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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

ST. MARY'S, ALASKA

Taken March 1, 2016
Commencing at 6:27 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 62, inclusive

Taken at
St. Mary's City Hall
St. Mary's, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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1 For U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:
 2 Keith Gordon
 3 Project Manager
 4 For Alaska Department of Natural Resources:
 5 Mark Morones
 6 Projects Coordinator
 7 For AECOM:
 8 Nancy Darigo
 9 Physical Science Lead
 10 Jessica Evans
 11 Public Involvement Lead
 12 David Every
 13 Biological Science Lead
 14 Donne Fleagle
 15 Senior Rural Outreach Lead
 16 Amy Rosenthal
 17 Social Science Lead
 18 Yup'ik Translator:
 19 John Active
 20 Taken by:
 21 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR
 22
 23 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
 24 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
 25 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
 Public within and for the State of Alaska.

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1 neither a proponent for nor an opponent of the proposed
 2 Donlin Gold project. At this point in time we are simply
 3 trying to facilitate the development of a
 4 middle-of-the-road analysis of the potential effects of
 5 the project and disclose that to you all so that you all
 6 can comment back to us and tell us whether or not we
 7 understand the potential impacts of the project and the
 8 effects of it throughout the whole regionThe agenda for
 9 this evening, this agenda relates to most of the meetings
 10 we are doing. What we will do is an opening presentation
 11 tonight that will take maybe 30 minutes or slightly more
 12 just to give you a little background of what Donlin is
 13 proposing and where we are at in the process and how you
 14 can comment to us.
 15 As I mentioned, we are developing this Environmental
 16 Impact Statement. Well, the Environmental Impact
 17 Statement is in a draft form, and what we are doing by way
 18 of these meetings is attempting to facilitate comments
 19 from folks in the region that could be impacted by the
 20 project if it's constructed. So we will talk a little bit
 21 about that as we go through the process.
 22 The whole intent primarily of this presentation is to
 23 give you information regarding how you can comment to us
 24 so that we can make sure we have done an appropriate level
 25 of analysis and fully understand the potential effects of

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** We are planning to
 3 introduce everybody that came along today, but we were
 4 thinking we would do that at the end of this first
 5 presentation that gives you a little bit of background
 6 about what we're here to talk about tonight so that, when
 7 you go to look at these posters, you know who the folks
 8 are in the room that you might want to talk to.
 9 So as the mayor mentioned, my name is Keith Gordon.
 10 I'm a project manager with the United States Army Corps of
 11 Engineers Alaska District. I'm the Corps' regulatory
 12 project manager for the proposed Donlin project.
 13 The Army Corps of Engineers is the lead federal
 14 entity for development of the Environmental Impact
 15 Statement related to the proposed Donlin project simply
 16 because of our role by way of law, rule, regulation as it
 17 relates to the National Environmental Policy Act.
 18 We have 11 entities assisting us in development of
 19 the EIS; federal, State and tribal entities, as you can
 20 see on the bottom of the screen. And I'll talk about
 21 these folks a little bit off and on as we go throughout
 22 the program.
 23 It's important to note that not only as lead federal
 24 agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, but by
 25 way of our own authorities, the Army Corps of Engineers is

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1 the proposed project in this region.
 2 So after this presentation, then I'll ask all the
 3 folks that are here this evening that came along to
 4 introduce themselves, tell you who they are, what their
 5 role is in the project. And then after that we will go to
 6 a poster session. We have got a dozen posters on the
 7 wall. Three of them over here depict Donlin's proposed
 8 project, and the other nine depict potential impacts of
 9 the project in relation to major resource issues that were
 10 identified for us by coming out to this community and
 11 others throughout the region during the scoping process.
 12 And that's everything from subsistence to socioeconomics
 13 to spill risk to water quality, et cetera. So it's a wide
 14 variety of issues.
 15 After you all have had whatever time you feel is
 16 functional to look at these posters and get some questions
 17 answered with the folks that came along, we will reconvene
 18 and take your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact
 19 Statement. This is one of the opportunities you have to
 20 comment. You don't have to give us all your comments
 21 tonight. If you don't want to comment tonight, you can
 22 certainly comment later. I'll give you more information
 23 about that as we go through it.
 24 One thing I would note, that when you do comment, we
 25 are asking that folks come up to the front of the room and

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1 make your comments because, for our purposes, to make sure
 2 that we accurately capture your comments in the Final
 3 Environmental Impact Statement, which is where your
 4 comments and our responses will appear, Mary Vavrik will
 5 document your comments. She's a court reporter. And so
 6 if you can come up to the front of the room when you make
 7 your comments, that will facilitate her capturing them and
 8 make sure we are responding to the comment correctly.
 9 In some of the communities we are doing BLM 810
 10 ANILCA subsistence hearings. We are not doing that here
 11 tonight simply because BLM doesn't have a finding that
 12 generates a requirement to have a subsistence hearing in
 13 this particular community.
 14 Okay. Very briefly, I'll give you a little bit of
 15 information about what Donlin is proposing by way of their
 16 project. I think most of you are familiar with it, but
 17 just in case, this is Donlin's proposed project. And
 18 there is a poster over on the wall over here that depicts
 19 the same thing that you can take a look at and ask more
 20 questions about when the presentation is over.
 21 There are three primary components to Donlin's
 22 proposed project. Number one on the screen is the pit
 23 that Donlin is proposing to construct. It actually starts
 24 out as two pits, morphs into a single pit if the project
 25 is permitted. That pit would be, depending on whether you

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1 measure the depth from the low side or the high side,
 2 either 1,100 feet deep or 1,850 feet deep. It's
 3 approximately 2.2 square miles in size. And when mining
 4 is complete, it would take 50 to 55 years to fill with
 5 water and effectively be a lake in perpetuity.
 6 The next primary component of the project is the
 7 tailings storage facility. Obviously, what Donlin wants
 8 to do is mine gold ore, crush it, remove the gold. Well,
 9 tailings are what's left over after you crush ore. It's
 10 just tiny bits of rock. And they are proposing a tailings
 11 disposal methodology that includes a given quantity of
 12 water in with the tailings, and that's what would be
 13 behind this tailings dam that you can see on the screen.
 14 That facility, to give you an idea of scale, would be
 15 about 3.5 square miles in size.
 16 The third primary component of the mine site is the
 17 waste rock facility. Waste rock is either the overburden
 18 that's removed, the rock that is removed to get to the
 19 ore, or it's ore that has so little gold in it that it's
 20 just not economic to process it through the mill. So that
 21 rock goes to the waste rock facility. That facility also
 22 is about 3.5 square miles in size.
 23 There is a variety of other components, as you can
 24 see, related to the mine site, including the mill
 25 facility, power plants, et cetera. Those you can take a

