 feet from the existing
 23 shoreline jutting out into the Kuskokwim River, and when a
 24 barge is docked there, that could be another 100 to 200
 25 feet beyond that point. So it would be important to

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1 understand the impact that that would have on other river
 2 travel. Thank you. And also to get the word out to the
 3 public about the potential impact there.
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you. And
 5 I would have to look back at what they proposed regarding
 6 the actual widths of marine versus riverine barges and how
 7 far they might extend out into the river.
 8 **MS. JUNE MCATEE:** Good evening. My name
 9 is June McAtee. I'm Vice President of Land and
 10 Shareholder Services of Calista Corporation. Calista is
 11 the regional Native corporation organized under the Alaska
 12 Native Claims Settlement Act. Together with the Kuskokwim
 13 Corporation, Calista owns surface lands at Donlin Creek,
 14 and also Calista owns the mineral estate that's the focus
 15 of the Donlin Gold Project.
 16 Calista is mandated under ANCSA to manage its lands
 17 to provide maximum benefits for its shareholders. This
 18 was the underlying intent of the Act itself to provide
 19 land to carry out these sorts of purposes. The land at
 20 Donlin was selected in the 1970s for its mineral
 21 potential, which has always been seen as a resource that
 22 might provide economic benefits to the region as a whole.
 23 After years of its own exploration at Donlin Creek,
 24 Calista brought in an industry partner that has been
 25 thoughtful about development, mindful of the environment,

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1 and dedicated to training and hiring our shareholders from
 2 the very beginning of the project, which is now 20 years
 3 ago.
 4 Calista has two primary goals as an ANCSA
 5 corporation: To generate profits for the corporation and
 6 its shareholders, and to provide economic benefits and
 7 opportunities for its shareholders and their descendents.
 8 Now the Donlin Gold Project, after many years of
 9 study and development, and in partnership with Calista and
 10 The Kuskokwim Corporation, has sought permits to build a
 11 mine.
 12 During exploration and development, the project
 13 provided vocational training and employment to Calista
 14 shareholders and their descendents who comprised up to 90
 15 percent of the workforce at Donlin. In the future, the
 16 project will provide these benefits on a greatly expanded
 17 scale. An estimated 16- to 1,900 workers will be employed
 18 during construction and up to 500 to 600 during operations
 19 of the mine.
 20 During operation, 650 jobs and 40 million in annual
 21 wages would be generated across the state. Sales of goods
 22 and services would increase by 150 million a year. The
 23 landowners will receive royalty payments, and Calista will
 24 share its resource revenue with other regional and village
 25 corporations in the state through 7(i) and 7(j) resource

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1 revenue sharing. State and local governments will receive
 2 tax revenues from the project. The project's port and
 3 pipeline facilities have the potential to provide better
 4 services and lower the cost of some goods locally. Excess
 5 capacity in the natural gas pipeline could lessen the
 6 region's dependence on diesel fuel.
 7 The economic benefits from such a large project can
 8 do a lot to help the region achieve self-sufficiency and
 9 fulfill the much broader goal of self-determination. With
 10 declining oil production in a struggling state economy, a
 11 large resource project in rural Alaska can help offset
 12 reductions in government funding and services.
 13 We see this project as an integral part of
 14 self-determination as a rural people. We intend to be
 15 active and involved participants in the development of our
 16 own land and the resources at Donlin Creek.
 17 For these reasons, Calista supports Alternative No.
 18 2, which is the proposed action to build the mine, which
 19 has benefited from years of research and input from local
 20 residents and has been carefully designed to minimize
 21 environmental impacts and negative social impacts.
 22 We encourage the Army Corps of Engineers to permit
 23 this alternative.
 24 **MR. CHUCK ASAYUK HERMAN:** Hello, everyone.
 25 My name is Chuck Asayuk Herman. I've lived in Bethel

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1 since I was one. I grew up fishing on the river, still do
 2 it during the summer, and check a set net with Jody during
 3 the winter. Eaten a bunch of whitefish this year. It's
 4 been pretty good.
 5 I didn't step up during the hearing. It seemed like
 6 the answer was pretty clearly obviously it's going to
 7 affect subsistence in many, many ways. I didn't know
 8 exactly how to add to that in a way that would be helpful,
 9 but it seems pretty clear that this has a significant
 10 chance of affecting subsistence and subsistence lifestyles
 11 here.
 12 I think for most people, the river is why we are
 13 here. For Alaska Native people, the river was a source of
 14 life. For the rest of us, we're here for some reason or
 15 another related to that because we enjoy fishing or
 16 because we are offering services here. Essentially, the
 17 river is everything. And anything that has a potential to
 18 damage that I think needs to be handled very, very, very
 19 closely.
 20 I'm also a city council member here in Bethel. I'm
 21 not here speaking on behalf of the city council. I'm here
 22 on my own, but one kind of thing I'd like to note is -- it
 23 doesn't really have to do with the EIS. It has more to do
 24 with this hearing.
 25 It's been kind of awkwardly done with the random

