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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

MCGRATH, ALASKA

Taken February 26, 2016
Commencing at 3:00 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 74, inclusive

Taken at
McGrath Native Village Council Office
McGrath, 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. Army Corps of Engineers:

3 Keith Gordon
4 Project Manager

5 Jason Brewer
6 Regulatory Specialist

7 For Alaska Department of Natural Resources:

8 Jeff Bruno
9 Deputy Director
10 Office of Project Management and Permitting

11 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

12 Mark Spencer
13 District Manager

14 For AECOM:

15 Bill Craig
16 Project Manager

17 Nancy Darigo
18 Physical Science Lead

19 A. David Every
20 Biological Science Lead

21 Donne Fleagle
22 Senior Rural Outreach Lead

23 Amy Rosenthal
24 Social Science Lead

25 Taken by:

26 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

27 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken

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

29 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary

30 Public within and for the State of Alaska.

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1 assisted by federal and State agencies, as well as tribal

2 cooperators, in developing the document. We are also

3 assisted by AECOM, an international engineering and

4 environmental analyses firm, who is assisting us in the

5 development of the document. What I'll ask is that after

6 we go through this presentation, that federal, State and

7 AECOM folks introduce themselves. And I'll give you a

8 little bit more of that in a minute.

9 If the lighting is a problem for anybody, let me

10 know. We are trying to turn it down so you all can see

11 the screen a little better.

12 Please, as you can see, Mary Vavrik is our court

13 reporter who is documenting the proceedings today so we

14 can accurately capture your comments so that we address

15 them correctly in the Final Environmental Impact

16 Statement. It would be beneficial for her, given that she

17 has to hear everything going on in the room, if you have

18 cell phones, if you could put them in vibrate mode, that

19 would be great. When we do start taking your comments

20 after my presentation and the presentation that BLM will

21 do, we request that you come up front to speak so that

22 Mary can accurately capture your comments as well as your

23 name and any association that you are here formally to

24 represent.

25 So what is the meeting agenda for today? I'll do a

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

2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Good afternoon, folks.

3 My name is Keith Gordon. I'm a project manager with the

4 Army Corps of Engineers. I'm the Army Corps of Engineers'

5 Alaska District project manager for the proposed Donlin

6 project. We thank you all very much for the opportunity

7 to come out here to talk to the residents of McGrath and

8 the surrounding communities regarding the status of

9 Donlin's proposed project.

10 The Army Corps of Engineers is assisted in the

11 development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement by

12 11 different cooperators. Those cooperators' logos or

13 names are on the screen; federal, State and tribal

14 entities helping us in the development of this document

15 and with the development of the analyses.

16 The purpose of the meeting today is basically to give

17 you an indication of where we are at in the development of

18 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and, most

19 appropriately, how you can comment on the draft analyses

20 and the draft conclusions that are in the document so that

21 we can get your input on whether or not we understand the

22 potential impacts of the project and your input on what

23 should or shouldn't happen in relation to Donlin's

24 proposed project.

25 The Army Corps of Engineers, as I mentioned, is

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1 presentation that takes about 30 minutes. Then BLM will

2 do about a 15-minute presentation on the ANILCA 810

3 hearing that we are also going to be doing today. Then we

4 will break for a poster session. You can see a dozen

5 posters around the room: Three over here that define

6 Donlin's project as they propose to construct it, and then

7 nine other posters around the room that that give you some

8 information on the potential impacts of the project.

9 As far as roles in the project, the Army Corps of

10 Engineers is the lead federal agency for development of

11 this Environmental Impact Statement simply because of our

12 regulatory and legal role in the process as it relates to

13 the National Environmental Policy Act and the EIS we are

14 developing as a result.

15 Our role is to be neither a proponent for Donlin's

16 project, nor an opponent of Donlin's project. We are to

17 go down the middle of the road, do unbiased analyses, and

18 then at the end of the day when the Corps of Engineers

19 gets to authorities under which we would or would not

20 issue permits, that's when our agency has a decision in

21 relation to our authorities.

22 The National Environmental Policy Act process -- in

23 other words, the EIS process -- is intended to inform all

24 federal entities who need to make a decision on the

25 project, State entities who want to use that information,

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1 local and tribal entities.
 2 So as I mentioned, after we do these presentations,
 3 we will go to a poster session. When the poster session
 4 is over, we will reconvene and take your comments on the
 5 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, after which BLM will
 6 formally initiate their ANILCA 810 hearing, and we will
 7 take your comments on the 810 process.
 8 Mark, would you like to introduce yourself and make a
 9 couple of comments about the purpose of the 810 hearing?
 10 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** Good afternoon. Thank
 11 you for having us here. So as Keith mentioned, in
 12 addition to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement,
 13 Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands
 14 Conservation Act requires that an evaluation of
 15 subsistence uses and needs be completed for any federal
 16 determination to -- and this is a quote right out of
 17 ANILCA -- "withdraw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit
 18 the use, occupancy or disposition of public lands."
 19 So due to the proposed project affecting BLM-managed
 20 lands, the BLM prepared a preliminary analysis -- that's a
 21 draft -- of subsistence impacts. The preliminary findings
 22 concluded that the project may result in significant
 23 restrictions to subsistence uses for certain communities.
 24 So following the DEIS public comment period today, BLM
 25 will conduct, as Keith mentioned, an 810 public hearing.

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1 And this will be your opportunity to provide formal
 2 comment on the potential for this project to affect
 3 subsistence resources.
 4 Thank you.
 5 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, Mark. And
 6 if there is anybody on the phone at this point in time who
 7 would like to comment, by the time I do this presentation,
 8 Mark has his presentation and then we run through the
 9 poster session for the folks in the room, we estimate we
 10 will start actually taking comment at approximately 4:30.
 11 But that will depend on how much time folks in the room
 12 want to spend going through the posters we have available
 13 and talking to the folks in the room who are here to
 14 address those issues and other issues.
 15 Very briefly, I'll talk about what Donlin is
 16 proposing, and you all can get more information on that,
 17 if needed, at the poster session.
 18 This is Donlin's proposed mine site, approximately
 19 ten miles north of Crooked Creek. You can see that there
 20 are three primary components at the mine site, and there
 21 are three primary components to the project overall.
 22 There is the mine site, there is the proposed
 23 transportation infrastructure that would supply the mine
 24 so it could, A, be constructed and, B, operate. And then
 25 there is the pipeline component that would, as proposed,

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1 supply natural gas to the mine so it could operate.
 2 What you are looking at on the screen is that first
 3 component of what Donlin is proposing, the mine site
 4 itself. You can see that No. 1 represents the two pits,
 5 the ACMA and Lewis pits that, if constructed, would merge
 6 into a single pit. Depending on where you measure the
 7 depth of that pit from, on the low side it's 1,100 feet
 8 deep; on the high side it's 1,850 feet deep, if
 9 constructed as proposed. That pit, once constructed,
 10 would last in perpetuity.
 11 While there would be a small amount of rock, waste
 12 rock, that would go into the pit at the end of its life,
 13 the pit ultimately would be expected to fill with water 50
 14 to 55 years after mining ceased, and then there would be a
 15 pit lake there in perpetuity.
 16 The second primary component of Donlin's proposed
 17 mine site facility is the tailings storage facility.
 18 Tailings are basically crushed rock. After Donlin takes
 19 the ore, runs it through the mill, extracts the gold,
 20 what's left is crushed rock. And that rock would have
 21 some degree of water and potentially a limited amount of
 22 chemicals in it resulting from the milling process. And
 23 those tailings and the water entrained in them would be
 24 retained behind this large dam that you see in that
 25 valley.

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1 To give you an idea of scale, the mine site is
 2 approximately 2.2 square miles in size, No. 1 on the
 3 screen. The tailings storage facility would fill that
 4 valley and be approximately 3.5 square miles in size, or
 5 fill the portion of the valley that you see.
 6 The waste rock facility is the third primary
 7 component of the mine site. Waste rock is the overburden,
 8 the rock that has to be removed to get to the ore and any
 9 ore that doesn't actually contain enough gold in it to be
 10 worth processing. That waste rock facility is also about
 11 3.5 square miles in size.
 12 For overall scale, if you combine everything Donlin
 13 is proposing to construct, the actual physical footprint
 14 of the proposed mine site and everything related to it is
 15 approximately 26 square miles in size.
 16 Okay. The second primary component of Donlin's
 17 proposed project, as I mentioned, is the transportation
 18 infrastructure. You can see that that pink and red blob
 19 in the center of the screen at the top is the proposed
 20 mine site, the camps that will be built that relate to it,
 21 gravel sources, et cetera and so on, the tailings
 22 facility, the waste rock facility we talked about.
 23 The transportation component that we are depicting on
 24 this slide is the red line, the 30-mile road that would be
 25 constructed down a new port facility at Jungjuk just

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1 downstream of Crooked Creek. As you can see, there are
 2 little red and pink blobs along that road. Most of those
 3 are material sites that would be opened up to supply
 4 gravel to construct the road, maintain the road,
 5 et cetera.
 6 Also in the upper left-hand portion of that, you see
 7 a 5,000 foot airstrip that would be constructed to allow
 8 aerial access into the mine site. And between the port at
 9 Jungjuk and the mining facility, there is a proposal to
 10 store about 40 million gallons of diesel annually, which
 11 is approximately what they would burn for the operation of
 12 the heavy mining equipment at the project.
 13 The third primary component of Donlin's proposed
 14 project is a natural gas pipeline. As proposed, it's a
 15 315-mile, 14-inch diameter buried steel pipeline that
 16 would run from the western side of Cook Inlet through the
 17 Alaska Range over to the mine site.
 18 The project as proposed would take approximately
 19 three to four years to construct, is expected to mine gold
 20 for approximately 27 and a half years, and then go through
 21 a closure and reclamation phase. But it's important to
 22 understand that closure doesn't just start at the end of
 23 mining. There are facilities that Donlin is proposing to
 24 construct that they might only need for a short period of
 25 time. Therefore, some of those facilities would be closed

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1 or reclaimed as soon as they are no longer needed; so
 2 either at the end of construction, somewhere during the
 3 mining life, et cetera.
 4 And then the more expansive formal closure and
 5 reclamation phase, the majority of that would happen near
 6 the end of the mining life or after the end of the mining
 7 life. There is also a substantial quantity of monitoring
 8 that would take place after the -- after mining ceased.
 9 The reason for that is, that water that I mentioned that
 10 would go into the pit lake, that water has to meet federal
 11 and State water quality standards before it could be
 12 discharged. So that pit lake, the pit would take 50 to 55
 13 years to fill. At some point water is going to actually
 14 need to be discharged from that because once you get it to
 15 a given level, you have to start discharging water.
 16 Donlin would be required to treat that water in
 17 perpetuity so that any water coming off the facility met
 18 federal and State requirements. There is also -- that
 19 same criteria applies during operations.
 20 So there are, in relation to the waste rock facility,
 21 other facilities, as Donlin is proposing to construct
 22 them, that would discharge water, require the same
 23 treatment before that water could be discharged into
 24 Crooked Creek, into the Kuskokwim or any of the other
 25 tributaries in the area.