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1 closer look at on the poster over here. And if you have
 2 any questions, we can address them.
 3 As I think I failed to mention, there is three
 4 primary components to the overall project. There is three
 5 primary components to the mine site, but there is three
 6 primary components to the overall project. One is the
 7 mine site, the second is the transportation
 8 infrastructure, and the third is the pipeline.
 9 This is the second primary component of the overall
 10 project. The pink and red blob in the upper middle of the
 11 screen is the mine site that Donlin is proposing to
 12 construct. If constructed, it would be constructed about
 13 ten miles north of Crooked Creek, and it would be accessed
 14 from the Kuskokwim River by that red line, which is a
 15 30-mile road that they are proposing to build from the
 16 Kuskokwim River to the mine site. And as you can see,
 17 there is a variety of potential gravel pits that might
 18 need to be constructed along it to either construct it or
 19 maintain it.
 20 There is a number of other facilities that relate to
 21 transportation. If the road is built down to the
 22 Kuskokwim River, a new port would need to be built.
 23 That's the Jungjuk port. That port would be an industrial
 24 port designed specifically to facilitate mining.
 25 The second primary component is an airstrip. There

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1 is a 5,000-foot airstrip that would be used for airborne
 2 access into the project. There are camp facilities both
 3 for construction and operations. And then between the
 4 port site and the mine site there is a proposal to store
 5 40 million gallons of diesel every year. The project as
 6 proposed would burn approximately 40 million gallons of
 7 diesel a year to operate.
 8 I don't believe I mentioned that -- well, the project
 9 is proposed to operate for 27 and a half years, but we
 10 will see that in a little more detail in the next slide.
 11 The third primary component of the overall project is
 12 the pipeline that would supply natural gas to the project.
 13 That's what the mill facilities and most of the other
 14 facilities would operate off of. That 40 million gallons
 15 of diesel I mentioned would be used to power the mining
 16 equipment, rock haul trucks, et cetera. Natural gas is
 17 what would power the mill facilities, camp facilities,
 18 et cetera. That is a 315-mile pipeline that would run
 19 from the western side of Cook Inlet through the Alaska
 20 Range over to the mine site itself. It's proposed to be a
 21 14-inch diameter buried steel pipeline.
 22 The project, if constructed, would take approximately
 23 three to four years to construct, operate as proposed for
 24 about 27 and a half years, and then closure, reclamation.
 25 Closure and reclamation don't necessarily happen the day

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1 mining ceases. Closure actually starts anytime Donlin is
 2 completely done with a facility or some piece of
 3 infrastructure that they know they are not going to have
 4 any use for. So just during the construction phase, there
 5 are some things that will be constructed and be of
 6 temporary use and then can be reclaimed as soon as they
 7 are no longer needed for the construction process.
 8 As far as the project itself, there is a variety of
 9 facilities that may need to be constructed and exist for
 10 some period of mining, and then maybe ten years into the
 11 project, or whatever the life of that particular facility
 12 is, it would then be reclaimed before we get to the
 13 closure of mining. The vast majority of reclamation and
 14 closure of various facilities would occur at the end of
 15 mining.
 16 And of course, as you can see, some facilities would
 17 never be closed out. The pit lake would last forever.
 18 The tailings storage facility, the waste rock facilities,
 19 they are just landscape features there that last forever.
 20 There is a host of federal permits needed for the
 21 project, as well as State permits. There is over 100
 22 permits, authorizations, leases, et cetera, required for
 23 this project to go forward. So what we are doing in the
 24 Environmental Impact Statement is analyzing the potential
 25 impacts related to some of those, primarily federal

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1 permits, the vast majority of State permits, et cetera.
 2 But as I mentioned, the Army Corps of Engineers is
 3 neither a proponent of the project nor an opponent of the
 4 project. We do have the responsibility under Section 404
 5 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and
 6 Harbors Act to issue permits for the project if we feel we
 7 can permit it. But it's important to note that neither
 8 our decision regarding our authorities, nor virtually any
 9 of the other entities' decisions regarding their
 10 authorities require that another entity make the same
 11 decision. So a decision the Army Corps of Engineers makes
 12 does not mean the Bureau of Land Management has to make
 13 the same decision, nor the Fish & Wildlife Service,
 14 et cetera.
 15 What typically happens when we get through the permit
 16 evaluation process, the impact evaluation process versus
 17 NEPA is, if we get to the end of the day and we have
 18 substantial issues between entities, then we sit down to
 19 try to work it out and see if there is a way we think the
 20 project can go forward. Sometimes it can. Sometimes it
 21 can't. We don't know what will happen with the project
 22 because, as I mentioned earlier, this is a Draft
 23 Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, the analyses
 24 are in draft form. The conclusions are in draft form. We
 25 have no final conclusions on the project yet, nor have we

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1 made any final decisions.
 2 So our process, you all are -- some folks with the
 3 Corps of Engineers and the other cooperators came out here
 4 during the notice of -- I'm sorry -- the scoping phase of
 5 this project between December of 2012 and March of 2013
 6 when we came out to get information on what we should
 7 analyze in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 8 Since then, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement has
 9 been developed, and it went out for you to comment on
 10 starting November 27th of 2015. It will be out until
 11 April 30th of 2016 for you all to comment on.
 12 After that, we will take a look at those comments,
 13 determine if we have adequately analyzed the project, if
 14 there are data gaps out there where we need to get more
 15 information, if our analyses appear to be accurate or not,
 16 if we need to do more analyses, if we need to reanalyze
 17 some things, do more modeling, do more studies, et cetera.
 18 And as I mentioned, your comments would be responded
 19 to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is
 20 what we would develop after we go through that process of
 21 reviewing comments and addressing the issues that come up
 22 in those comments.
 23 After that, the federal agencies that use the
 24 Environmental Impact Statement to make a decision would
 25 develop Records of Decision to indicate whether they