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1 hearing in the middle of it that chopped it up. Asking
 2 Grant to step down when he had been told to talk more
 3 slowly seemed like a poor way to run a meeting. And I've
 4 sat through a lot of public hearings in this room. So I
 5 just wanted to notice that.
 6 Let's see. What else do I have on here? One thing
 7 that's really concerning me is the proposed way we are
 8 going to deal with a disaster or something that happens.
 9 We have gone through -- I would qualify them as major
 10 disasters. They probably qualify as minor disasters on
 11 the larger scale with schools burning down, other things
 12 here. We've run into issues of we are not the on the road
 13 system, so the plans that are used in many other places
 14 don't really work here because we can't get assistance
 15 from other agencies that can just drive on down the road
 16 and send people down the road to help us out.
 17 We have already seen State service being cut. DEC
 18 has cut their local office, and the city has started to
 19 have to take over some of those duties, even when we may
 20 or may not be assured that we wouldn't. So there is
 21 clearly going to be kind of this connection of lowering of
 22 State resources, State assistance with this great
 23 potential for damage and how we're going to mitigate that
 24 if it happens. And I'd like to see some very, very
 25 detailed plans of how to do that, where the coordination

1 is going to come from and just how that whole process is
2 going to look.
3 Switching -- my day job is I work with students at
4 the high school on college and career training, trying to
5 figure out what they want to do, where they want to go.
6 And looking around at the posters, I saw there was a
7 guaranteed number of jobs for residents in the
8 communities, Alaska Natives. I could not get a clear
9 answer on how many of those are going to be highly skilled
10 jobs for people in our region and how it's proposed that
11 people in our region are going to be trained for those.
12 Are there going to be scholarships available? What
13 exactly is the plan to make sure that people from this
14 community are going to be the ones filling the
15 high-powered jobs and leading this effort? Because I
16 think if it is going to happen, it needs to have pretty
17 significant power from the community and the power
18 structure of it.
19 And then I'm just going to finish by echoing what a
20 number of other people have said in asking for more time.
21 I think six months to review a document of this size is
22 not nearly enough, I think, six months to review something
23 that's going to affect this area for generations.
24 I'm probably one of the few people who was born right
25 before the mine was proposed. I'm 23 years old and intend

1 to be here until the mine could possibly be closing, so
2 I'm right in that area right there. And I think six
3 months of my life is not nearly enough time to look over
4 something that's going to be affecting me and everyone I
5 know and my children, which probably aren't going to be
6 for a while; but when that comes around, six months is not
7 nearly enough time. We need at least six more months to
8 do this.
9 Thank you.
10 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
11 The Corps of Engineers agrees that this meeting hearing
12 setup is problematic. The reason we are trying to go as
13 far through this public hearing as we can and then
14 incorporate a hearing, then go back to the meeting is
15 because we don't know how many people when we initiate
16 these processes are going to want to comment. And our
17 concern is that if we put the hearing off until the very
18 end, we may be shortcutting people's interest in providing
19 testimony in relation to subsistence.
20 So we are not doing it right. We are going to see
21 what we can do to fix it. So we appreciate your
22 indulgence with the process thus far.
23 **MR. KURT KUHNE:** Hello. My name is Kurt
24 Kuhne, K-U-H-N-E. I'm the executive director of Yuut
25 Elitnaurviat. We are a workforce development entity here

1 in Bethel. And I just want to speak to the economic
2 opportunities for the region. And also with -- I haven't
3 had an opportunity to read that document that Grant has
4 been working very hard to read. I did look at the
5 Executive Summary.
6 And just a comment towards the EIS. Hopefully those
7 socioeconomic concerns or issues or opportunities are
8 being incorporated. Additionally, I want people from this
9 region -- our mission at Yuut is to train local people for
10 high wage local jobs. So I want to make sure the people
11 of this region are the people that have those jobs if the
12 mine is permitted. And I don't know how that's
13 incorporated in the EIS, but I also want the people from
14 this region working there if it is permitted because what
15 better stewards of our land or the land of the people here
16 than the people from here.
17 Today the Commissioner of Labor for the State of
18 Alaska issued out a press release that said the number of
19 out-of-state employees coming in for jobs in Alaska has
20 gone up this last year. And the trend is for that to go
21 up, meaning less Alaskans are taking Alaskan jobs. I
22 would like to see that change. So if this mine is going
23 to go and be permitted, I think we have an obligation. We
24 have -- we really need to make sure the people of this
25 region are trained for those jobs.

