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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
810(a) PUBLIC HEARING

QUINHAGAK, ALASKA

Taken February 16, 2016
Commencing at 3:45 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 16, inclusive

Taken at
Quinhagak Community/Bingo Hall
Quinhagak, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S
 2 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
 3 Mark Spencer
 District Manager
 4 Bruce Seppi
 Wildlife Biologist
 5
 6 Taken by:
 7 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR
 8
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 10
 11
 12
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 14
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 16
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 18
 19 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
 20 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
 21 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
 22 Public within and for the State of Alaska.
 23
 24
 25

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1 Statement, please just take the mike. And if you could
 2 state and spell your name for the record and provide your
 3 testimony. Thank you.
 4 **MS. GRACE HILL:** Can you --
 5 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** If you would like to
 6 testify again, anything on -- go ahead.
 7 **MS. GRACE HILL:** What you just said, BLM,
 8 maybe they didn't understand what you were saying.
 9 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** Okay. If you have
 10 provided information, testimony during the Draft
 11 Environmental Impact Statement dealing with subsistence
 12 use -- which we heard quite a few comments -- the Bureau
 13 of Land Management will certainly evaluate all of those
 14 comments that were provided. This is another opportunity
 15 under ANILCA Section 810 if you would like to provide any
 16 more testimony specific to the project and subsistence
 17 use.
 18 So do we have anybody who would like to provide
 19 additional testimony on subsistence use?
 20 **MR. MATHEW FRIENDLY:** Will you have drafts
 21 available for when they are all complete so the residents
 22 can see that so we can know -- we would like to see some
 23 drafts, you know.
 24 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** All right. So the
 25 preliminary draft -- I may ask Keith just to help me out.

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** All rightie. We will
 3 go ahead and start. And just to mention it again, all of
 4 your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
 5 dealing with or regarding subsistence, the Bureau of Land
 6 Management will fully look at those comments, as well. So
 7 I just want to make that clear for everyone.
 8 And again, the Bureau of Land Management is doing an
 9 analysis specific on subsistence uses due to Section
 10 810(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation
 11 Act. And again, it requires us, the BLM, to do an
 12 evaluation of subsistence uses and needs to be completed
 13 for any federal determination to, again, withdraw,
 14 reserve, lease or otherwise permit the use, occupancy or
 15 disposition of public lands.
 16 And due to the proposed project affecting the
 17 BLM-managed land, we prepared that preliminary analysis,
 18 which concluded that the project may result in significant
 19 restrictions for certain subsistence uses in the
 20 communities.
 21 So at this time we are officially opening the Section
 22 810(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation
 23 Act hearing in the Quinhagak community related to the
 24 proposed Donlin Gold Mine. So when providing testimony,
 25 just like you did with the Draft Environmental Impact

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1 The draft, the preliminary analysis that we have been
 2 speaking about and when we talked about it earlier on the
 3 slides, is available in the Draft Environmental Impact
 4 Statement.
 5 **MR. MATHEW FRIENDLY:** At a later time.
 6 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** It's available now, and
 7 you can see it. And it's in Appendix N of the draft EIS.
 8 The next question is what are the ways can we provide it
 9 to the --
 10 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** There is copies back
 11 here.
 12 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** There are also copies
 13 in the back. How many copies do we have?
 14 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** 25.
 15 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** 25 copies on the back
 16 table.
 17 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** They might be gone.
 18 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** My name is Alice
 19 Julius, and I'm from Goodnews. What I would like to
 20 encourage you guys to try to have somebody from our region
 21 to explain these in Yup'ik to our people because our
 22 Elders and our people don't really understand a lot of
 23 this stuff. Maybe translate them. Qu yana.
 24 **MR. WILLY KEPPEL:** Willy Keppel,
 25 K-E-P-P-E-L. I would like to reiterate one more time, I

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1 believe that we need to -- everybody in here needs to hear
2 from all of you how you are going to get the word out to
3 all the villages that don't have access to the Internet
4 and can't hear the radio stations, couldn't hear the radio
5 shows coming out of Bethel. It's a huge responsibility to
6 you folks, I believe, because people just don't have a
7 clue. If you are in Nightmute, you might as well have --
8 call it all the time night, I mean, when it comes to news
9 there, or any other place. But we are all affected
10 because we all live downriver of the mine.
11 And I would also ask again that this comment period
12 be extended at the minimum of six more months so that
13 people have a chance to sit and re-evaluate how you are
14 getting out. I mean, it's great the way you are here, but
15 there is 57 villages out here. And it's not just the
16 Kuskokwim drainage that's going to be affected. It's
17 going to be the Yukon drainage, too.
18 People are -- I think a lot of people here don't
19 understand that if it kills off all of our fish in a
20 catastrophic accident, it affects the fishing here, too,
21 because we have -- you know, part of subsistence is also a
22 30-day period where guys can make a little bit of money at
23 commercial fishing. And how you fill the freezer, whether
24 it be through a little bit of commercial fishing or
25 whether you are out subsistence fishing, it's the same