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1 thought they could permit the project as proposed, permit
 2 an alternative to the project, or not permit the project
 3 at all. And as you can see, the last thing on the screen
 4 is just the Corps of Engineers' decision, which comes
 5 after our Record of Decision. That's just the standard
 6 process.
 7 So very briefly, what does the EIS consist of that we
 8 are asking you to comment on? I'll go through the first
 9 half a dozen chapters in the Environmental Impact
 10 Statement just to give you an idea what's there and why
 11 you might want to comment on it.
 12 Chapter 1 primarily addresses the purpose and need
 13 for the project as proposed. Donlin has their purpose and
 14 need for the proposed project. Given our role, it's
 15 incumbent on the Army Corps of Engineers to, in
 16 cooperation with our cooperators, develop the purpose and
 17 need for the Environmental Impact Statement and our own
 18 regulatory purposes.
 19 You can see the purpose -- the overall purpose, which
 20 is noted on the screen. The thing I have to mention is
 21 that we had an editorial change that did not get made in
 22 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement before it went
 23 out. The -- if you look at the overall purpose as it's
 24 defined in the draft that we sent out, there is a half a
 25 sentence added after "Alaska" that was to be deleted but

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1 didn't get deleted before it went out. That half a
 2 sentence noted that part of our purpose was to maximize
 3 economic benefit for Donlin's stockholders, Calista and
 4 TKC shareholders.
 5 The economics and the socioeconomics of this project
 6 are very important. We are aware of it. It's one of the
 7 things we need your comment on regarding whether or not we
 8 have captured it correctly. But for us to do
 9 middle-of-the-road analyses on the potential impacts of
 10 this project, we cannot excessively weight economic
 11 impacts one way or another.
 12 So I'm mentioning this because that half a sentence
 13 was intended to be removed, but it didn't get removed. So
 14 I need to note we are aware of it, and it does not
 15 play the role in our analysis it would appear to play
 16 based on what is appearing in the draft.
 17 Chapter 2, alternatives. By way of finding ways to
 18 potentially minimize impacts of proposed projects,
 19 whatever the project is, we are required under the
 20 National Environmental Policy Act process to look at other
 21 alternatives to see if there is ways the project could be
 22 constructed that would minimize impacts to the human
 23 and/or natural environment.
 24 The first alternative we always have to start with is
 25 the no action alternative. I'll talk about that in a

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1 minute. We have already talked about Donlin's
 2 alternative, Alternative 2. And I'll note the other
 3 alternatives that have been carried forward for detailed
 4 analysis in the EIS and give you more information on those
 5 in a minute. It is important to note that in the
 6 development of the alternatives, they developed over 300
 7 alternative options that were considered that could have
 8 been turned into alternatives. We winnowed it down to
 9 seven alternatives that went forward for detailed
 10 analyses.
 11 So as I mentioned, we always have to start with the
 12 no action alternative. Well, the no action alternative
 13 means that nothing would be built. There would be no
 14 change regarding what's out there now. We use that
 15 alternative because, to adequately compare the proposed
 16 action, Donlin's alternative and the other alternatives,
 17 to what exists, we need to start with the baseline
 18 condition. And the no action alternative is basically the
 19 baseline condition. So if this alternative were selected,
 20 basically nothing is constructed and the project that's
 21 proposed doesn't go forward.
 22 Alternative 2, as I mentioned, was Donlin's proposed
 23 action.
 24 Alternative 3A, how does this alternative potentially
 25 minimize some of the impacts of Donlin's proposal? Well,

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1 this alternative and the next several that you will see
 2 relate to reduction of potential impacts in relation to
 3 barging on the Kuskokwim River by minimizing fuel usage or
 4 changing the fuel that's used or how it's delivered to the
 5 project.
 6 Alternative 3A is called the LNG-powered haul truck
 7 alternative. What that means is that the heavy equipment,
 8 the 300-ton payload trucks used to haul rock at the mine
 9 site, would be powered by natural gas instead of diesel.
 10 If you do that, you eliminate a substantial percentage of
 11 diesel barging on the Kuskokwim River; therefore, you
 12 limit the potential impacts of barges on the Kuskokwim
 13 River, the potential for spills on the Kuskokwim River,
 14 et cetera, some of the potential for that.
 15 But, however, there are tradeoffs any time you go
 16 forward with one of these alternatives. So when we are
 17 looking at what Donlin is proposing versus any of the
 18 alternatives we are coming up with, we are weighing and
 19 balancing the potential impacts of their alternatives
 20 versus another to say that, okay, this alternative
 21 minimizes these impacts, but what does it do for these
 22 other impacts.
 23 So the whole purpose for going through these
 24 alternatives is to give you an idea what we looked at and
 25 how it modifies the weight and balance in the analyses of

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1 one impacts versus another versus giving you everything we
 2 considered in relation to all of these alternatives.
 3 Alternative 3B is the diesel pipeline alternative.
 4 This alternative further reduces the impacts of barging of
 5 diesel fuel because that natural gas pipeline that Donlin
 6 is proposing to construct would actually be replaced by a
 7 diesel pipeline so, save for a very small amount barged on
 8 the Kuskokwim River during construction, there would be
 9 virtually no barging of diesel on the Kuskokwim River.
 10 There would still be cargo barging to supply the mine so
 11 it could operate, but not diesel barging.
 12 So as you can see, there is a variety of impacts of
 13 that. It means that there is a 19-mile longer segment of
 14 pipeline that would run from Donlin's proposed pipeline
 15 initiation at Beluga Point down to Tyonek and the
 16 expansion of the North Foreland Barge Facility in Tyonek,
 17 as well as other potential impacts.
 18 In this case -- we were talking about, well, there is
 19 a potential for diesel spill on the Kuskokwim. Well, in
 20 this case you kind of modify that, and now your potential
 21 for spill is either in Cook Inlet or a terrestrial or
 22 aquatic spill somewhere along the pipeline route. Again,
 23 just ways we change how we weigh and balance potential
 24 impacts of projects.
 25 Birch Tree Crossing is another alternative that