1 **MR. ZACH FANSLER:** Good evening. My name
2 is Zach Fansler, F-A-N-S-L-E-R. First out, I guess I'd
3 like to do a shout-out to John Active for all his hard
4 work translating. He's been at it for three-plus hours,
5 and he's doing a super important jobs to make sure that
6 everybody can understand what's going on here.
7 I guess I had a couple of questions to lead off as
8 well with, and I was wondering -- and maybe they are more
9 for Grant -- as to how to find a hard copy of the EIS
10 report, if that's something you guys send out if a request
11 for -- if there is a way to get our hands on that and if
12 there is any more hard copies. I know now they have the
13 posters out and things like that. So collecting those
14 would be helpful, I think.
15 But the main reason that I wanted to speak is because
16 I would like to request at minimum an additional six
17 months of time for comment and questions, as well as
18 additional meetings or, even better, multiple meetings.
19 5,500-plus page reports takes an extremely long time to
20 get through, especially one as technical and detailed as
21 this one.
22 At the time we have had a mere two months to review
23 the report, and Aniak and Crooked Creek, two communities
24 what would be greatly affected by the possible mine, have
25 had even shorter time periods before their meetings were

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1 held. It is important that the communities have ample
 2 time to review and weigh the possible effects on
 3 subsistence activities, local waterways and local lands
 4 versus the possible economic advantages for their
 5 communities.
 6 To support this, I would like to echo other comments
 7 that we have heard before. Most of us have no baseline
 8 EIS for us to compare this report to. To get that it
 9 would require us to locate and read at least one more EIS
 10 report, therefore doubling our work. Most of us also lack
 11 the technical background to easily comprehend this report
 12 on our first read-through. To properly understand many of
 13 the technical parts, we need time to research terms,
 14 amounts, percentages and other unknowns on a computer or
 15 by old-fashioned research. Thus far in my reading of the
 16 EIS, I am left with numerous questions that will take me
 17 countless hours to find answers to or require countless
 18 hours from you guys, hopefully, to provide some answers
 19 for me to make it easier.
 20 I appreciate, for instance, the poster time that was
 21 given tonight, but I feel like it would have been much
 22 more beneficial if I was able to review the entire report
 23 as much as possible before going into those so then when I
 24 met with the individual standing at each poster, I could
 25 ask them my pointed questions regarding that poster. So

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1 it would be my goal that I'll be able to do that when we
 2 have another one of these meetings or meetings throughout
 3 the summer.
 4 I know that right now I'm not alone in my desire for
 5 an extension for this commenting period. I've heard
 6 multiple people speak to that. I'm a member of our city
 7 council, and I can tell you that we are currently working
 8 on a resolution to formerly request additional time for
 9 comments to this EIS with the hope of working together
 10 with our local governing bodies, tribal entities and
 11 others. And it sounds like we have support for that from
 12 some entities already. As a current member of the
 13 council, I am heavily in support of this resolution.
 14 To close, I think one of the things that I have been
 15 hearing over and over again is this word "perpetuity," and
 16 that really sticks out to me. I mean, unless I'm
 17 incorrect -- and I'm not always the greatest wordsmith --
 18 but perpetuity to me means an indefinite amount of time or
 19 forever. And it seems to me that granting us another six
 20 months of time to review this massive report seems pretty
 21 minuscule when compared with the idea of monitoring a
 22 tailings dam, treating water collected for the coming
 23 decades or centuries or millennia.
 24 I think Native culture has been here for thousands
 25 and thousands of years. It's imperative that we take the