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1 thing because you got -- you got to have food. You got to
2 have money to pay the bills to keep the freezer going.
3 And these fish that swim past here, a lot of them are
4 headed to the Kusko. If those all die, it affects the
5 Goodnews, Platinum area. It affects this area. It
6 affects Tunt area, probably even -- who knows what all
7 area out here it affects. But it's going to affect a lot.
8 So please do extend the comment period, try to figure
9 out how to get to all the rest of these little villages.
10 They are absolutely clueless. They have only heard
11 professionals sent by the mining company give their side.
12 And of course, that's going to be the good side of life.
13 That's business, you know. So that part I would like to
14 see done.
15 Thank you.
16 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** Would anybody else like
17 to provide testimony, comment?
18 **MS. GRACE HILL:** I have a comment on -- we
19 had -- how many were there, Vernon?
20 **MR. VERNON CHIMEGALREA:** I have been with
21 the company for five years.
22 **MS. GRACE HILL:** No. Here.
23 **MR. VERNON CHIMEGALREA:** Probably five. I
24 have been with the company for five years, and I have been
25 here for five years.

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1 **MS. GRACE HILL:** Yeah. [speaking in
2 Yup'ik] -- come to tell us how or what the mine is going
3 to be like. And they all encourage us to speak about what
4 we think about the mine, but they come here and they talk
5 about everything about spills, if the pipeline ruptures,
6 everything about the mine. But we don't have a guarantee.
7 If there is an accident, we will all be affected, all the
8 people in the Kuskokwim and Yukon. Our fish will be
9 affected, our berry picking, everything. We don't have
10 any guarantee.
11 [speaking in English] Nothing is made perfect
12 that -- even if they say it won't happen, eventually it
13 will. The Valdez spill, how it affected our whole area.
14 We had a mine here that -- Arolik River had black
15 stuff coming down. Our trouts were skinny. And we know
16 those facts that it has an impact on those fish after 30,
17 40 years. So we -- you know, you can say I agree it's
18 going to create jobs. It's going to do this, that. But
19 then after how many years you are going to leave and then
20 we have to deal with what's left behind. Like our
21 spawning areas, our fishing, berry-picking areas will all
22 be affected.
23 And these people are -- they want to understand. And
24 then like somebody said, it will be just that area that
25 will get the money, not us. Calista will get a little

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1 bit, but then all you people will leave, take whatever
2 gold you wanted, then forget about us. You know, that's
3 just a fact of life, and that's what has been done all
4 over. We have seen the Goodnews mines, Platinum, they
5 just took whatever they needed and left, but we will be
6 the ones -- we, the people, will be the ones to suffer.
7 And that's not what we want for our grandchildren, our
8 children's children to do that. We want them to have
9 something we have always had, and the main thing is fish.
10 We live on fish, dried, smoked, whatever.
11 And that's one of the greatest impacts we are worried
12 about is the barges going up, down, every day and all
13 that, and we have to -- I know you guys go to certain
14 villages, but -- I've seen the list, but -- it's good when
15 you give us information, but most of us here are
16 looking -- you know, reading these and saying, yeah, we
17 understand because we -- we sometimes don't understand the
18 big words they use.
19 And you know, I look and I say, well, what is it?
20 But then we are humble. We don't ask. And if we don't
21 understand, we just -- most of us just sit and not ask.
22 And we are glad there are some people that will speak up
23 and say, hey, this is our land, and we would like to save
24 it, preserve it even though it will bring money, but it
25 won't be there for forever.

1 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** Would anyone else like
2 to provide comment? Testimony?
3 **MR. BAVILLA SMALL:** [speaking in Yup'ik]
4 Oh, I forgot something I want to ask. Did I hear
5 correctly that they wanted to have two mines up there?
6 Well, it's good that the jobs will be provided. Well, it
7 would be good if some of us would get roads, may be a
8 benefit from the mine. And you know, we have been using
9 snow roads for a long time. And with global warming we
10 got no snow for snow roads. But you know, we are not
11 really all of us against the mine, but using as an example
12 how our -- our children, grandchildren, great
13 grandchildren live and, you know, we worry about our
14 children and grandchildren.
15 When they -- I want to ask about the mine. I forgot
16 that this -- have they ever thought about putting in
17 another mine? And if there is an accident, will they
18 close the mine? You know, we are afraid that if there is
19 a spill it will ruin our subsistence foods. And we are
20 bothered a spill that will affect our subsistence way of
21 life, hunting birds, fishing for fish, hunting animals.
22 It's good that there is jobs available from the mine
23 and if they had people that were working at the mine, you
24 know, how -- our way of life in our area, how our land
25 is.