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1 One of the other things that helps to understand
 2 regarding the proposed project is there are over 100
 3 licenses, leases, permits, other authorizations that
 4 Donlin would be required to obtain to construct the
 5 project as they are currently proposing or potentially in
 6 another form. These are just a brief listing of what some
 7 of the federal requirements are.
 8 The Army Corps of Engineers, in relation to the
 9 proposed project, has authority under Section 404, which
 10 primarily deals with impacts to basically fill in wetlands
 11 or other waters of the United States, rivers, streams,
 12 lakes, ponds. We also have authority in relation to this
 13 project regarding potential impacts to navigational
 14 servitude; in this case, effectively Cook Inlet and the
 15 Kuskokwim River, primarily. And so we would be required
 16 to issue permits for some of those impacts if the
 17 Commander determines that the project is in the public
 18 interest and should be permitted in Donlin's proposed form
 19 or another form.
 20 The Bureau of Land Management primarily is looking at
 21 right-of-way issues in relation to the pipeline but, of
 22 course, under NEPA they are effectively looking at
 23 virtually all the other impacts of the project as
 24 proposed. And other agencies, like the Environmental
 25 Protection Agency and Fish & Wildlife Service, National

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1 Marine Fisheries Service, PHMSA -- the Pipeline Hazardous
 2 Materials and Safety Administration -- have roles in
 3 permitting the project in its proposed form, another form,
 4 or not at all.
 5 The State of Alaska also is a very major player in
 6 permitting the proposed project or an alternative to the
 7 project. As you can see, there are a variety of permits.
 8 And this is a small number of the permits that
 9 authorizations, reviews of analyses, impact analyses,
 10 et cetera, that the State of Alaska would do in relation
 11 to what Donlin is proposing. And Mr. Bruno is in the room
 12 today and will introduce himself shortly to give you
 13 additional information on that.
 14 Regarding where we are at in the Environmental Impact
 15 Statement process, I think all of you are aware that the
 16 Army Corps of Engineers was out here previously, along
 17 with some of the federal, State and tribal cooperators,
 18 for the scoping session which happened in early 2013 to
 19 get your initial comments on the potential impacts of the
 20 project. And that is some of the information that we have
 21 used to determine how we should -- how and what we should
 22 analyze in relation to the proposed project.
 23 Since then, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
 24 has been developed. We have put that statement out for
 25 your and others' comments as of November 27th last year.

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1 The comment period, as it's currently listed, lasts till
 2 April 30, 2016. And I'll talk more in a few minutes about
 3 how you can comment, the various ways you can comment, and
 4 how you comment to us in a manner that gives us something
 5 that we can address and determine whether or not we have
 6 done the analyses correctly, whether or not we are coming
 7 up with draft conclusions that you believe are accurate in
 8 relation to what's proposed.
 9 Our responses to the vast majority of the comments
 10 you all or anybody else would make would appear in the
 11 Final Environmental Impact Statement. That is expected to
 12 go out approximately June of 2017. So a little more than
 13 a year from now. After that, the federal agencies -- in
 14 this case, the Corps, the Bureau of Land Management and
 15 the Pipeline Hazardous Materials and Safety
 16 Administration -- would develop Records of Decision that
 17 define whether or not the agency determined that it
 18 could -- each of the agencies could permit the project as
 19 proposed, permit an alternative to the project, or not
 20 permit the project.
 21 It's important to understand that I mention those
 22 100-plus authorizations of one type or another that are
 23 required in relation to the project as proposed. Just
 24 because the Army Corps of Engineers makes a decision one
 25 way or the other does not constrain virtually anybody else

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1 to make the same decision. The same goes for virtually
 2 all the other decisionmakers in the process.
 3 There is the possibility that some of those required
 4 to authorize the project in its proposed form or another
 5 form might come to a different decision. If that happens,
 6 then we would go through a process to try to resolve any
 7 issues the various entities had to determine whether the
 8 project would go forward in its proposed form, another
 9 form, or not at all.
 10 My point with all of this is that the draft EIS is
 11 draft. The analyses in it are draft. The conclusions in
 12 it are draft. We need your input in relation to what we
 13 have done thus far, have we done enough, have we done it
 14 adequately, et cetera. So no final decisions have been
 15 made. That's the point of all this proposed or another
 16 form or not at all. That's the point of making that
 17 repetitive point.
 18 Very briefly, I'll go through the first half a dozen
 19 chapters in the document to give you an idea of what's in
 20 there so that you have an idea of where you might look in
 21 the document for things you want to comment on.
 22 Chapter 1, purpose and need. Donlin has their
 23 purpose for the proposed project. By regulation and the
 24 Army Corps of Engineers' role, it's our responsibility to
 25 define both the basic and overall purpose of the project

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1 in relation to NEPA and our regulations in cooperation
 2 with our various cooperators on the project. What you see
 3 on the screen is the final Army Corps of Engineers'
 4 overall purpose for the proposed project.
 5 The reason I bring this up is that I do need to note
 6 that in the Environmental Impact Statement as it went out,
 7 there is another half a sentence added after the word
 8 "Alaska" that was actually supposed to be removed, but it
 9 didn't get -- that editorial fix didn't get made before it
 10 went out. What that last half a sentence says is that
 11 part of our overall purpose is to maximize economic
 12 benefit for Donlin's stockholders, Calista and TKC
 13 shareholders. That's not part of our overall purpose for
 14 the project.
 15 The economics of this project are very important.
 16 They are part of the analysis. We understand and we
 17 believe the importance of potential economic benefit of
 18 this project, the potential economic costs of this
 19 project. However, because, as I mentioned earlier, the
 20 Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for doing unbiased,
 21 middle-of-the-road analyses of the proposed project, we
 22 cannot excessively weight economic benefit or cost too
 23 much in one direction for another.
 24 So sorry, but because we didn't get that fix made in
 25 the document, I need to make that statement.

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1 As you can see, the need is also defined on the
 2 screen for Donlin's project as they propose it. And of
 3 course, we are looking for your input on everything in the
 4 document, including the purpose and need, if you would
 5 like to comment on that.
 6 As I mentioned, we went through the scoping process
 7 and got folks' input on what should be addressed in the
 8 project. As we went through the draft analyses,
 9 determined if there were data gaps, if there were studies
 10 that needed to be done, reviewed the baseline
 11 environmental information, one of the things we do to
 12 potentially minimize the impacts of proposed projects is
 13 go through the alternatives development process.
 14 There were over 300 options that were looked at that
 15 could have individually or in combination formed
 16 alternatives to what Donlin is proposing to potentially
 17 mitigate impacts to the human and/or natural environment.
 18 Those were winnowed down to the seven that you see on the
 19 screen. I won't read through them. We will go through
 20 them very briefly here in a minute, and I'll describe what
 21 they are and how they might minimize impacts to the
 22 proposed project. I won't discuss Donlin's proposed
 23 action, Alternative No. 2, because we have already
 24 discussed that when we went through the slides relating to
 25 what Donlin is proposing.

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1 The National Environmental Policy Act requires that
 2 we always evaluate all alternatives to a proposed project,
 3 including the proposed action, Donlin's proposed action,
 4 in relation to the no action alternative, Alternative 1.
 5 The no action alternative just means nothing would change.
 6 The project would not be constructed. Everything that
 7 currently exists exists. All current trends that are
 8 happening would continue to happen. There would be no
 9 change to the current human and natural environmental
 10 baseline.
 11 Then, of course, as I mentioned, we have Alternative
 12 2, Donlin's proposed action. Alternative 3A, how would
 13 Alternative 3A potentially mitigate some of the impacts of
 14 Donlin's proposed project? Alternative 3A is the
 15 diesel -- the LNG-powered haul truck alternative. What
 16 this means is the 300-ton payload trucks that would move
 17 ore and waste rock around the mine would actually be
 18 powered by liquid natural gas instead of diesel.
 19 By doing that, how do we minimize impacts? Well, we
 20 potentially minimize impacts of diesel barging during
 21 operations up and down the Kuskokwim River or a portion of
 22 it. In other words, less diesel would need to be barged.
 23 Therefore, it potentially minimizes impacts of barging,
 24 impacts of fish, impacts to their habitat, potential
 25 impacts of shoreline erosion, et cetera.

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1 There are tradeoffs. If you go with that
 2 alternative, well, then, you need to build an LNG plant at
 3 the mine site that would not be required otherwise. You
 4 would have to take the natural gas that comes in via the
 5 proposed pipeline, turn it into natural gas, et cetera.
 6 So anytime you talk about any of those alternatives, there
 7 are tradeoffs in relation to what Donlin is proposing or
 8 the alternative.
 9 Alternative 3B, this replaces the natural gas
 10 pipeline with the diesel pipeline. Well, what does that
 11 mean? Well, that means, save for a small amount of it
 12 during construction, you effectively eliminate barging on
 13 the Kuskokwim River for fuel. Not for cargo, but for
 14 fuel, which means you virtually eliminate potential for
 15 diesel spills related to barging on the Kuskokwim River.
 16 You reduce substantially the potential impact of barges
 17 stranding on the Kuskokwim River. But it has tradeoffs.
 18 It means that that 315-mile pipeline has to be 19
 19 miles longer, and that additional 19-mile segment runs
 20 down to Tyonek and requires improvements of the North
 21 Foreland Barge Facility at Tyonek.
 22 It also means that while we have radically reduced
 23 the potential impacts, say, for spill on the Kuskokwim
 24 River of diesel, well, now we have the potential for
 25 terrestrial or aquatic spills of diesel in relation to the