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1 time to make sure that we make decisions that will allow
 2 Native culture to thrive for another thousand and thousand
 3 and thousand and thousands of years and beyond. In my
 4 mind, granting an extension would not only be beneficial
 5 to this process, but it is really the absolute least that
 6 you can do to honor our communities and culture.
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
 8 We do have copies of the DVD of the document available.
 9 If you would like a hard copy, we can talk about that.
 10 They are available, but because of the cost of producing
 11 them, shipping them, et cetera, we are asking people to
 12 use DVDs or the websites if they can. But I grew up when
 13 there weren't computers, so I have a hard copy on my desk.
 14 I carry chunks of it around to review. So if you are
 15 interested in one, let us know and we will see what we can
 16 do.
 17 **MS. SHARI NETH:** And given the great
 18 impact it appears that the current plan could have on our
 19 area, my question is: Why can't it just wait? Just wait
 20 until technology steps up to the plate and can look at
 21 this in an environmentally safe fashion. Why can't it
 22 just wait until there are other resources of energy rather
 23 than over 300 miles of pipeline? Maybe natural gas from
 24 the North Slope could be sent as electricity on lines
 25 going to it.

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1 So my question is: Why does it have to be now when
 2 the impacts seem so great? Why can't it just wait for
 3 technology to step up to the plate?
 4 **MR. JOHN OSCAR:** My name is John Oscar. I
 5 live here in Bethel, and I'm a former executive director
 6 for Kuskokwim River Watershed Council and also a former
 7 Cenaluilriit Coastal Management Program director.
 8 Naturally the water flows downriver. What steps do
 9 you propose to mitigate the possible introduction of
 10 invasive species by transport factors? When barges
 11 release their ballast water, other organisms, other
 12 nonnative species and water-bearing plants like elodia,
 13 rock snot, shellfish and such, I understand that there
 14 will be in-river barges that will transfer the equipment
 15 from Bethel to the barge landing upriver.
 16 While sea-bearing barges will make their stops in
 17 Bethel, will you have monitoring in place in Bethel?
 18 Two: Thousands of tons of construction equipment
 19 materials and supplies would be brought in by both land
 20 and air cargo on a yearly basis for decades. The current
 21 air cargo taking place at the site may already be bringing
 22 in invasive species. Is there monitoring in place for
 23 that.
 24 Three: The potential impacts to subsistence native
 25 resources and critical habitat areas important for Fish &

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1 Wildlife is a concern. What steps will there be in place
 2 to correct these invasive species once they have taken
 3 hold?
 4 And finally, not everyone will be hired by this
 5 project, but it's beneficial to those who are currently
 6 working. Once the project is complete, Alternative
 7 trained workers will be looking for work. People will
 8 soon be dependent on the healthy lifestyle they face now,
 9 and will be looking to supplement their food source off
 10 these resources, but maybe with a less of a resource if
 11 corrections are not in place today.
 12 And I also concur with those folks for greater
 13 outreach and time extension for this process. Thank you.
 14 **MR. MATT SCOTT:** Hi. My name is Matt
 15 Scott. This will be a pretty specific and pretty brief
 16 comment. I walked up to one of the posters and saw the
 17 cyanide tank and mercury tank issue. I heard that there
 18 was a depth crush test requested on the Army Corps of
 19 Engineers on those tanks, but there wasn't any kind of
 20 testing requested that would concern specific point crush
 21 like if it was in a river that then froze and could not be
 22 recovered until spring and the river breaks and point --
 23 you know, point pushes on specific parts of the canister.
 24 And that's pretty common in this region.
 25 So I would like to request that you do some more

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1 scientific testing on the -- whatever the specific
 2 standards of those tanks are in a more realistic fashion.
 3 There is no depth to this river at all, so that's not
 4 really a test that's going to make much of a difference,
 5 but the crush test certainly would.
 6 Thank you.
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you. The spill
 8 scenarios, the spill risks, et cetera, are things we are
 9 also interested in comments on. In relation to the crush
 10 depth of those containers, that referred to a loss in
 11 marine environment where it could go to hundreds of
 12 thousands of feet in depth.
 13 **MR. MATT SCOTT:** But you still need to
 14 consider the loss in this specific marine environment as
 15 well, correct?
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I agree. Both the
 17 riverine and marine environments, those scenarios need to
 18 be discussed and looked at. So if you have any comments
 19 on those, we are open to those comments, as well.
 20 At this time, we have gone through the numbers that I
 21 know that are out there. Is there anybody who doesn't
 22 have a number who would just like to make a comment?
 23 **MR. GREG ROCZICKA:** Actually, I don't have
 24 any prepared statement. I didn't even know what this
 25 little card was for. But I just want to add to -- Greg