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1 potentially minimizes impacts of barging. As I mentioned,
 2 what Donlin is proposing is construction of this 30-mile
 3 road down to a new port site at Jungjuk. Well, if the
 4 Birch Tree Crossing alternative went forward, instead of a
 5 30-mile road, that red line on the screen from the mine
 6 site, there would be a 76-mile road, that purple line on
 7 the screen, that would run from the mine site down to a
 8 new port site at Birch Tree Crossing.
 9 What this means, one of the ways this minimizes
 10 impact is, save for a limited amount of pipe and other
 11 cargo and diesel barging during early parts of
 12 construction, there would be virtually no barge traffic
 13 upstream of Birch Tree Crossing.
 14 Well, what is one of the effects of this? Since five
 15 of the six shallow spots that tend to strand barges on the
 16 upper Kuskokwim are above Birch Tree Crossing, it is a way
 17 to minimize potential impacts of barging in relation to
 18 stranding if virtually all barging does not go above Birch
 19 Tree Crossing.
 20 Okay. We looked at the first few alternatives
 21 primarily in relation to minimizing barging impacts. Now
 22 we will take a look at Alternative 5A, which has to do
 23 with tailings methodology and how that alternative might
 24 minimize or mitigate some of the impacts. As I mentioned,
 25 that tailings storage facility is ground rock and water.

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1 Well, Alternative 5A, the dry stack tailings
 2 methodology, basically removes a bunch of that water from
 3 that ground rock before it goes into the tailings
 4 facility. So what does this mean? Well, it means that
 5 that 3.5-square-mile footprint of the tailings facility is
 6 smaller in some ways. It's smaller in that, instead of
 7 the valley having a substantial portion of it filled with
 8 tailings, now you have a much smaller tailings footprint.
 9 The tailings, however, are stacked higher and they are
 10 drier, so there is the potential during operations that
 11 you may have more dust impact from wind erosion around
 12 this facility.
 13 That dry stack tailings facility under this
 14 alternative is proposed to be covered at the end of mine
 15 life, so wind erosion related to that shouldn't be as much
 16 of an issue after closure if that alternative goes
 17 forward. But what you also have is, under Donlin's
 18 proposal, you have a tailings facility with a large dam
 19 down here retaining all the tailings and the water that's
 20 constrained in them.
 21 In this case the tailings are drier, so now we have
 22 an operating pond downstream of the dry stack tailings
 23 dams. And it's two dams in this case instead of one. And
 24 then there is the hydraulic dam below the operating pond.
 25 This operating pond would exist primarily during mining.

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1 After mining, the operating pond largely goes away, and
 2 the water from that goes over to the pit, and it would
 3 need to be treated to meet federal and State water quality
 4 standards before it could be treated for release into
 5 Crooked Creek, the Kuskokwim River, et cetera.
 6 Okay. Now we will switch to the remaining
 7 alternative for the pipeline route. We saw Donlin's
 8 proposed route on the screen when we talked about
 9 alternatives. Alternative 6A -- we had a number of
 10 proposed modifications to the pipeline route. This is the
 11 one that survived for detailed analyses. Under this
 12 alternative, the pipeline would be routed through the
 13 Dalzell Gorge. It would be a couple of miles shorter.
 14 However, it has the potential to have more impacts to the
 15 Iditarod National Historic Trail. So the gold line on the
 16 screen is Donlin's proposed route. The purple route is
 17 the Dalzell Gorge pipeline route.
 18 That largely was Chapter 2. And so it would benefit
 19 us if you could look at the alternatives that we
 20 considered, look at the options that we generated that
 21 could have been developed into alternatives, tell us if
 22 there is any alternatives out there that we should have
 23 considered that we didn't, any options that should be
 24 combined into alternatives that we haven't combined and
 25 analyzed, et cetera.

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1 Chapter 3. Chapter 3 is the heart of the whole
 2 document. It defines the baseline human and natural
 3 environmental condition. It says this is what's out there
 4 now. And then it looks at the potential impacts of
 5 Donlin's proposal and the potential impacts of these
 6 various alternatives and says, okay, this is what might
 7 happen if Donlin's proposal were permitted or one of these
 8 alternatives were permitted. And the example we are using
 9 in this case is the potential impacts of barging.
 10 Of the 26 resource issues that are identified in the
 11 document -- major issues like water quality, air quality,
 12 transportation, subsistence, socioeconomic impacts -- of
 13 those 26 major resource issues, 14 of them are potentially
 14 impacted by barging. And that's what we are depicting on
 15 the screen. So anytime we are talking about a major
 16 impact like a pipeline, like the consumption of diesel,
 17 consumption of natural gas, et cetera, we are defining the
 18 primary resource issues that might be impacted and then
 19 disclosing those impacts.
 20 The example -- we keep using barging as an example
 21 because it's something that came up in scoping a lot
 22 regarding what people are concerned about. To give you an
 23 example of barge impacts, the best thing I can do is start
 24 with our understanding of current barging on the Kuskokwim
 25 River, and then you all can tell us if we are right or

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1 wrong.
 2 The burnt gold color on the bottom of the screen that
 3 is the same all the way across, that's our understanding
 4 of current barging on the Kuskokwim River. So as we
 5 understand it, in any standard year there are -- if you
 6 were standing on the shoreline from Bethel to somewhere
 7 north, there are 68 barges that leave Bethel somewhere
 8 during the ice-free season. And what that typically means
 9 is a tug is pushing a barge. So in a 24-hour period, if
 10 you were standing on the shoreline at that point, in that
 11 24-hour period you would see a tug and a barge go past
 12 you.
 13 If Donlin's project is permitted as proposed, in that
 14 same time frame you would see three tugs each pushing four
 15 barges going past you in that same 24-hour period. They
 16 would be larger tugs and in some cases larger barges.
 17 So what are we looking at on this graph? Well, this
 18 is the potential impacts of barging as it relates to
 19 construction in relation to each of these alternatives.
 20 And this is the potential impacts of barging and the
 21 variation between each alternative during operations.
 22 So what we can see is that for all the alternatives
 23 that we have talked about, except for Alternative 1 where
 24 there is no change to anything, the impacts during
 25 construction of barging are the same, except it's