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1 diesel pipeline if we are running a diesel pipeline versus
 2 natural gas because, as you are aware, if you have a leak
 3 or a rupture of a natural gas pipeline, that spill is
 4 virtually almost entirely airborne; whereas, diesel, of
 5 course, as you are aware, runs on the ground surface or
 6 over or in the water.
 7 Alternative 4, I'll show you a slide of what this
 8 alternative looks like in a couple of seconds. How does
 9 this alternative potentially minimize impacts in relation
 10 to what Donlin is proposing? Well, it shortens the
 11 barging distance by 75 miles because the proposed port
 12 site is moved substantially downstream. But it also means
 13 it's adding 46 miles of additional road and the related
 14 impacts of additional noise from trucks, additional
 15 emissions from trucks, et cetera.
 16 So as you can see on the screen, the red blob is the
 17 proposed mine site north of Crooked Creek. And you see
 18 the little gold road down into Crooked Creek. The red
 19 line is that 30-mile proposed road to the proposed port
 20 site at Jungjuk. Under Alternative 4 there would be no
 21 proposed port site at Jungjuk or that 30-mile road. What
 22 you would have is a 76-mile road, the purple line, that
 23 runs down to the port, the new port at Birch Tree
 24 Crossing.
 25 Well, what are some of the other impacts of this

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1 alternative? Well, what that means is, with the exception
 2 of a very small amount of fuel and cargo equipment barging
 3 during construction, virtually all barging, fuel and
 4 cargo, would not go past the Birch Tree Crossing port
 5 site. So five of the six shallow water areas where barges
 6 sometimes strand on the Kuskokwim River are actually
 7 upstream of Birch Tree Crossing. So this alternative,
 8 again, we have tradeoffs in emissions, but also we have
 9 potential impacts to reduce the effects of barging
 10 upstream of Birch Tree Crossing, reduce the potential for
 11 barges stranding, reduce the potential for spill,
 12 et cetera.
 13 So again, the whole point of going through all these
 14 alternatives is to give you an idea that anytime you
 15 change one thing in relation to one alternative, it's a
 16 tradeoff in how we analyze and weigh and balance the
 17 potential impacts of other alternatives. And it relates
 18 to all the resource areas that I'll talk about in just a
 19 few minutes to give you an idea of how much weighing and
 20 balancing we are perpetually doing when we look at these
 21 things.
 22 Thus far we've talked about alternatives that
 23 primarily relate to potentially barging and emissions
 24 impacts. Alternative 5A is an alternative that deals
 25 primarily with the tailings facility. Donlin is proposing

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1 what's referred to as a subaqueous tailings methodology.
 2 As I mentioned, that crushed rock has some percentage of
 3 water in it when it goes into the tailings facility. This
 4 alternative dries it out substantially. So the material
 5 that goes into the tailings facility is much drier.
 6 Okay. Well, what are the tradeoffs of that? Well,
 7 the actual physical footprint of the tailings facility
 8 that contains tailings is substantially smaller than what
 9 Donlin is proposing, but it's also stacked a good bit
 10 higher. You stack it higher and it's drier. Well, that
 11 means there may be more wind erosion and more dust
 12 deposition during operations.
 13 They are proposing -- they are not proposing -- the
 14 folks that have reviewed the document thus far and
 15 developed this alternative feel that if Alternative 5A
 16 went forward, that that facility should be capped with a
 17 liner and then have material placed over the top of it to
 18 preclude any erosion by wind after closure of the mine
 19 site and mining ceases. As you can see, there is also
 20 modifications in power consumption, as well as other
 21 things.
 22 So to make it clear, Donlin is proposing
 23 Alternative 2. All these other alternatives are
 24 alternatives the Corps or the other cooperators or someone
 25 in the public has recommended might be considered by way

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1 of methodologies, but which would minimize or mitigate
 2 impacts.
 3 So as you can see, the dry stack tailings facility
 4 has a smaller footprint for the tailings, but it also
 5 means that there is now a hydraulic dam below the tailings
 6 dam that contains all that water that would be removed
 7 from the tailings. The water, of course, as we mentioned,
 8 would have to be treated before it could be released, and
 9 that operating pond would largely cease to exist at the
 10 end of mining because if you are not putting new tailings
 11 in there, you are not removing water from anything that
 12 would require that you keep putting water into this
 13 facility.
 14 Alternative 6A, there were a variety of alternatives
 15 looked at by way of alternate pipeline routes from Cook
 16 Inlet over to the mine site. This is the alternative that
 17 survived for detailed analyses. It runs the pipeline
 18 through Rainy Pass, the Dalzell Gorge, the south fork of
 19 the Kuskokwim. It's a couple miles shorter, but it
 20 potentially has greater impacts on the Iditarod National
 21 Historic Trail.
 22 So again, for those of you who are interested and
 23 would like to comment on the alternatives or anything
 24 else, if you could take a look at what Donlin is proposing
 25 versus this alternative, give us any comments you have on

Page 24

1 that.
 2 As an appendix to the EIS, there is a list of those
 3 300 other options that we looked at that could potentially
 4 be combined into alternatives. You are welcome to look at
 5 those and comment on those, as well as tell us if there is
 6 any we missed. Are there things out there that should
 7 have been analyzed as options that could have been
 8 combined with something else to become an alternative, or
 9 are there just alternatives out there that we haven't
 10 addressed that we should. If we have addressed everything
 11 we need to, you can comment on that, as well. We are
 12 looking for comments, whatever comment you would like to
 13 make, on the proposed project.
 14 Okay. Very briefly, Chapter 3 primarily is the heart
 15 of the document. It's the environmental baseline that
 16 defines what exists in the human and natural environment
 17 currently, and then it talks about what we think the
 18 potential impacts of the proposed project are in relation
 19 to the alternatives that were carried forward for detailed
 20 analyses.
 21 There are 26 -- or, depending on your definition, 23
 22 or 26 major resource issues that could be impacted by the
 23 proposed project. The 14 that you see on the screen are
 24 those resource issues that we think might be impacted by
 25 barging. And you will find in the document a discussion

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1 of how barging might impact those various issues.
 2 The purpose of this slide is just to give you an idea
 3 of how the analyses is done and what it covers, which is
 4 also the purpose of the next couple of slides. But by way
 5 of making the example of the analyses done, we are using
 6 barging as the overall example.
 7 It's important to understand the existing baseline of
 8 barging on the Kuskokwim River in relation to what Donlin
 9 is proposing, and we understand that. So we need your
 10 input on whether or not we actually understand current
 11 barging on the Kuskokwim River.
 12 The burnt gold color on the bottom of the screen is
 13 barging as it currently exists on the Kuskokwim River, to
 14 our knowledge. To our knowledge, if you are standing on
 15 the shoreline north of Bethel some distance upstream, what
 16 you would have seen this summer or previous years is an
 17 average of 68 barges passing that spot round trip going
 18 upstream and downstream during an average barging season.
 19 So with what Donlin is proposing -- what you would
 20 actually see in relation to the barging currently done,
 21 it's usually a tug pushing one or two barges making that
 22 round trip. With what Donlin is proposing, let's say you
 23 are standing on that same spot in the shoreline this
 24 summer for 24 hours; you would see a tug pushing one or
 25 two barges passing you. If Donlin's project is

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1 constructed as proposed, you would see a tug pushing four
 2 barges, and it would pass you three times in a 24-hour
 3 period. Whether it was going up- or downstream, you would
 4 see three instead of one.

5 This slide is broken out into construction on the
 6 left side of the slide and operations on the right side of
 7 the slide and is intended to give you an idea of the
 8 potential impacts of barging, comparing and contrasting
 9 one alternative to the another. Alternative 1 on the left
 10 that has no blue above it, that's just the baseline as it
 11 currently exists. So if that alternative went forward,
 12 there is no change to barging.

13 Construction, you can see that the increase in
 14 barging is the same for all those alternatives. Well,
 15 please keep in mind that a bar graph doesn't always tell
 16 you the whole story. You remember that Alternative 2 is
 17 the proposed port site at Jungjuk, which is farther
 18 upstream than the Birch Tree Crossing under Alternative 4.
 19 So while the volume of barging is the same under
 20 Alternative 2 and Alternative 4 during construction,
 21 actually very little barging goes upstream of Birch Tree
 22 Crossing.

23 So what I'm referring to is this bar graph right here
 24 [indicating]. It appears that both Alternative 2 and
 25 Alternative 4 have the same amount of barging during

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1 construction. Well, they do. They have virtually the
 2 same amount of barging during construction; however, in
 3 the case of Alternative 2, it goes farther upstream than
 4 Alternative 4.

5 Since there is no real change in relation to the LNG
 6 haul truck alternative or diesel pipeline alternative in
 7 construction, we will go over to the operations side. And
 8 for the 27 and a half years of proposed operations, what
 9 you can see is Donlin's proposed barging -- Donlin's
 10 proposed project increases barging on the Kuskokwim River
 11 by 179 percent over what's currently there. Again, the
 12 bar graph doesn't always tell you the same story.

13 It appears that during operations barging impacts are
 14 the same in Alternative 2 and Alternative 4. Again,
 15 Alternative 2 would go to the proposed Jungjuk port site
 16 versus Alternative 4 going to the Birch Tree Crossing
 17 site. Alternative 3A reduces barging in that you don't
 18 need to barge as much diesel. So there is less barging of
 19 fuel. Alternative 3B virtually eliminates barging in
 20 relation to diesel. So again, just an indication of how
 21 the alternatives differ in relation to the analyses.

22 To conclude Chapter 3, we have a couple of slides
 23 here that talk about the draft analyses and draft
 24 conclusions as it currently exists. We are using fish and
 25 potential impacts of barging on fish to make that example.

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1 Alternative 2, the draft conclusion at this point is
 2 that it has the potential to have moderate impacts on fish
 3 in relation to their habitat in the river overall with
 4 potentially greater impacts on shallow -- fish in shallow
 5 and narrow segments. And what we would like from you all
 6 is an indication, if you would like to comment on those
 7 impacts, of whether we are right, whether we are wrong, or
 8 whether there is more we need to do, whether there is
 9 something we didn't do right.

10 Again, you are seeing the same trend under
 11 Alternative 3A, 3B and 4 we talked about on the other
 12 slides. The impacts vary depending on the alternatives.
 13 And the alternatives are intended to mitigate impacts.
 14 The question is: Do you think they do, or would it be
 15 worth going that route, or should we go with what Donlin
 16 is proposing if the project goes forward? This slide is
 17 just another example of tradeoffs in alternatives, between
 18 the various alternatives. Again, talking about air
 19 emissions, potential impacts of barging in relation to
 20 primarily Alternatives 2 and 3.

21 Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 talks about cumulative
 22 impacts. What we mean by a cumulative impact is all past
 23 activities, human activities primarily, present activities
 24 that currently exist, and future activities combined with
 25 Donlin's proposed project so that we can forecast what we

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1 think the potential impacts of Donlin's proposed project
 2 are in the future, as well as the potential impacts of any
 3 of those alternatives to Donlin's project that we are
 4 suggesting.