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1 Roczicka. I spent a lot of years working with regulatory
 2 issues and recognize some of the faces around here from
 3 others.
 4 I would just take few moments. I'd like to
 5 congratulate BLM. And I think it's all said there on page
 6 14. The last sentence of their finding for Alternative 2
 7 would be exceptions that they would take that were made to
 8 will or shall. Referring to the BLM document and the fact
 9 that they are actually able now to take into consideration
 10 impacts to downriver or downstream effects.
 11 And the main reason I came up to speak was when
 12 Ms. Hoffman was talking about the potential expansion or a
 13 new port terminal coming in, and being as I worked with
 14 the tribal council at the time that -- when that proposal
 15 was put forward, we received a notice. And when I
 16 contacted the engineer in charge of reviewing that, he
 17 said, well, I do these all the time down in Southeast.
 18 It's a routine. It's a rubber stamp.
 19 And when we started questioning, it essentially
 20 stopped the process from a deadline that would have
 21 passed, and eventually that permit was held up.
 22 But one of the main issues with the extension and
 23 expansion of that dock the way they had it out is it has a
 24 very high possibility of deflecting the current. It is
 25 not just fish nets that are down there. There are fish

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1 camps.
 2 When the sea wall went up here back in the -- I guess
 3 it was in the '70s, what happened right downstream?
 4 Changed the channel. It starts to eat out down below.
 5 They extend the sea wall farther, it starts to eat out
 6 down there. They extended the sea wall farther down to
 7 protect the tank farms. And the current is now getting
 8 down below the Knik dock where that proposed expansion
 9 would be where there is no development and really no --
 10 there is one fish camp there, actually, that's active off
 11 and on over the years.
 12 But that dock goes out there and deflects the current
 13 along with the restricted channel that's been described to
 14 you. Where does the force of the current go? It goes
 15 down and hits Oscarville Slough. There are many fish
 16 camps down there. And if you look at the way the river
 17 changes over the years and the volume of water that moves
 18 through another area, you put the force of the current
 19 that's going by Bethel into Oscarville Slough, Oscarville
 20 Slough in five to ten years could very well become a main
 21 channel of the Kuskokwim. And you are taking out a whole
 22 dang village.
 23 So you guys think about that.
 24 I just wanted to add also my subscription to what
 25 everybody else has said here. I'm not familiar with the

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1 document. I haven't been able to give this one the
 2 attention it deserves, but you guys have had 36 months of
 3 a whole team of several different agencies and experts to
 4 put this together. The least you could do is give us
 5 another six months to give it our best shot for a good
 6 going over. Thank you.
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you very
 8 much. Is there anybody else who would like to comment?
 9 Okay. As I mentioned, the comment period on the Draft
 10 Environmental Impact Statement currently is open until
 11 April 30, 2016. We are hearing your request for
 12 additional time.
 13 **MR. DAVE CANNON:** Can people on the line
 14 make a comment?
 15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes, sir. Before I
 16 conclude, let's go to the folks on the line and let us
 17 know what you are thinking.
 18 **MR. DAVE CANNON:** My name is Dave Cannon,
 19 and I live in Aniak, and I'm representing myself. And I
 20 have a question and/or a comment, I guess. And it has to
 21 do with socioeconomic aspects.
 22 And I know that worst case scenarios I don't really
 23 think are considered in this assessment here, but I think
 24 one that really should be -- and I'm going to start out by
 25 saying, when you get on the website and look at, say,

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1 NOVAGOLD's website or Barrick's, they have statements that
 2 say this website contains forward-looking information or
 3 forward-looking statements. We get no assurance that
 4 forward-looking information will prove to be accurate.
 5 It's based on assumptions management believes to be
 6 reasonable, including but not limited to the continued
 7 operation of the company's mining operations, no material
 8 adverse change in the market price of commodities or
 9 exchange rates, that the mining operations will operate
 10 and the mining project will be completed in accordance
 11 with their estimates and achieved stated production
 12 outcomes, and on and on and on.
 13 So my question would be, if this mine were up and
 14 running for ten years, a borough was created and the price
 15 of gold tanked, what would be the impact to the people in
 16 the villages out here and has that been considered in this
 17 study so far?
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, Dave. Yes,
 19 there is some consideration in the document of what I
 20 think reasonably could be referred to as a boom/bust cycle
 21 that you are referring to, whether it's the project going
 22 through its full proposed life and then there not being
 23 something to replace it, or getting partially through its
 24 life. So yes, there is some information in the document.
 25 But what we would need to know is have we analyzed it to