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1 beneficial to look at what we are disclosing in the
 2 document in the text versus just looking at tables and
 3 figures because one thing that would be missed if we only
 4 look at the table and the figure in this graph is, as I
 5 mentioned, while under Alternative 2, Donlin's proposed
 6 alternative, and Alternative 4, the Birch Tree Crossing
 7 alternative that has that port about 75 miles downstream,
 8 it appears to be the same construction impact for barging.
 9 Well, in reality, the barging under Alternative 4,
 10 with the exception of a small amount during construction,
 11 only goes as far as Birch Tree Crossing, whereas Donlin is
 12 proposing to run it up to Jungjuk port. So it's
 13 beneficial to look at the text and not just the figures in
 14 the document.
 15 You can see that under the -- under operations, we
 16 again compare and contrast the potential impacts of
 17 barging from one alternative to another. And it's the
 18 same thing you saw before. Alternative 3A, there is less
 19 barging and therefore impacts in relation to what Donlin
 20 is proposing because you are barging less diesel.
 21 Alternative 3B you are barging almost no diesel. Again,
 22 less impact. But again, Alternative 2 and Alternative 4
 23 appear to have the same level of impact, and yet under
 24 Alternative 4 not all the barges run as far upstream.
 25 We then give you a little bit of information

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1 regarding potential impacts of barging on fish just by way
 2 of making an example of what does the analysis discuss in
 3 the document. We talk about the potential impacts to fish
 4 habitat, fish behavior, talk about the potential for
 5 barging to injure or kill fish in some circumstances. The
 6 draft analyses and draft conclusion in the document in
 7 this example notes that in relation to what Donlin is
 8 proposing, Alternative 2, barging is expected to have a
 9 moderate impact on fish, with the exception some of areas
 10 where it's shallow or narrower segments of the river where
 11 the impacts could be greater than moderate.
 12 And again, you see the same trends in relation to
 13 Alternative 3A, 3B and 4. They potentially reduce the
 14 impacts but, again, then we have to weigh and balance
 15 those reductions in relation to other impacts of other
 16 issues.
 17 And so as I mentioned, every time we do this, we
 18 change the configuration of what we are looking at.
 19 That's why we need your input to let us know whether we
 20 really understand what's happening in the region and how
 21 this project might impact your lives, positive and
 22 negative, so we know whether or not we have done a
 23 functional analysis.
 24 This slide just goes on to talk about other tradeoffs
 25 between those same alternatives, and it depicts the same

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1 sort of thing in relation to these alternatives in
 2 relation to Donlin's proposed project.
 3 So that is basically Chapter 3. It's what currently
 4 exists, and it's the potential impacts of all the
 5 alternatives.
 6 Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 deals with cumulative
 7 impacts. Cumulative impacts means if Donlin's project is
 8 permitted, how does that relate to everything that came
 9 before it, everything that currently exists, and
 10 everything that we think might happen in the future.
 11 That's cumulative impacts, all the past, present and
 12 reasonably foreseeable future activities combined. And
 13 what we do is we use that to forecast into the future the
 14 potential impacts of Donlin's project, positive and
 15 negative, so that we can give you all an idea of what we
 16 think the impacts might be for you all to tell us if you
 17 think we captured it correctly or if there is something
 18 else we need to do.
 19 Chapter 5 deals with mitigation. Alternatives are a
 20 way of mitigating or minimizing the impacts of a project.
 21 There is a whole host of other ways that project impacts
 22 can be mitigated. And we discuss a wide variety of those
 23 in Chapter 5. For instance, in some cases Donlin looked
 24 at how they might construct something and said, we are not
 25 going to do it that way because the impacts are too

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1 substantial, so we will do it this way; or we are not
 2 going to locate it here; we'll move it over here. That's
 3 one way to mitigate impacts of projects that's just in its
 4 design. Then as you step through the whole project, there
 5 is a whole host of other ways to potentially mitigate
 6 impacts of projects.
 7 So if you have an opportunity to look at Chapter 5,
 8 what we are asking for are your comments on whether or not
 9 we have got it or not.
 10 As I mentioned, in a few minutes we will go into the
 11 poster session and talk about some of the potential
 12 impacts of the project and the project as it's proposed.
 13 But as I mentioned, our primary reason for being here is
 14 to tell you all how you can substantively comment to us on
 15 the document.
 16 One of the things it's important to note is, under
 17 the National Environmental Policy Act, these EISs, they
 18 are not -- when you are commenting on one of these things,
 19 it's not really a voting situation for or against. We
 20 absolutely need people's comments regarding whether they
 21 are for or against the project, but if 100 people come to
 22 me and say, I support the project, how do we address that
 23 when we answer that comment in the Final Environmental
 24 Impact Statement? Well, what we would have is 100
 25 comments that said I support the project all combined into

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1 one comment with one response that said "comment noted"
 2 because there is not really anything there for us that
 3 indicates whether we have done our analyses correctly,
 4 incorrectly, whether we didn't do enough, whether we need
 5 to do more, et cetera.
 6 What happens if I get 100 comments that say, I'm
 7 opposed to the project? Well, again, that doesn't tell us
 8 anything about our analyses. It doesn't tell us whether
 9 we need to do more. It doesn't tell us whether we have
 10 indicated correctly or incorrectly our understanding of
 11 how the project might impact the region and the folks that
 12 live here. So if I get 100 comments that say, I oppose
 13 the project, well, what I have is 100 comments combined
 14 into one that says I oppose the project and a response
 15 that says "comment noted."
 16 What we need is a comment that -- let's take
 17 fisheries again. In the document, for most communities on
 18 the Kuskokwim and communities that are in the vicinity of
 19 the Kuskokwim, we have talked about the value of fisheries
 20 in relation to subsistence. And we have talked about some
 21 of those species in relation to their importance in
 22 sharing as it relates to subsistence. Well, what we need
 23 to know is: Did we get it right? Do we understand the
 24 importance of that species in relation to subsistence, in
 25 relation to sharing? Do we understand the potential

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1 impacts of barging on that species? Do we understand the
 2 potential beneficial impacts of the project from a
 3 socioeconomic standpoint to communities on the Kuskokwim
 4 and throughout the region?
 5 So it's everything. We need comments on positive,
 6 negative. We need comments on every aspect of what we
 7 have done that you would like to comment on.
 8 So how can you do that? Obviously you can comment at
 9 this meeting. You can comment at the other meetings that
 10 you will see on the screen that we have yet to do. As I
 11 mentioned, the comment period is currently open until
 12 April 30. You can comment tonight. You can email us a
 13 comment at this address. And when it disappears off the
 14 screen, we will have it at the back of the room for you.
 15 You can mail comments to me at this address. You can fax
 16 comments to that phone number, or you can go to the
 17 website that I'll show you in just a minute.
 18 These are the meetings that we have done to date and
 19 the meetings that are coming up in the near future. And
 20 you are certainly welcome to attend any of those or have
 21 anybody else attend who might be interested in the
 22 project.
 23 I mentioned the website. This is the website that
 24 you can go to to see the Draft Environmental Impact
 25 Statement. Under the EIS documents tab there is other