5 So, again, if you are interested, we ask that you
 6 look at the cumulative impacts and tell us, did we
 7 adequately identify impacts to the human and natural
 8 environment that have already occurred, those that are
 9 occurring, those that we expect might occur and in
 10 combination with Donlin's proposed project or the
 11 alternatives.

12 Chapter 5, mitigation. We have been talking about
 13 mitigation in relation to the alternatives. There is a
 14 whole host of other mitigation out there. Under the
 15 National Environmental Policy Act, anything you can do to
 16 avoid, minimize, mitigate impacts is mitigation. Under
 17 our program, the 10-404 authorities, there are specific
 18 ways by which someone might mitigate impacts to
 19 navigation, impacts to fill in the wetlands or other
 20 waters of the United States.

21 So again, if you can take look at Chapter 5 and tell
 22 us whether or not we have adequately defined mitigation,
 23 adequately characterized its potential impacts on the
 24 proposed project, we would appreciate it.

25 As I mentioned, in a few minutes we will go into the

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1 poster session. And as discussed, there is three posters
 2 right up here that talk about what Donlin is proposing.
 3 And then from the scoping session and other review of
 4 potential impacts of the project, we have got nine posters
 5 that we think reasonably characterize potential impacts to
 6 the project to the areas that most people indicated they
 7 were interested in discussing. You can certainly ask
 8 questions on other impacts that we haven't addressed in
 9 those nine posters. These are just the nine that we felt
 10 were the most of interest to most people.
 11 So as I mentioned, the primary function of this
 12 entire session in relation to comments on the draft EIS is
 13 to give you information on how you can most substantively
 14 comment to us regarding the Draft Environmental Impact
 15 Statement so we can figure out if we have done it right,
 16 if we need to do more, et cetera.
 17 The best way I can do that is the National
 18 Environmental Policy Act, the EIS process, is not a voting
 19 process. Yes, whether people are for or against projects
 20 are important, but what we need is detailed comments on
 21 the document, the analyses, et cetera, to indicate whether
 22 or not we are analyzing it correctly and its potential
 23 impacts.
 24 So as I mentioned, comments on the draft EIS are
 25 typically responded to in the final EIS. So by way of an

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1 example, what happens if I get 100 comments that say I'm
 2 for the project? Well, we respond to that in the final
 3 EIS by combining those 100 comments that said I'm for the
 4 project into one comment, and our response is "comment
 5 noted." If I get 100 comments that say I'm opposed to the
 6 project, what do we do with that? We combine the 100
 7 comments that say I'm opposed to the project into one
 8 comment, and we address it by saying "comment noted."
 9 What we need are substantive comments. In our
 10 analyses, our baseline assessment of the importance of a
 11 given fish species to a given community in relation to
 12 subsistence and sharing is not adequately addressed,
 13 that's a way to give us a substantive comment. If we have
 14 underestimated, overestimated the potential impacts of the
 15 effect of the project on that fish species in relation to
 16 subsistence and sharing, that's a substantive comment.
 17 So we know we are primarily using fisheries as an
 18 example, but what we need are comments that tell us
 19 whether we got it right, whether we got it wrong, whether
 20 we did enough, whether we didn't do enough; something that
 21 tells us whether or not we know what we are talking about.
 22 You all live here. You know what the potential impacts of
 23 this project are. We need from you, do we know what we
 24 are talking about or don't we.
 25 How can you comment? Well, obviously you can comment

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1 at this meeting. As I mentioned, the comment period at
 2 this point in time is open until April 30. Your comments
 3 at this meeting Mary will capture and will be responded to
 4 in relation to the requirements of the National
 5 Environmental Policy Act in the final EIS. You can also
 6 submit comments to us via the website you see on the
 7 screen. You can mail them to us. You can fax them to us.
 8 These are the meetings that have either taken place
 9 or meetings that are coming up. And you are certainly
 10 welcome to participate in any of those meetings or ask
 11 someone else to participate in any of those meetings to
 12 comment further.
 13 Here is the website. And at that website you will
 14 see that there is the draft EIS under the EIS documents
 15 tab. There is also the newsletters, project information,
 16 background information, various presentation summaries, my
 17 contact information. And if you have matters that you
 18 specifically would like to address to our tribal liaison,
 19 Ms. Amanda Andraschko, her contact information is there,
 20 as well. And we will have this information available for
 21 you as we go through the program.
 22 At this point in time, that concludes the initial
 23 comments I had in relation to where we are at now and how
 24 you can comment on the Draft Environmental Impact
 25 Statement.

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1 What we are planning to do at this point is
 2 Mr. Spencer will do a brief presentation on the 810 ANILCA
 3 hearing process. After that we will break, as I said, go
 4 to the posters, allow you all to ask questions, make
 5 comments as we take a look at the posters, reconvene for
 6 your comments session on the Draft Environmental Impact
 7 Statement. And then Mr. Spencer will initiate the formal
 8 hearing and take your comments on subsistence in that
 9 format.
 10 Please note that you can make comments in relation to
 11 subsistence or anything else in the Draft Environmental
 12 Impact Statement portion of the comments session. The 810
 13 session, as Mr. Spencer noted, is primarily intended for
 14 subsistence comments. However, whenever you make a
 15 subsistence comment, both BLM and the Corps will use it in
 16 both circumstances. If you make comments during the
 17 hearing, the 810 hearing session, that we feel are
 18 comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that
 19 are not specifically subsistence related, we will also
 20 consider those as comments on the Draft Environmental
 21 Impact Statement.
 22 Mark, would you like to --
 23 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** I need a minute.
 24 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** We are going to take
 25 about two minutes here so Mary can kill the file for my

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1 presentation and open a file for Mark's presentation, and
 2 then we will go forward. If there is anybody who has
 3 joined us on the phone, we expect to go to the comments
 4 session on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in
 5 about 45 minutes.
 6 (Off the record.)
 7 **MR. MARK SPENCER:** I'm going to go ahead
 8 and start, if you all can go ahead and grab a seat, too.
 9 You can stand. That's okay, too.
 10 And we are going to talk about the preliminary 810
 11 analysis. So as Keith mentioned, my name is Mark Spencer.
 12 I'm the district manager at Bureau of Land Management down
 13 in Anchorage.
 14 All right. So BLM, Bureau of Land Management, has
 15 completed a preliminary analysis of subsistence impacts
 16 from the proposed project, as Keith described it, in the
 17 Environmental Impact Statement. So through the process we
 18 determined that a significant restriction of subsistence
 19 uses and needs may result from any of the alternatives
 20 discussed in the EIS, the Environmental Impact Statement,
 21 including their cumulative effects, that BLM would have to
 22 use three factors for the analysis that was considered
 23 when the project was examined.
 24 In this analysis, three factors are required under
 25 the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which

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1 I'll use sometimes the abbreviation just so I don't have
 2 to keep saying that, commonly, as most of you know, as
 3 ANILCA.
 4 So these three factors are really important. It is
 5 different from the requirements compared to the National
 6 Environmental Policy Act. The first factor up there is
 7 the reduction in the availability of subsistence resources
 8 caused by a decline in the population or abundance of
 9 harvestable resources. And this includes things that you
 10 are very familiar with: fish, wildlife, plants, firewood,
 11 drinking water, for example. And then the second one is
 12 reductions in the availability of resources used for
 13 subsistence purposes. And this could cause an alteration
 14 of their distribution, for example; migration patterns or
 15 even species location.
 16 And then last, access; limitations on access to
 17 subsistence resources from increased competition for the
 18 same resource or resources or physical barriers, for
 19 example.
 20 Now, we are going to be a little bit repetitive on
 21 what Keith presented, but there is a reason for that, to
 22 indicate that under the requirements of ANILCA, we looked
 23 at the same factors that were considered in the
 24 Environmental Impact Statement. So Donlin Gold submitted
 25 applications to the Bureau of Land Management for a

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1 right-of-way, a 97-mile right-of-way back in 2012 and
 2 2013. And so they are proposing, as Keith did mention, to
 3 construct, operate and maintain a 315-mile-long gas
 4 pipeline that was described in his presentation. And it
 5 goes from essentially the Cook Inlet west out to the
 6 project site itself.
 7 So of that 315 miles, the total pipeline length, and
 8 why Bureau of Land Management is doing this 810 analysis
 9 is because it would cross about 97 miles of right-of-way
 10 on BLM-managed land, and that's a requirement out of
 11 ANILCA. This represents about 30 percent of the total
 12 right-of-way length of 315 miles. State of Alaska lands
 13 constitute about 65 percent, and then ANCSA lands about 4
 14 percent to get to your 100 percent.
 15 And the purpose of that pipeline was described, but
 16 just to amplify it again, as part of that energy supply
 17 infrastructure to actually operate the gold mine. And in
 18 addition to the pipeline and the mine site, the project
 19 also includes a transportation infrastructure that was
 20 considered in the 810 analysis, as well. And two of the
 21 six alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS would also
 22 affect the pipeline component, as you all just saw.
 23 So Alternative 3B would substitute a diesel pipeline
 24 for the natural gas pipeline within that same BLM 97-mile
 25 right-of-way, as well as the entire length.

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1 Alternative 6A would route a portion of the pipeline,
 2 as Keith mentioned, through Dalzell Gorge and that would
 3 affect about 46 miles of Alaska State lands. So just like
 4 the EIS, the 810 analysis evaluated the three components
 5 of the project: The mine site, transportation
 6 infrastructure, and the pipeline. And the potential
 7 effects on subsistence resource.
 8 Although this application, as Keith mentioned, really
 9 focuses on the 97-mile BLM-managed right-of-way, we have
 10 to look at the entire project as required under the
 11 National Environmental Policy Act.
 12 So we are going to take a look at those components
 13 relative to subsistence resources. There is a pipeline
 14 route near Windy Fork of the Kuskokwim watershed, and that
 15 pipeline includes a 150-foot wide cleared right-of-way;
 16 also involves 12 airstrips ranging from 3,500 to about
 17 5,000 feet long, and nine of which would be built along
 18 the pipeline right-of-way during construction. And of the
 19 pipeline right-of-way, it would also involve about nine
 20 construction camps, 65 cleared pipe storage areas, an
 21 estimated 70 gravel pits ranging from one to 50 acres in
 22 size. And the pipeline right-of-way and the pipeline
 23 itself would cross about seven watersheds; and that
 24 involves 396 stream crossings, and 77 of those involve
 25 anadromous streams, or salmon-rearing streams.