1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir. There
2 is a single mine proposed, but it would, if constructed as
3 proposed, start out as two individual pits that became a
4 single pit, but it is a single mine proposal at this time.
5 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** [speaking in Yup'ik]
6 You guys can comment in Yup'ik if you want. I'm very
7 happy you are commenting in Yup'ik, too. And she's
8 encouraging independently the people here that want to
9 speak Yup'ik to speak up.
10 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** Anybody else would like
11 to provide comment? Yup'ik is fine. Going once?
12 Anybody? Okay. Thank you very much.
13 Just a reminder that we do have comment forms in the
14 back on the table both for the preliminary analysis on
15 subsistence impacts, as well as the Draft Environmental
16 Impact Statement.
17 So this concludes the hearing on the 810 analysis.
18 And again, thank you very much for your time. We take
19 your comments very seriously.
20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
21 very much. Taylor has got a comment, and then I've got a
22 closing comment, and we will go from there.
23 **MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** Several people
24 asked questions about how to make the best effort possible
25 to get the word, the information out to all of the

1 villages. And I wanted to mention, we have an Executive
2 Summary. It's about 80 pages long with some diagrams.
3 It's kind of a short form of a very big document. It's a
4 way to read a little bit about many issues and then to
5 know where to go for much more information. So Jessica in
6 the green shirt has a few more copies of that.
7 And if you are interested in additional information,
8 that would be a tool. It also includes at the back the
9 DVD. So this was distributed to every tribe, city and
10 corporation throughout the YK Delta, along with some other
11 information over the past several years' newsletters.
12 Then the other thing I wanted to mention is that John
13 Active came to KYUK studio two weeks ago to prepare a
14 Yup'ik language translation of an introduction to the EIS,
15 explaining some of the concepts and the terminology. That
16 will be airing on KYUK probably starting next week. There
17 will be five segments about 25, 30 minutes each. And John
18 has prepared this in Yup'ik so that it can be broadcast on
19 the radio to help people understand; one more tool to help
20 them understand.
21 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** For those of us that
22 don't have the radio station, would you be able to provide
23 copies?
24 **MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** Thank you. I
25 missed this. Yes. So we will be sending it on the CD to

1 the tribes, cities, corporations around the region the
2 same way that we did newsletters and some of the earlier
3 material. So it should get to each of the villages even
4 if you don't actually have KYUK just now. It will also be
5 posted on the website at KYUK. And at the Army Corps of
6 Engineers project website it's called donlingoldeis.
7 Another way to get that information. But it sounds like
8 the most important for here where there is no radio access
9 would be to get some CDs to the village and people could
10 pass them around and listen together.
11 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** And then the comments
12 that he made about extending the informational stuff,
13 would you guys be able to extend so that you guys would be
14 able to get to more people?
15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** That is a possibility.
16 One of the comments we frequently receive on open comment
17 periods is a request to extend it. That's a decision that
18 the Army Corps of Engineers will talk to the cooperating
19 agencies, including the tribal entities. And then
20 ultimately the Alaska District Commander and/or regulatory
21 management will make the decision as to whether or not we
22 would extend the comment period beyond April 30th.
23 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** Because most of the
24 villages don't have --
25 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:** Why do they

1 need a gold mine?
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** That's an excellent
 3 question. There is a global demand for gold, but one of
 4 the questions is how much more do we really need. And
 5 it's a very valid question.
 6 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:** Why not have
 7 one in English and the other one in Yup'ik so you can get
 8 both sides? There are some people that don't really
 9 understand the English language, but they would better
 10 understand it in Yup'ik rather than just English.
 11 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** We attempted a
 12 translation of a reasonably expansive portion of the
 13 Executive Summary, but we were not able to find anyone who
 14 had the time necessary to develop a fairly lengthy Yup'ik
 15 translation of the Executive Summary. I'm not referring
 16 to the entire document, just the Executive Summary, a
 17 portion of the Executive Summary. So as Taylor mentioned,
 18 we do have what John is doing by way of these radio
 19 broadcasts that we can send out on a CD.
 20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:** You guys have
 21 the time and money to come out here to try and explain all
 22 this. I don't see why you can't do it in the Yup'ik
 23 language, as well. If you are going to be dealing with
 24 all the people out here upstream and downstream in the
 25 Delta and anybody else who might be involved, I think it's

1 really important that it should be translated into Yup'ik,
 2 too, as well, since the majority of the people are Yup'ik
 3 speaking people.
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you. I'll
 5 pass that along and we will see if that's something that
 6 they feel they can do.
 7 **MS. ALICE JULIUS:** I think since this is
 8 what we are going to be dealing with in many years, I
 9 think it should be done that way like what he requested
 10 because we can wait. If you can wait, we can wait that
 11 long.
 12 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. I will ask
 13 and see what we can do.
 14 We thank you all very much for the opportunity to
 15 come out here, and if you have other comments, questions,
 16 et cetera -- as Taylor mentioned, www.donlingoldeis.com is
 17 an avenue by which you can communicate to us, or the phone
 18 number that was listed, the email address, the fax number,
 19 et cetera. Thank you for your time and your comments.
 20 (Proceedings adjourned at 4:08 p.m.)
 21
 22
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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 29th day of February
 14 2016.
 15
 16
 17 **MARY A. VAVRIK,**
 18 Registered Merit Reporter
 19 Notary Public for Alaska
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 My Commission Expires: November 5, 2016

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