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1 the degree it needs to be analyzed and have we analyzed it
 2 accurately.
 3 Is there anybody else on the phone that would like to
 4 comment?
 5 **MR. CARL WASSILIE:** Yeah. This is Carl
 6 Wassilie. I'll speak on behalf of myself, as well. Can
 7 you hear me?
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes. Go ahead.
 9 **MR. CARL WASSILIE:** Yeah, this is Carl
 10 Wassilie. As I mentioned in Anchorage, I have family and
 11 fish camps on the Kuskokwim River, as well. You know, I
 12 just wanted to, once again, reiterate the no action
 13 alternative, even though it's not on there. And then the
 14 second point I want to make is that the -- sorry. It's
 15 been a long evening, and I know everybody is trying to get
 16 home.
 17 The second point I want to make is that for those
 18 born after 1971, that the economic benefits of the
 19 minority -- of the majority of the population that's
 20 increasingly becoming "after born" has to be considered in
 21 the economic development as well with the shareholders.
 22 Currently Calista did not share with those born after
 23 1971, unless there is another message.
 24 But anyway, that's something that has to be put in
 25 place because there is not anybody that has spoken out on

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1 behalf of those born after 1971. And so the Alaska Native
 2 Claims Settlement Act, so that the -- and the regional
 3 corporations have excluded from going through that Act of
 4 Congress signed by Nixon.
 5 And the other thing is I wanted to thank the
 6 reviewers for looking at the marine environment because
 7 it's so critical and continue supporting looking at the
 8 ports, including out in the Bering Sea because of
 9 increased activity of barges carrying toxins as well as
 10 the fuel. The emergency response personnel of the State
 11 of Alaska are inadequate and there needs to be really a
 12 strong look at employing tribes and emergency response
 13 planning for this -- I haven't seen anything from the
 14 company or the State to address this issue of what assets
 15 would be compromised in the current plan in the Bering Sea
 16 with the increase in traffic due to melting sea ice.
 17 And you have increased barges going up in the Bering
 18 Sea just offshore from Kuskokwim Bay going up to -- as
 19 well as there is support developing in the Beaufort Sea on
 20 offshore islands for oil and gas. So there is going to be
 21 a massive increase in barge traffic, not just from Donlin.
 22 So the communities' impacts are extraordinary in the
 23 marine environment.
 24 So that's just something I wanted to continue to, you
 25 know, make sure that that is put into consideration is

1 that, you know, we saw Shell Oil playing around with the
2 assets in Alaska that didn't make sense as far as a major
3 catastrophe and ability to respond to a catastrophe. So
4 that says something just in the marine environment, but
5 also on the Kuskokwim.

6 The tribal emergency response is so much more
7 critical to the local areas compared to the State. The
8 State does have an important role as far as training and
9 whatnot, but the tribes can really -- if there is an
10 emergency response, people that live there, they are the
11 first responders. So that's something that needs to be
12 really strongly evaluated in this proposal in the EIS.

13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you very
14 much. Is there anybody else on the phone that would like
15 to make a comment? Is there anybody in the room? Okay.
16 As I mentioned, comment period at this time is open until
17 April 30, 2016. We are hearing your comments about
18 needing more time. We will have to consider that in
19 relation to the other comments we receive and see where we
20 go with that.

21 As I noted, you can comment at other meetings via
22 email, via fax, via the website at www.donlingoldeis.com
23 or contact myself or Ms. Amanda Andraschko, Alaska
24 District's tribal liaison.

25 I'd like to thank you all very much for your

1 participation. I would like to thank you all for the
2 facility. And we will be visiting a couple other
3 communities in the region the next couple of days. So if
4 you have something further, we may have time to talk while
5 we are in and out of town if flight arrangements allow.

6 **MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** Before you go,
7 there is a little bit of the food left with some Ziploc
8 bags, so if people would like to take something home for
9 their families, we would certainly appreciate you helping
10 us get through everything.

11 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** With that, we are going
12 to conclude this evening. Thank you very much.

13 (Proceedings adjourned at 9:52 p.m.)
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1 **REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE.**

2 I, MARY A. VAVRIK, RMR, Notary Public in and for
3 the State of Alaska do hereby certify:

4 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before
5 me at the time and place herein set forth; that the
6 proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later
7 transcribed under my direction by computer transcription;
8 that the foregoing is a true record of the proceedings
9 taken at that time; and that I am not a party to nor have
10 I any interest in the outcome of the action herein
11 contained.

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed
13 my hand and affixed my seal this ____ day of February
14 2016.
15

16 _____
17 MARY A. VAVRIK,
18 Registered Merit Reporter
19 Notary Public for Alaska

20 My Commission Expires: November 5, 2016
21
22
23
24
25

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