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1 information there: Newsletters, project information,
 2 background documents. And as you can see, there is my
 3 contact information on the screen. And if you have issues
 4 specifically related to tribal concerns that you would
 5 like to take to Ms. Amanda Andraschko, our tribal liaison,
 6 you can certainly do that, as well.
 7 So at this time, what I'd like to do is have the
 8 folks in the room that also came along tonight to
 9 introduce themselves. One of the things that I would
 10 mention is that while the Army Corps of Engineers is the
 11 federal lead for development of the EIS and we have 11
 12 cooperators assisting us in the development of it, AECOM
 13 is an international environmental and engineering firm
 14 that is largely crafting the analyses. And so they have
 15 folks here tonight who will be able to talk to you about
 16 what Donlin is proposing, as well as some of the potential
 17 impacts on the screen.
 18 So the way we typically go through this -- Mark,
 19 would you like to introduce yourself and talk about your
 20 role in the project?
 21 **MR. MARK MORONES:** So my name is Mark
 22 Morones. I'm with the State of Alaska Department of
 23 Natural Resources. So the State is a cooperating agency,
 24 as was mentioned. So we have various roles in this
 25 project. You know, we -- within DNR we would be involved

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1 with the pipeline that Keith was referring to. We would
 2 be involved with fish and game. We would be coordinating
 3 comments that go to subsistence with Department of Fish &
 4 Game, DEC for spill prevention. So a lot of different
 5 aspects. Aside from what's going on with the 404
 6 permitting, we're out there monitoring the project and
 7 participating to make it better and more responsible.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
 9 very much. Amy, would you like to introduce the folks
 10 with AECOM?
 11 **MS. AMY ROSENTHAL:** Good evening. Thank
 12 you all for having us in your community. And thanks for
 13 coming tonight. I'm Amy Rosenthal, and I'm a member of
 14 the AECOM team that is working for the Corps of Engineers
 15 writing the EIS document. And I'm going to introduce the
 16 members of our team that are here. And hopefully you will
 17 be able to talk to all of us during the poster session
 18 tonight.
 19 First I'll introduce Nancy Darigo, who is in the back
 20 of the room raising her hand. She is the lead for the
 21 physical environment resources, and she will be over at
 22 the posters discussing air emissions, water flow,
 23 hazardous chemicals and spill risk, and kind of in that
 24 zone over there by the food table.
 25 Next is Mr. Dave Every right up here. He's the lead

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1 for the biological resources, so he can answer technical
 2 questions about fisheries and the barge traffic posters
 3 that are back in the far corner over there.
 4 Myself, I'm Amy, and I am the social environment
 5 lead, and so I will be back by the socioeconomics poster
 6 and the subsistence poster. We also have with us Jessica
 7 Evans. And Jessica has been coordinating the public
 8 involvement work, and she's also been working on a number
 9 of different sections in the document. She will be here
 10 talking about the different components of the project:
 11 The mine site, the pipeline and the transportation
 12 facilities over here.
 13 Many of you met Donne Fleagle, who is in the back.
 14 She is another member of our team here tonight that can
 15 help answer questions, as well as Mr. John Active here,
 16 who is helping us translate. We have translation
 17 headphones if any of you need them. So please let us know
 18 if you would like them. So thanks very much.
 19 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** And we also have a
 20 couple of folks with Donlin and NOVAGOLD who are here
 21 tonight who can answer some of your questions about what
 22 they are proposing to do.
 23 **MR. MIKE RIESER:** Mike Rieser. I'm with
 24 Donlin Gold. I'm an environmental engineer.
 25 **MR. DAVE DEISLEY:** And I'm Dave Deisley

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1 with NOVAGOLD. I'm one of the owners. Barrick Gold and
 2 NOVAGOLD each own 50 percent of Donlin Gold where Mike
 3 works, so I'm one of the owners.
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. So right now we
 5 will just go to the poster session. And like I said, we
 6 will just kind of run this as long as you all would like
 7 to talk to these folks about what's on the posters. And
 8 after that we will reconvene, and Mary will take your
 9 comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 10 (Off the record.)
 11 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** We will go ahead and
 12 start the public comment session. As we mentioned, so
 13 Mary can capture it, if you wouldn't mind, if you would
 14 come to the front of the room to make your comment, you
 15 can use the microphone if you like. You don't have to.
 16 We will start with the folks that have numbers. Do we
 17 have numbers 1 through 5, or did we have more?
 18 **MR. REX NICK:** I have No. 1, but I'll
 19 pass.
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. The gentleman
 21 with No. 1 has decided to pass. So who has No. 2? Would
 22 you like to make a comment?
 23 **MR. GEORGE BEANS, SR.:** I don't know
 24 exactly how to --
 25 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I'm sorry, folks. It

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1 would help if I gave you a little more information. So we
 2 can adequately address your comment, before you make your
 3 comment, if you could state your name. If you are here
 4 representing any specific entity, if you can state that as
 5 well. Other than that, you are free to just make your
 6 comment if you would like to make it.
 7 **MR. GEORGE BEANS, SR.:** Yeah. I'm George
 8 Beans. I'm not representing anybody. I'm with the tribal
 9 council here, but I'm -- I wasn't delegated to speak on
 10 their behalf. I've -- I've noticed that with your
 11 pipeline, that on one of the sheets that it says -- it
 12 shows your pipeline going under the waterways every time
 13 you are crossing waterways.
 14 Now, the -- what about the equipment when you are --
 15 how are you planning on crossing these streams and
 16 waterways with the equipment? What sort of construction
 17 are you looking at? Is it going to be culverts or bridges
 18 or -- you know, to -- main thing I'm getting at is the
 19 fish habitat, the fish -- you know, not to disturb the
 20 fish with their access to the spawning grounds, their
 21 spawning grounds.
 22 And this would tie in with the subsistence issue.
 23 Fish is the main staple, a big staple of the people in
 24 this region.
 25 I realize that most of it is going to be -- most of