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1 The proposed route that you see there in the
 2 Kuskokwim watershed is in Game Management Unit 19C, just
 3 for reference for those who hunt.
 4 So the proposed mine site, aerial view of that, as
 5 Keith mentioned, includes the waste rock facility that
 6 would fill in about a little over 2,200 acres of American
 7 Creek, the tailings storage facility that would fill in
 8 about 2,300 acres on Anaconda Creek. And the tailings
 9 storage facility would be contained behind a 460-foot-high
 10 dam.
 11 The mine has two pits, and those pits were described.
 12 One is about 1,850 feet deep from the high wall, and the
 13 other pit is about 1,650 feet from the high wall. And
 14 they would merge into one, which would be about 2.2 miles
 15 by one mile wide near the end of mining operations. And
 16 then at mine closure, runoff from the tailings storage
 17 facility would be pumped into the open pit.
 18 So the pit is estimated to take about 50 years to
 19 fill, as Keith mentioned. And pumping would be required
 20 to prevent it from overflowing into Crooked Creek and the
 21 Kuskokwim River watershed. And the pit water may not meet
 22 water quality standards and would need to be treated
 23 before it could be released into Crooked Creek.
 24 The water treatment plant would be constructed 50
 25 years after mine closure, and water from the pit lake

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1 would have to be pumped and treated into the wastewater
 2 treatment plant into perpetuity, and that would be to
 3 prevent the untreated water, the pit water, from flowing
 4 into Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River. And the
 5 proposed site of the pit is in Game Management Unit 19A.
 6 A little bit about the -- a recap of the
 7 transportation facilities, which includes construction of
 8 the expanded port facilities at Bethel, the cargo
 9 terminal, and also the port site -- proposed port site at
 10 Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim River. And that would involve
 11 about 2.8 million gallons of fuel storage, a 30-mile long
 12 mine access road from the Kuskokwim River to the mine
 13 site; and that would involve about 45 stream crossings, 13
 14 gravel pits, and a 5,000 foot airstrip at the mine. And
 15 this is also in Game Management Unit 19A.
 16 And that's the proposed port site at Jungjuk. So
 17 barges would supply the mine with fuel and cargo as
 18 discussed and involve about 64 cargo barge round trips and
 19 58 fuel barge round trips, which totals about 122 round
 20 trips annually. And that's from the Bethel port site to
 21 Jungjuk. That's about a 110-day shipping season.
 22 River barges would be transported by a tug pushing a
 23 four-barge configuration for each trip, and each fuel
 24 barge would carry about 1.29 million gallons of diesel
 25 fuel. The port at Jungjuk would be needed to supply the

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1 fuel and cargo to the wastewater treatment facility and
 2 also from the pit lake.
 3 Okay. So the preliminary analysis of the impacts to
 4 subsistence based on the alternatives outlined in the
 5 draft includes all six alternatives outlined in the EIS.
 6 And so some of you may have a copy of that report, which
 7 we have in the back. It's also in Appendix N of the EIS.
 8 And that's on page 409. We also have, I think, about 30
 9 copies, and you could also access it on the website, as
 10 well.
 11 So the following is an evaluation of the effects of
 12 the project proposal on subsistence uses and needs
 13 involving the three components of the project: the mine
 14 site, natural gas pipeline, and the transportation
 15 infrastructure.
 16 So regarding the mine, villages closest to the mine
 17 would potentially experience the most effects to
 18 subsistence, and that includes Napaimute and Crook Creek.
 19 Mine activities to the mine, such as drilling, blasting,
 20 power generation, would likely change the distribution of
 21 wildlife species important to subsistence, such as moose
 22 and caribou.
 23 Areas important to Crooked Creek for berry picking,
 24 wood cutting and hunting would be directly affected by the
 25 mine, and adjacent areas would potentially be contaminated

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1 with dust emissions containing various particulate
 2 materials from ore processing and from trucks on haul
 3 roads and access roads. And this can make the berry
 4 picking areas undesirable or unusable for subsistence
 5 uses.
 6 Water released from the mine during operations has
 7 the potential to affect salmon and resident fish
 8 populations important to subsistence, as well as the
 9 aquatic food web in Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River.
 10 And after mine closure, the pit lake, as Keith mentioned,
 11 would fill with untreated water that would not meet water
 12 quality standards that could potentially impact fish and
 13 wildlife.
 14 A water treatment plant that was discussed earlier
 15 would be built 50 years after mine closure to treat water
 16 from the pit that may or may not meet water quality
 17 standards for fish.
 18 Possible water releases from the mine during
 19 operations and after closure when the water is being
 20 pumped into the pit and after the water treatment plant is
 21 constructed may have the potential to impact fish in
 22 Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River, and that could
 23 result in significant restrictions to subsistence
 24 resources.
 25 Potential runoff from the tailings dam and pit lake

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1 would have the potential to contaminate resources and fish
 2 resources important both to the Crooked Creek and lower
 3 Kuskokwim River into perpetuity, impacting subsistence
 4 fish resources important to all communities from Crooked
 5 Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 6 For the pipeline -- this is a lot of information, so
 7 bear with us -- the potential effects to subsistence from
 8 construction and operation of a natural gas pipeline would
 9 affect the villages of Tyonek, Skwentna, Nikolai, McGrath,
 10 Takotna, as well as the downriver villages of Sleetmute,
 11 Stony River, Georgetown and Crooked Creek.
 12 And during construction, the effects of clearing the
 13 right-of-way -- trenching, drilling, for example -- and
 14 presence of machinery for pipeline transport would also
 15 have similar effects and may cause a redistribution of
 16 moose and caribou and fur bearers and negatively affect
 17 access to subsistence use areas and the availability of
 18 subsistence resources.
 19 During mine operations, the air strip would remain
 20 along the pipeline right-of-way at Farewell and would
 21 potentially increase access to subsistence resources by
 22 nonlocal residents using aircraft and increase competition
 23 for those subsistence resources along and adjacent to the
 24 pipeline right-of-way. And villages that could be
 25 negatively affected by increased access to and competition

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1 in the area include McGrath, Nicolai and Takotna.
 2 For the transportation infrastructure -- and this is
 3 the last component -- the potential effects to subsistence
 4 from transportation infrastructure, including barging of
 5 cargo and fuel and construction of a port at Jungjuk on
 6 the Kuskokwim River, would affect all villages on the
 7 river from Crooked Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim
 8 River.
 9 And impacts from barging include, as Keith mentioned,
 10 displacement and disruption of subsistence activities by
 11 barge traffic or reduced access to subsistence fishing
 12 activities and sites, such as set nets and fish wheels,
 13 along the river.
 14 Subsistence fish resources may also be negatively
 15 affected by the intensity of barge traffic as proposed in
 16 Alternative 2. And effects to the fish may increase when
 17 river water levels are low, as barge rafts will need to be
 18 uncoupled and barges towed individually or in pairs. This
 19 would require additional barge round trips or may include
 20 additional barge trips on the river and potentially
 21 increase impacts to subsistence fishers on the Kuskokwim
 22 River.
 23 So in the findings, after looking at these three
 24 components, the evaluation concludes that Alternative 2
 25 may result -- and that's "may" -- in significant

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1 restrictions to subsistence uses for the communities of
 2 Crooked Creek and Napaimute in relation to the mine site
 3 and the communities on the Kuskokwim River from barge
 4 traffic. And that includes, for example, Bethel,
 5 Napakiak, Napaskiak, Oscarville, Kwethluk, Akiakchak,
 6 Akiak, Tuluksak, Upper and Lower Kalskag -- let's see.
 7 What else? Chuathbaluk, Napaimute -- did I get that
 8 close? You can correct me if you want. And -- let's see.
 9 And also McGrath, Nikolai and Takotna.
 10 In addition, potential spill scenarios involving
 11 ocean and river barge release of diesel fuel, cyanide,
 12 mercury, tailings dam failure, and release of untreated
 13 water from the pit lake and tailings dam after mine
 14 closure may result in significant restriction to
 15 subsistence uses on the river for the communities listed
 16 above.
 17 So BLM has found that in its 810 preliminary analysis
 18 that Alternatives 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5A, 6 and the cumulative
 19 case considered in the EIS may significantly restrict
 20 subsistence uses. And so these findings, as Keith
 21 mentioned, require the BLM to conduct hearings. What's
 22 missing in this analysis is your input from all the
 23 communities that were identified in the earlier
 24 presentation. And that's the missing component for us to
 25 get to a final document. So we will conduct an 810

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1 subsistence hearing afterwards after your comments are
 2 made on the EIS. And we do welcome your testimony.
 3 Following the public hearings, what the outcome is,
 4 that a finding may be revised to will not significantly
 5 restrict based on changes to alternatives, new information
 6 coming from you, for example, or new mitigation measures
 7 resulting from the hearings or additional work on the EIS.
 8 And if a finding of may significantly restrict subsistence
 9 uses is not revised or the impacts can't be mitigated,
 10 there is a three-part determination that we have to make
 11 before we can proceed with the proposed project.
 12 So it could still proceed contingent on these three
 13 factors. And this is prepared only when there is a
 14 finding of may significantly restrict, and that
 15 determination will separately address each of these three
 16 required items that you see up there before you.
 17 And so they include, first of all, why such a
 18 significant restriction of subsistence uses is necessary
 19 and how it's consistent with sound management principles
 20 for multiple use of public land. The second one is how
 21 the activity, proposed activity will involve the minimal
 22 amount of public lands necessary to accomplish the
 23 project. And then lastly, what reasonable steps could be
 24 taken to minimize the adverse effects upon subsistence
 25 uses and resources. So after compliance with those three

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1 steps, BLM could or may proceed with a proposed action.
 2 So a little bit about comments. Very similar to the
 3 EIS, when you comment on the preliminary findings, the
 4 preliminary analysis, just as Keith mentioned, please
 5 consider what specific information you can give us to
 6 provide a substantive comment. Just like the EIS: Have
 7 we missed anything? What else should be included? What
 8 do you think is not right based on your use of the
 9 subsistence resources? That's what we need from you to
 10 get to a final document.
 11 On comments, very similar to the EIS, you can mail
 12 them. You can fax them. You can email them to the
 13 address above. And just like the EIS, the comment period
 14 ends on April 30th. And just like the EIS, comments that
 15 are provided on the preliminary analysis will also be
 16 included in the final report for subsistence analysis, as
 17 well. So thank you.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much,
 19 Mark. At this point in time, we are going to do the
 20 poster session. And would -- you know who I am. Jason,
 21 would you introduce yourself?
 22 **MS. NANCY DARIGO:** He just walked out.
 23 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** With me from the Army
 24 Corps of Engineers is Jason Brewer. He's also a project
 25 manager for the Corps working on the Donlin project.

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1 We would like to go through an introduction of the
 2 other federal and State folks in the room. You have met
 3 Mark, and I think he's discussed BLM's role. We will also
 4 introduce AECOM folks and Donlin folks so that you all can
 5 take a look at who the faces are in the room and get an
 6 idea of who you can talk to in relation to what you see on
 7 the posters or anything else you would like to talk about.
 8 **MR. JEFF BRUNO:** My name is Jeff Bruno.
 9 I'm here with the State of Alaska. As you may recall from
 10 the presentation earlier, there is a lot of State permits
 11 going on at the same time. Those permits are required to
 12 run in their own separate process, but as a cooperating
 13 agency, the State does try to integrate federal and State
 14 timelines. That being said, it can still be a little
 15 confusing, so my goal here is to hopefully answer any
 16 questions you have about State permitting and make sure
 17 you are aware of how to get involved in the State
 18 permitting process outside of this process.
 19 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Bill, would you
 20 like to introduce the folks you have with you?
 21 **MR. BILL CRAIG:** I'm Bill Craig with
 22 AECOM. And as Keith mentioned earlier, we are the
 23 third-party contractor helping to prepare the EIS. We are
 24 kind of an extension of Keith as a staff to prepare the
 25 EIS. And my team with me here today, first from McGrath,

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1 Alaska, is Donne Fleagle. So I will be standing over here
 2 [indicating] at these posters helping answer questions on
 3 what Donlin is proposing. And then also any questions you
 4 might have on spill risk. And then Nancy Darigo is our
 5 physical environment lead, and she will be over in this
 6 area [indicating] and kind of working with, I think, these
 7 four posters right here. And then we have Dave Every.
 8 He's our biological lead. He will be over here
 9 [indicating] answering questions on barge traffic and
 10 fisheries. And Amy Rosenthal in the back of the room, she
 11 will be in this area [indicating]. She's our social
 12 environment lead, and she will be answering questions on
 13 subsistence and socioeconomics.
 14 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** For the Donlin folks in
 15 the room, would you stand up and introduce yourselves and
 16 mention your role in the project.
 17 **MS. PATTY MCGRATH:** Hi. I'm Patty
 18 McGrath. I'm the permitting manager for Donlin Gold
 19 Project, and I want to encourage folks, if you have
 20 questions about the Environmental Impact Statement, to
 21 direct them to the agencies that are here since that's the
 22 document that they are developing. But if you have
 23 questions about the project, of course you can ask myself
 24 or Kurt.
 25 **MR. KURT PARKAN:** My name is Kurt Parkan.

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1 I'm the external affairs manager for Donlin Gold.
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. With that, we
 3 will take 30 to 45 minutes -- less time if you need less
 4 time, a little more time if you need more time -- to take
 5 a look at the proposed project and these posters, and then
 6 we will reconvene to take your comments on the draft EIS,
 7 follow that with testimony you have in relation to the 810
 8 hearing. So if there is anybody on the phone, we expect
 9 to reconvene and start taking comments in anywhere from 30
 10 minutes to 45 minutes, possibly less. Thank you.
 11 (Off the record.)
 12 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** So at this point in
 13 time, I'll open it up for comments on the Draft
 14 Environmental Impact Statement. As I mentioned earlier,
 15 Mary will capture your comments via a formal transcript,
 16 so we ask that if you would like to comment, that you
 17 approach the front of the room. We have got a couple of
 18 microphones up here that you can use.
 19 We ask that you clearly state your name so that Mary
 20 can record it. If you have any formal association, in
 21 other words, you are actually representing an entity, if
 22 you would state that, as well, then make your comment. We
 23 have about eight people who have pulled numbers out who
 24 would like to comment. A couple of those folks had to
 25 leave, but after we are done going through the folks that

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1 have numbers, then we will ask anybody else in the room
 2 who would like to comment to just make a comment. You
 3 don't have to have a number to comment. And if there is
 4 anybody on the phone, then we will go to those folks for
 5 their comment. So who has No. 1?
 6 **MS. DONNE FLEAGLE:** No. 1 has passed.
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. No. 2.
 8 **MS. DONNE FLEAGLE:** No. 2, Frank Miller.
 9 **MR. FRANK MILLER:** At this time I don't
 10 have nothing. So I'm going to decline, other than
 11 maybe --
 12 **MS. DONNE FLEAGLE:** No. 2 has declined.
 13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you, Chief
 14 Miller. No. 3.
 15 **MS. DONNE FLEAGLE:** No. 3 has declined.
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** No. 4.
 17 **MR. DANIEL ESAI:** My name is Dan Esai.
 18 I'm from the village of Nikolai. And this meeting is
 19 pretty informal -- informative. And thanks for letting me
 20 speak on behalf of the people that I represent.
 21 I'm a member of the Kuskokwim River Watershed Working
 22 Group, which is affiliated with the State for conserving
 23 our king salmon, Chinook. And I'm a tribal council member
 24 for Nikolai and a city council member for Nikolai.
 25 I'm not against the pipeline or anything like that,

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1 but it's just the environmental and subsistence issues
 2 that -- what my spiel is about.
 3 On the section from Farewell station to Big River,
 4 White Mountain station, on that original route, I wish
 5 they could -- the State and Donlin could reconsider to
 6 change it to the five miles north -- northwest of their
 7 original route because that's wintering grounds for
 8 caribou and moose. It's a wind-blown area. If they move
 9 that route, it will be in the timber and it will be job
 10 opportunities for local people.
 11 And our salmon are at critical numbers now, and we
 12 are working on that, too. And I don't know about the
 13 barge traffic, but you'll get input from downriver folks.
 14 I don't know how they are going to drift all that waves
 15 from the barge action.
 16 We are going to bring -- we are going to have a
 17 meeting in Bethel at the end of March, so if you guys want
 18 to go over there, it would be good for you all to listen
 19 in.
 20 I'm not good at public speaking, but I'm just winging
 21 it. I don't have nothing written down.
 22 You have to wear many hats to live out here in the
 23 Bush. And I worked underground with some of these men
 24 from Nikolai before at Nixon Fork Mine. And I'm in favor
 25 the project, but just that -- like they rerouted the Jones

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1 Creek and the Rhone part. I wish you could consider
 2 rerouting that. And that's all I have to say.
 3 I thank you all for letting me speak. And have a
 4 good day.
 5 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir. Those
 6 are very good comments. No. 5. Okay. No. 6. And I
 7 forgot to mention, if you all would stand behind the
 8 speaker. If we put this microphone in front of the
 9 speaker, we get a whole lot of nasty feedback.
 10 **MR. VERNON JOHN:** My name is Vernon John.
 11 I'm the Nikolai tribal transportation program coordinator.
 12 And there is a couple of stuff during this presentation
 13 that I'd like to bring up. And some of it has to do with
 14 subsistence.
 15 What's going to happen to the sheep when the
 16 helicopters start coming in and out? What's going to
 17 happen to the buffalo herd up at there near the mountains,
 18 Farewell burn? And our local sheefish got a couple of
 19 spawning areas that are going to be affected, whether they
 20 are going to be affected or not. Our king salmon fishing
 21 area, our major one is called Salmon River. And how much
 22 is that going to be affected? That's only, like, 40 miles
 23 away from where they are going to put the pipeline in the
 24 waters. The headwaters go through that area.
 25 And for -- and for that -- if this pipeline does go

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1 through, I'd recommend that we build a diesel line because
 2 that would benefit everybody in the region because we all
 3 have diesel power plants and, therefore, it would be
 4 cheaper to have our line shipped over land instead of
 5 being flown in or bought by barge.
 6 And so therefore, there would have to be a road
 7 system. There is no ifs, ands or buts about it. They are
 8 saying it's just a right-of-way, but in order to take care
 9 of a gas line, you are going to have to have a road
 10 system.
 11 So this is our time and point to put our words on how
 12 we want it built. And this is going to happen whether we
 13 like it or not. And all this stuff is going to affect our
 14 subsistence way of life that we have. Mostly the moose
 15 from up there is going to come down. That means all the
 16 big bulls are going to be in this area. But for fishing
 17 and king salmon fishing, we finally got it back within the
 18 last two years. Numbers are really up. For sheefish, I
 19 can't really say the numbers on that. Caribou herd, we
 20 have lost it. I think, from what I've heard, they are
 21 coming back in little groups.
 22 And also you mentioned there is 80 gravel pits on
 23 that road. And I'd like to see the route where they are
 24 going to put the gravel pits because that means they are
 25 going to be using explosives. It's going to be chasing

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1 the game away. And the most common explosive they use is
 2 the cheapest, which is ANFO. That's fertilizer and
 3 diesel. Therefore, it's going to affect wildlife and the
 4 environmental impact because if you put fertilizer, plants
 5 grow bigger. If you put fertilizer in the water, it
 6 doesn't poison the water. It makes the plants in the
 7 water bigger; therefore, they suffocate and it kills the
 8 creek. That's how ANFO works. It doesn't poison it, just
 9 to let you know.

10 And I want to move on. That bargaining system, I'm just
 11 totally against this because there is no infrastructure
 12 for that. Jungjuk is what they are saying? The one that
 13 caught my eye was Jungjuk. They showed the slide on that.
 14 And there it's gravel bars. Therefore, they are either
 15 going to have to dredge it to make it a -- make an
 16 infrastructure for there so they could bring their
 17 equipment and all their fuel up. There is a lot of stuff.

18 But the most positive thing is it will bring
 19 environmental work. It brings work to the people in the
 20 poorest region of Alaska. And I think that's something
 21 that's a real positive.

22 But we have a chance to make our opinion on this and
 23 say how can we help our community better -- better help
 24 our communities is what I'm trying to say because we have
 25 a chance to do it now. And we have a say in how it should

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1 be done and what can we do better.
 2 315 miles of gas line and those 80 gravel pits also
 3 really bothers me because, I mean, do we really need 80
 4 gravel pits and 315 miles of gas line? The more pits you
 5 have, the more game you are going to scare off because you
 6 will be using explosives.

7 Other than that, that's all I have to say on that. I
 8 just want to thank you for your time in getting my point
 9 across.

10 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir, for
 11 your comments. No. 7.

12 **MS. KELLIE PEIRCE:** Good afternoon. My
 13 name is Kellie Peirce. I'm a resident here in McGrath.
 14 I'm also a landowner out in the Farewell area. And most
 15 of my comments today are going to be geared towards the
 16 pipeline and that area out in the Farewell area and the
 17 Alaska Range.