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1 the concern I think is going to be over on the Kuskokwim
 2 side where it's not so much here on the Yukon side.
 3 Speaking about the Yukon, this would probably be my
 4 next comment or question mainly is, I have been hearing
 5 some talk about the Yukon-Kuskokwim corridor. And this
 6 corridor is a road between the Yukon River and the
 7 Kuskokwim River. And they were talking about, from what
 8 talk I have been hearing, is that they are using this road
 9 system, the corridor, to transport supplies to minimize
 10 the barge activity over on the Kuskokwim and utilize the
 11 Yukon from -- like from Fairbanks -- Fairbanks on down to
 12 the corridor to bring supplies over and fuel maybe over to
 13 the Kuskokwim side.
 14 That's all I have. And if you will comment on that,
 15 or answer that question, please.
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I can cover a part of
 17 that, and I can see who else in the room can address it.
 18 In relation to your question about how are they going to
 19 construct the pipeline, in relation to some of the rivers
 20 that are major salmon-bearing rivers where they have major
 21 crossings, in some of those cases they are planning to
 22 horizontally directionally drill, which would mean they
 23 actually drill under the river instead of trenching
 24 through the river, et cetera.
 25 The vast majority of the crossings through smaller

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1 rivers, streams, et cetera, would just be trenched through
 2 the river. And it's excavated through, the pipeline is
 3 put down, and then they cover over the top of it. A
 4 substantial percentage of the construction of the pipeline
 5 would be during winter versus during summer.
 6 Is there anybody in the room who wants to add more
 7 detail to pipeline construction? Dave?
 8 **MR. DAVE EVERY:** One of the things that's
 9 also important to note is that they do pipeline
 10 construction in segments, so they will have all the
 11 equipment to do one segment, and so they may go from one
 12 direction to the east edge of a crossing, and then another
 13 section will be from the west edge. So they won't
 14 actually run the equipment across the river. It would be
 15 staged over there or staged over there and then run from
 16 there. So that way you don't have to build a bridge. You
 17 don't have to run the equipment through the water.
 18 **MR. GEORGE BEANS, SR.:** I'm sorry. Maybe
 19 I asked the question wrong or ask it to be explained now.
 20 I'm talking about the equipment, heavy equipment. Like
 21 you are proposing a road from the Kuskokwim River back to
 22 the mine site and you got to cross some waterways there in
 23 that process.
 24 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yeah. There is a
 25 series of -- there is a number of bridges that would have

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1 to be constructed over smaller waterways on that road from
 2 the Jungjuk port to the mine site. And then, yeah, there
 3 is a whole variety of culverts that have to be
 4 constructed. In relation to the pipeline, in some areas
 5 there are shoofly roads. Those are just temporary
 6 construction roads.
 7 Now, when we talk about temporary roads, the vast
 8 majority of those roads -- it is not, first of all, a
 9 315-mile road from one end of the pipeline to the other.
 10 There are some segments of it where, due to topography,
 11 due to the need to access a materials site to get gravel,
 12 due to a need to get to a water supply to get water that
 13 they need to construct the road, that these temporary
 14 roads, shoofly roads, will be constructed. However,
 15 they're not proposing to remove those roads in virtually
 16 all cases. They are proposing to facilitate revegetation
 17 of them in place. So in some areas there is also the
 18 potential for the need to culvert some of those.
 19 I'm not aware in relation to shoofly roads of any
 20 that they are potentially proposing to construct bridges,
 21 but I can't say that that's 100 percent accurate for every
 22 single one of them.
 23 And then your second comment was in relation to --
 24 **MR. GEORGE BEANS, SR.:** The
 25 Yukon-Kuskokwim corridor.

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1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** That is one of the
 2 alternatives that was considered early on as something
 3 that might need to be evaluated in substantial detail.
 4 One of the ways we determine whether or not something like
 5 that should be analyzed is to determine if it is a
 6 reasonably foreseeable future action. And because of the
 7 state of that proposal, which means that it's been
 8 discussed, there has been some initial, I say, planning
 9 done for how it might happen; but when they looked at it,
 10 they said, well, there is no direct funding for it right
 11 now. There is no plans in place to say that we are going
 12 to analyze it under these laws in this time frame.
 13 We are not aware of people seeking permits, et cetera
 14 and so on, to actually construct it. So when they looked
 15 at it, they said, well, it's not reasonably foreseeable in
 16 the time frame in which we would make a decision about
 17 whether or not this project should or should not go
 18 forward. That doesn't mean it might not happen sometime
 19 during the life of this proposed project if it's
 20 permitted, but when they looked at it, there is that
 21 potential future project and a number of others that were
 22 looked at and determined, okay, we don't see these
 23 happening in the near term in relation to this proposed
 24 project, so they weren't considered reasonably
 25 foreseeable.

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1 But again, we are asking for your comment on whether
 2 we got that right or not. And there is other projects out
 3 there that were considered that fell into that same
 4 category. So if we got it right, let us know; if we
 5 didn't, let us know, and we can see what we need to do.
 6 **MR. GEORGE BEANS, SR.:** Well, I can't say
 7 that you are right or not. You are still -- it would be
 8 hard for me to say if you are right in that. But yeah, if
 9 you were -- it's not totally scuffed, you know, the idea.
 10 It's not totally put aside. So if you do need it in the
 11 future, you will proceed with that?
 12 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Well, the -- this
 13 project is not proposing to construct a corridor from the
 14 Yukon down to the Kuskokwim or to the mine site. They
 15 looked at that route at one point in time with potentially
 16 barging up the Yukon and bringing materials to the mine
 17 site that way. And then there is this other whole issue
 18 in this part of the country of a road from the Yukon to
 19 the Kuskokwim.
 20 The road from the Yukon to the Kuskokwim is a
 21 separate thing from this project. It always has been.
 22 But the reason we are asking the question is because we
 23 have our sources for information on that type of project
 24 or others, but sometimes there is folks in the region at
 25 the State level, at the federal level who are planning

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1 things that we don't know about yet or plans have changed;
 2 when we looked at it, there was no funding for it, but
 3 something has changed and now there is funding and we just
 4 aren't aware of it yet.
 5 So that's why we put these sorts of things out for
 6 comment just to see if there is something going on that we
 7 are not aware of, in addition to whether or not we got it
 8 right, wrong, et cetera.
 9 All right. Thank you very much.
 10 I see No. 3 has decided to pass. No. 4.
 11 **MR. BILL ALSTROM:** Okay. Good evening
 12 again. You all know me. I'm Bill Alstrom. You know, I'm
 13 not -- I'm with my Native -- village Native corporation
 14 here but, you know, we are not really directly involved.
 15 But it's mostly like George said. It's mostly going to be
 16 for the Kuskokwim, lower Kuskokwim, Kuskokwim area on some
 17 issues. But area-wide we are involved, especially when it
 18 comes to the environmental factors.
 19 And I know -- it's my understanding when we get up
 20 here to give our presentation, you either support or
 21 oppose -- oppose this construction of this mine. And just
 22 looking at all the posters here, I see a lot of risks.
 23 I'm looking at the benefits and the risks. And I see more
 24 risks involved in this project than benefits. And I'll
 25 explain that.