18 I have worn many hats living in the Bush for many
 19 years in Alaska. I have my Master's of Science degree in
 20 wildlife biology. I studied brown bears for many years.
 21 And I'm a photographer and I have a photography business,
 22 which a good percentage of my pictures have been shot out
 23 in the Farewell area. I'm a mom. I am home schooling, so
 24 I have become a teacher this year. And a wife, a
 25 commercial pilot and a hunter, a conservationist.

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1 And the project definitely concerns me. I understand
 2 the importance of having an economy, being able to use the
 3 resources around us. I love the idea of more jobs for
 4 local people. But my background has made me who I am, and
 5 I do have a lot of concerns about the actual mine itself
 6 in terms of the ability logistically for the mining to
 7 occur in a way that's not going to impact local people,
 8 subsistence opportunities, hunting opportunities for the
 9 local people. And it's just pretty hard to do a project
 10 this big without having spills and leaks. And, you know,
 11 a lot of things go wrong.

12 Alaska is a pretty hard place to do construction.
 13 Many of us already know that. And so a lot of my comments
 14 are going to be related to those types of concerns.

15 I also wanted to say I'm really grateful that we live
 16 in a country where we can speak up. And you know, a lot
 17 of places in the world you can't speak up. So thank you
 18 for letting me speak this afternoon. I appreciate the
 19 opportunity. I haven't submitted my written comments, but
 20 I will be.

21 And I'm going to start with -- well, I have a lot, so
 22 I don't want to take up too much time because I know there
 23 are people who have to travel. But I do want to touch on
 24 some of these. Some I'll elaborate on; others I'll keep
 25 it short.

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1 So first of all, the ecological impacts. I'm really
 2 concerned about how the pipeline is going to affect the
 3 hydrology of the area. Erosion issues, the fish ecology
 4 issues. One of our favorite things to do for our family
 5 in June when the sheefish run is to go out and catch
 6 sheefish. And after a long winter, it's so nice to have a
 7 big fresh fish to fry up in the pan. Some of their
 8 spawning occurs at the headwaters of some of the creeks up
 9 by the Alaska Range. And I -- you know, there is just so
 10 much that we don't know about the ecology of some of our
 11 species. We do know some things, but there is just a lot
 12 we don't know.

13 And living in Alaska, it's just such a fragile place.
 14 The tundra is fragile. It takes, you know, 100 years for
 15 an inch of lichen to grow. The wind out there in the
 16 Alaska Range, I mean, I've spent many a night getting
 17 practically blown away, as I'm sure many of you have, too,
 18 sheep hunting and just hiking in the mountains out there.
 19 It's a harsh environment. And how is it going to handle
 20 the construction? How is it going to handle the dozers.

21 There is a lot of talk about we are going to
 22 rehabilitate it and it will look great, just like almost
 23 like we weren't even there. But I just have my doubts
 24 about that. I mean, in a place like Pennsylvania where I
 25 lived for a number of years growing up, yeah, I mean, you

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1 can carve out a pretty big spot and then it just heals
 2 itself. The growing season is a lot longer. The soils
 3 are different. Alaska is just a whole different ball game
 4 in terms of trying to rehabilitate an area that's been
 5 really ripped up. So I have concerns there.
 6 Fault zones concerns. And then I've got concerns
 7 related to the logistics, again, of being able to build a
 8 pipeline with all these aircraft, all these airstrips, the
 9 amount of fuel, hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel
 10 that it's going to take to -- you know, the
 11 infrastructure, to keep all these pieces of machinery
 12 going, the camps and whatnot.
 13 And I mean, we all know, if you just gas up your
 14 airplane, you know, it goes over and it spills. And then
 15 there is just the potential when you are storing that much
 16 fuel for spills. So I'm kind of concerned about that.
 17 Not kind of. I am very concerned.
 18 I'm also concerned about the noise pollution that the
 19 other gentleman mentioned. And it's such a peaceful place
 20 out in Farewell. And for those of you who have been out
 21 there, it's really a cool place. I mean, it's like the
 22 kind of place that could have been made a national park.
 23 We just have so many places like that in Alaska, we are so
 24 lucky here in our state. But the noise of, you know, just
 25 aircraft and the increased traffic, helicopters and

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1 whatnot, that impacts people recreationally. That impacts
 2 the commercial guide operators when they are trying to
 3 guide their folks. And, you know, people do make a living
 4 out there.
 5 And I'm just wondering, you know, how much traffic is
 6 going to be going on and how is that going to be camping
 7 in your tent. You know, it gets pretty noisy in the fall
 8 with the hunters out there. That's a pretty small chunk
 9 of time out of the year. But, you know, what are we going
 10 to be looking at?
 11 And then just -- you know, the sheep do not like
 12 noise and aircraft. I mean, everybody kind of knows that.
 13 They don't like to be disturbed. And they are already in
 14 such a harsh habitat and they have such a harsh living
 15 environment, do we really want to push them a little bit
 16 more over that edge to where the numbers in Alaska-wide
 17 aren't doing so well with sheep populations. So I think
 18 that's another thing that others have brought up and
 19 others probably will bring up. But that's a concern I
 20 have.
 21 So moving on, the bison. So the Great Plains bison
 22 population out there is a really cool population because
 23 genetically they are very pure. We all know the bison
 24 almost got wiped out in the Lower 48. A lot of the ones
 25 that are remnants from that initial bottleneck of the

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1 population genetically were mixed with cattle genes. So
 2 what's really cool about that bison herd out at Farewell
 3 is it's genetically a really pure herd, which is a really
 4 unique thing, which I think we need to really to, for our
 5 Alaska heritage and our national heritage, be aware that
 6 it's, you know -- they are animals with a really unique
 7 gene pool that's very important for the population.
 8 And I'm also concerned with all the transport of the
 9 dozers. Now, dozers are one of the number one -- heavy
 10 equipment in general one of the number one transporters of
 11 invasive species into areas. Even when you wash them off,
 12 it's pretty hard sometimes to get those seeds off. So if
 13 we get some invasive species in there, some can kill large
 14 animals, small animals, dogs; foxtail, of course, being
 15 one of the really common ones.
 16 And the bison are all on the Farewell runway, and
 17 they are all up and down in that transition zone along the
 18 Alaska Range. And so I have concerns about what impacts
 19 that could have on that really cool population out there.
 20 And I wanted to touch also a little bit more on the
 21 transition zone, which is that little section of habitat
 22 when you come down to the base of the mountains, and then
 23 there is this little section where if you have been out
 24 there in the fall, it's amazing how many animals
 25 congregate in that area. It's not only moose that are in

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1 there, but we saw just gobs of black bears. And if you do
 2 any flying that time of year, it's just amazing. It just
 3 sucks them right in. And there is some kind of vegetation
 4 that they love in that area and they are, you know,
 5 grazing away in those meadows.
 6 And there is also some other neat -- we have seen
 7 some grizzly bear diggings in a habitat -- I've never
 8 known grizzly bears to really forage around a lot in it.
 9 I want to do more research and look up in the literature
 10 because I used to be very familiar with all the literature
 11 that had ever been published on brown and grizzly bears
 12 back when I was working as a professional wildlife
 13 biologist. But it's a pretty cool thing, some of the
 14 things that happen out there. Lots of bird species,
 15 golden eagles, and lots of different bird species are out
 16 there as well. So I have concerns about them, as well,
 17 and how they are going to handle the disturbance.
 18 One of the big ones to me is the loss of the scenic
 19 value of the region. A lot of people do use the area
 20 recreationally: Hunters, commercial guides, hikers,
 21 people that want to go berry pick; trappers are out there.
 22 And to me sitting out there and seeing a big swath cut
 23 through the trees, you know, it's just -- it's just -- it
 24 just almost brings tears to my eyes just thinking about
 25 bulldozers plowing through that area, especially in that

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1 critical habitat area, the transition zone, but through
 2 the mountains itself because that's just -- once you start
 3 in an area like that, you can't go back.
 4 And again, I like -- I want to say that I like the
 5 idea of having more jobs for people and being able to use
 6 a resource that's worth a lot of money. I mean, that all
 7 sounds good, but can we do it in a way that it's going to
 8 minimize the impacts. Of course, that's why we are all
 9 here. We're trying to solve some of these hard problems.
 10 So real loss of wildness.
 11 One thing that's surprising to me -- maybe not so
 12 surprising, but I think it's super cool how there are
 13 people in Europe where there is just so many more people
 14 and it's so crowded, and they have so many challenges over
 15 there. Well, a lot of the people over there, they want to
 16 come here and live. We met a couple from -- a couple of
 17 folks from New Hampshire that recently bought a cabin in
 18 the local area, and they are going to be coming more and
 19 more just because they want to get away from it all.
 20 There are Norwegian folks that come up and they use Dick's
 21 cabin up by Takotna.
 22 And there are all these folks that do the Iditarod
 23 Trail Invitational. I'm trying to think what they call it
 24 now. I think they call it that. And a lot of those folks
 25 are from Germany and they're from Italy where they used to

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1 have mountains and wildness, but that was hundreds of
 2 years ago. We still have it here, and they still want to
 3 come here and use that. I think that that is just so
 4 neat. And they are out there in the Alaska Range, too, in
 5 these wild areas. But is it going to be wild when there
 6 is bulldozers moving all over the place and helicopters
 7 zooming around and the animals are getting run off? And
 8 you know, it's just -- it's one thing to consider.
 9 So the loss of the scenic value, loss of the
 10 wildness. And then there is also impacts -- there is a
 11 lot of research on how putting one path in, you know, out
 12 west in the United States in the Lower 48, you know, it
 13 just -- once you get a path in there, boy, the people just
 14 come.
 15 And one other concern I have is just the masses from
 16 Anchorage coming in. Now, it's a pretty popular area
 17 during the hunting season, but it's very limited still
 18 because of the cost of getting there. People have to fly
 19 in. But once you make it more accessible and you do the
 20 trail clearing, other people are going to come. And I
 21 just wonder how that's going to impact the people that
 22 subsist out there, that trap out there for a living and
 23 get their moose out there during the winter hunt. And so
 24 those kinds of things really concern me.
 25 We live out here because I lived in Anchorage, and I

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1 don't want to be around all those people. And also people
 2 have an investment. People in McGrath who live here,
 3 that's our back yard out there where the pipeline is going
 4 through.
 5 And in terms of benefits, you know, some people have
 6 talked about maybe we can tap into the gas pipeline at
 7 some point, but Lucky brought up a good point at a meeting
 8 a couple weeks ago; that's going to be like \$300 million
 9 at least, or something, to build that. And for a town of
 10 300 people? We are not millionaires out here. Is that
 11 economically feasible? Is that really going to be a
 12 viable energy source for us? And the answer really is 99
 13 percent no, it's probably not going to be.
 14 So with that potential kind of pushed aside, I'm
 15 reaching for what are the benefits for McGrath for having
 16 the pipeline out there? Now, the mine in its operation,
 17 yeah, that's one thing, but --
 18 Another point I wanted to bring up is Alaska TV
 19 reality shows are so popular now, and the majority of
 20 those are -- you know, the major theme is wildness. And
 21 they are so popular nationally and internationally. And
 22 there is a reason why, because of the wildness. So I
 23 would like to see the wildness stay. If the pipeline has
 24 to go in, I would definitely want to see it moved so that
 25 it doesn't hug right up against the mountains where the

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1 game really piles up. The caribou herds, I've seen those
 2 in March out there. And I would like it to be moved
 3 further north away from the mountains. I think that the
 4 impact would be less that way for some of these points
 5 I've brought up.
 6 And I touched a little bit on the subsistence issues.
 7 But we do have some guides up in Nikolai and some other
 8 folks that do make a living. I do make a living on some
 9 of my photographs that I take out there. And, you know,
 10 are people really going to want to buy a picture of the
 11 north side of Denali with a huge swath of bulldozers in
 12 it? No. The answer is no, they are not going to want to.
 13 So these are more personal things that I'm touching on now
 14 but, of course, they are close to my heart.
 15 And then the last one that I want to mention -- and
 16 then I'll be done -- is I am a landowner out in the
 17 Farewell area. And since I was 12 I dreamed of having a
 18 cabin in the middle of nowhere. And I've saved and I've
 19 worked and I've worked hard in order to get a place like
 20 that. And I do have land out there. My family has land.
 21 And we have had dreams. I've had dreams of having my own
 22 cabin, you know, in the middle of nowhere, my own for as
 23 long as I'm here, anyway, which is just a short period of
 24 time on earth for all of us.
 25 But I don't want to sit in a rocking chair on my

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1 porch and look out at a swath and bulldozers, you know,
 2 scouring the earth as I'm sitting there in my rocking
 3 chair. And the pipeline is literally going through my
 4 backyard. It's not on my land, but it is very, very close
 5 to my land. And when I got the land, that was not my
 6 dream to watch bulldozers bulldozing a trail. And so
 7 that's another reason, a personal reason that I really
 8 would like it to be moved.
 9 Now, I didn't mention, but I did used to work for the
 10 Army for a while in Alaska, and one of my job duties was
 11 to assess disturbance that the military was having and try
 12 to mitigate that. So I'm familiar with the different
 13 ecological habitats that we have in Alaska, the challenges
 14 that we have here in our state for trying to rehabilitate
 15 areas that have been disturbed, and there are many, and
 16 they are challenging.
 17 And I think I got most of my points. And I just
 18 wanted to thank you again. If you are for the project,
 19 please speak up, and if you are -- have concerns about the
 20 project, please speak up. I would just encourage everyone
 21 in this room to speak up, to write your comments in about
 22 the project. We live in a country, like I said, where we
 23 can speak. And so many places you just can't do that.
 24 The government just does what it wants and people just do
 25 what they want.

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1 So it's a real blessing and a real privilege for us
 2 to be able to stand up and speak and do it in a very
 3 respectful way. And we all have different ideas and
 4 different opinions and concerns.
 5 And I think it's a wonderful thing that we are able
 6 to come together and to all have a chance to discuss our
 7 concerns and our opinions. And I think with that, I'm
 8 going to finally pass it on.
 9 So thank you for your time.
 10 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
 11 We appreciate your comments. They are very good comments.
 12 No. 8.
 13 **MS. KELLIE PEIRCE:** No. 8 is going to
 14 pass.
 15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Donne, did anybody pick
 16 up 9?
 17 **MS. DONNE FLEAGLE:** No, sir.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Is there anybody on the
 19 phone at this point --
 20 **MR. BOB SATTLER:** Thanks for the
 21 opportunity. My name is Bob Sattler. I'm with Tanana
 22 Chiefs Conference out of Fairbanks. And I do appreciate
 23 the opportunity to make a few comments. Our TCC, which
 24 most of you know, is the regional nonprofit organization
 25 for the tribal entities here in the upper Kuskokwim. So

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1 you are directed by our president, Victor Joseph, to come
 2 and listen in on concerns.
 3 Bob Sattler. I'm the environmental quality analyst.
 4 I look at these kinds of documents TCC region-wide. And
 5 I'm here with a couple other staffers. Paul Mayo back
 6 here, he's the director of natural and cultural resources
 7 at TCC. And Tobi Maracle in the front here, she's working
 8 with us to look into mining, sort of the mining genre of
 9 environmental impacts.
 10 I want to let all of you, the local residents, know
 11 that we are available to help you come up with written
 12 comments. We are more than willing to -- we are sort of
 13 charged with assisting on that topic and facilitating you
 14 getting your voice into the process.
 15 I'm not going to take too much time, but before
 16 coming here, I talked to Gina a little bit. I haven't
 17 talked to her very extensively. And I know Kevin from
 18 working here before, so we got into a conversation.
 19 Talked to Frank here a little bit. I'll follow up with
 20 him, certainly. And then Bernie, I'll talk to him a
 21 little more before April 30th to get some more comments
 22 in.
 23 But my specialty is the National Environmental Policy
 24 Act, and I'm also an archeologist at TCC, so I have been
 25 here previously.

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1 And I'm grateful. Early on in your presentation you
 2 said you did change the purpose and needs statement of
 3 this EIS. When I began reviewing it, it really was a
 4 surprise that, in that statement, which is sort of the
 5 keynote theme, that it did refer to the shareholders of
 6 that one region. And I know that folks in this region are
 7 very interested in the project for multiple reasons. So
 8 I'm glad to see that was changed because that does set the
 9 tone to the whole environmental review and the reason why
 10 they're doing it.
 11 So by removing that, I think it expands and it may be
 12 more inclusive. Not that people here have been excluded,
 13 but the point is that it would be more inclusive of a
 14 broader audience by removing that statement. So it's sort
 15 of interesting to see that.
 16 Somebody did mention a third-party contractor process
 17 so that in the neutral analysis they have hired somebody
 18 else, and BLM is now doing the analysis. Well, the 810
 19 analysis you have done internally with your agency, right?
 20 But the Army Corps has hired the contractors who are in
 21 the audience to do the professional analysis, and they are
 22 people that are very well trained, very smart people.
 23 I've worked with many of them in a variety of consulting
 24 firms.
 25 Some of the issues have already been stated. I don't

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1 want to go over those too extensive, but access is one.
 2 We heard that extensively. The airports, not just
 3 Farewell, but all the other airports and the subsistence
 4 issues, quite dialed up.
 5 But the substantive novel idea I'd like to bring in
 6 is in reviewing the Executive Summary, there is a charge
 7 that BLM will require an adaptive management policy or a
 8 procedure if they permit the project. And in the adaptive
 9 management theme, the agency would require the project
 10 proponent, in this case Donlin Mine, to have a procedure
 11 over the course of the life of the project to keep local
 12 people involved in the decision-making of, say,
 13 inadvertent impacts. And so I would say that in that
 14 adaptive management policy that these villages in the
 15 upper Kuskokwim be involved in that so they have a voice
 16 throughout the entire life of the project.
 17 And just in discussions today, I have had a couple
 18 conversations here about the tribal cooperating agencies
 19 that have been involved so far. Maybe there needs to be a
 20 consideration of adding these upper Kuskokwim villages in
 21 some capacity as a cooperating agency. And for you folks
 22 that may not know that, it will give you a seat at the
 23 table of discussing these issues with the agency
 24 officials, the contractors is more of a secondary thing;
 25 the decisionmakers, fundamentally. So I think that's very

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1 important.
 2 I don't have much more here. I just want to make a
 3 couple more comments. Since you were asking about
 4 technical comments, this whole bargaining system, as I
 5 understood it today, would be vastly dialed up. And I
 6 haven't read the whole EIS. I've read the Executive
 7 Summary, but I do know from experiences on the upper Yukon
 8 River that erosion is a major factor when large boats are
 9 going through the river during high water. During low
 10 water it's not too bad, but impact -- because the waves
 11 are hitting the gravel bars at the base of those banks.
 12 But at high water, those large waves that hit those banks
 13 radically change the erosion regime of the river. And of
 14 course, increased erosion contributes to the shoals or the
 15 shallow areas which somebody mentioned here today. So
 16 that's a major consideration.
 17 Another thing in the upper Yukon is it's -- with the
 18 large boat there, even on low water, the large wakes would
 19 during the middle of summer -- I guess it was the spring
 20 more so when the fry were going out, often the waves would
 21 go up onto the bank. Those little fry were going out to
 22 sea. And along the shoreline in many cases they would get
 23 washed up onto the shore and be stranded. So you can -- I
 24 have been able to observe this. There would be hundreds
 25 of little fry dried up on the gravel bars. So that's

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1 something of a technical consideration. You were asking
 2 about technical aspects of the analysis.
 3 And the last thing I'll say is that as part of my
 4 duties, myself and others, we are going to do over the
 5 next couple of years a review of all the environmental
 6 studies in the TCC region starting from the Rampart Dam,
 7 Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and now the Donlin Creek Mine.
 8 I've got to say this is a very extensive project. Up to
 9 this point, the analysis has been more extensive than most
 10 other environmental reviews of projects within the TCC
 11 region.
 12 So I'd strongly encourage you to try to get a grip on
 13 it, talk to some technical people. I know the Kuskokwim
 14 Watershed Group is going to be here next week to assist in
 15 understanding the document and preparing comments. Feel
 16 free to talk to myself, Paul or Tobi. We can assist
 17 further to meet this deadline. TCC will make more
 18 expansive written comments by that April 30 deadline.
 19 So with that, that's all I have. And thank you. I
 20 really appreciate the opportunity. It's been an excellent
 21 presentation by all the agency officials here.
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
 23 very much for your comments. Is there anybody else in the
 24 room who would like to comment? Okay. Is there anybody
 25 on the phone who would like to make a comment on the Draft

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1 Environmental Impact Statement? Okay.
 2 Mary, would you close your file for the Draft
 3 Environmental Impact Statement. And when you are ready,
 4 open a file for the 810 hearing. Mr. Spencer with the
 5 Bureau of Land Management will initiate the formal 810
 6 ANILCA hearing, and you will have an opportunity in a few
 7 moments to give testimony in relation to potential
 8 subsistence impacts of the project.
 9 (Proceedings adjourned at 5:53 p.m.)
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