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1 See, the benefits -- our regional corporation,
 2 Calista, and Kuskokwim Native Corporation, which consists
 3 of ten villages on the Kuskokwim, they will all benefit
 4 from this. And maybe the City of Bethel will. I have
 5 been hearing word that they are trying to -- there is talk
 6 about getting into an organized borough so they can jump
 7 in on the bandwagon. You know, I'm just -- because this
 8 presentation is just to -- to fathom all this, to try to
 9 sink this all in, you can't just do it in two or three
 10 hours. But they are out here. It's our only chance to
 11 comment on this, whether we support or oppose this
 12 project.
 13 And you know, I'm really in a slightly embarrassed --
 14 maybe more than embarrassed because not many people are
 15 here. We got about, what, 3-, 4-, 500 people in this
 16 village, and here we got a smattering of people. And I
 17 don't know if they realize it might not affect us because
 18 we are older. We are probably, half or more of us -- more
 19 than half of us will be long gone when this project is in
 20 operation, if it ever passes, if it ever gets okayed by
 21 the environmental people.
 22 But this is going to affect our younger people. My
 23 kids, they are all grown up now. I got -- my youngest one
 24 is, what, 32. And I got grandkids. I got ten grandkids
 25 and one great grandkid, grandson. I might look young, but

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1 I was pretty active when I was young.
 2 But anyway, I look at gold, you know. You ought to
 3 realize this. Gold is a nonrenewable resource, not like
 4 fish. Fish is a renewable resource. It comes up the
 5 river every year, every spring, hopefully. But gold, any
 6 kind of minerals you take out of the earth, once you take
 7 them out of the earth, they are gone forever. It's not
 8 going to last hundreds of years. They cannot be renewed.
 9 So they say this project got a lifeline of about 27
 10 and a half years, 30 years. And maybe the whole project
 11 from beginning to start, construction and all this stuff,
 12 might go into 50 years. I'm not going to be around to see
 13 that. I know my grandkids will. So we ought to think,
 14 you know, what's the option, you know. You got to look
 15 at -- you either can say --
 16 Yeah, it's going to be beneficial to the economic
 17 survival of this country. We all know that we have a hard
 18 time out here. But it's not going to go on forever. It
 19 might have about a 50-year lifetime. And what happens
 20 when they are all gone? They are gone. Everybody is
 21 gone. We just leave a big pit out there, like they said,
 22 filled up with water. And that's it, you know. Who is it
 23 going to benefit after 50 years? We might see economical
 24 benefits, you know, around the surrounding area, but it's
 25 not going to last.

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1 So that's the reason I might -- individually I'm
 2 going to have to oppose this project. I'm not supporting
 3 it. You know, I would like to support it because of the
 4 economical benefits, but that's not going to last.
 5 And I'm worried about the environment, too. But
 6 really what worries me is you see all these things, you
 7 look at all of them. Look on here. But the -- what's
 8 going to happen to the atmosphere? We got all these gases
 9 and whatever that can escape, and they all go up to the
 10 atmosphere.
 11 And with these last couple of years or so, maybe more
 12 than that, we have been hearing about global warming.
 13 It's happening. Right now, look all around you. When I
 14 was a kid growing up -- all of you remember -- most of you
 15 should remember. We had real winters out here. We had
 16 snows up higher than this building here. I mean, ice, ice
 17 that thick [indicating], five, six feet thick. Right now
 18 you go out there, it's barely a foot thick on the Yukon,
 19 maybe two or three feet out here. We don't see that
 20 anymore.
 21 Something is happening. It's happening up there.
 22 It's escaping. We see warmer and warmer summers,
 23 climates, even during the winter. Even out there it feels
 24 like April weather. And it's thawing out all the -- you
 25 look at the ice, ice cap on the north pole. Maybe one of

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1 these years -- I don't know in my lifetime, there might
 2 not be any more ice up there. It will be all ocean.
 3 And what else is happening? Look around you, our
 4 tundra. It's thawing out. The permafrost is thawing out.
 5 And you know what's frozen in that permafrost? Methane.
 6 Methane gas. When they thaw out, they also rise. They go
 7 up in the atmosphere.
 8 And we got a lot of pollution in this world. We all
 9 know that. Look over at China. They got over a billion
 10 people over there, and they are -- you know, they finally
 11 climbed out from under their rock, and they are becoming a
 12 very -- they use -- they use all kinds of fossil fuels.
 13 You can see all the smog and everything in their big
 14 cities over there.
 15 It's a rippling effect. It affects all of us. And I
 16 don't think it's going to get any better. The more we
 17 use, the more use of fossil fuels and stuff -- and they
 18 are thinking about opening a mine as big as this? And
 19 it's just going to add to all that pollution going up to
 20 the atmosphere. They are going to create -- we already
 21 have the problems in our -- the ozone layer. The more
 22 ice -- that ice melts, it don't reflect. We don't get
 23 the -- we get that reflection off the ice that goes back
 24 up. And when all that melts -- and you know how water is;
 25 it absorbs. It absorbs the heat, causing more melting.

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1 So that's a big concern of mine.
 2 And there is another -- another -- I can go down the
 3 list here, but I don't want to take too long. But there
 4 again, there is the -- like George mentioned, the
 5 transportation. Take a look at the size of these barges
 6 over here. Those are humongous. They are big. They are
 7 not what we see coming up and down the Yukon here. These
 8 things, they are going to hold, you know, a whole lot of
 9 diesel fuel. They are going to be putting them up there
 10 at the -- wherever they are stationed on the Kuskokwim.
 11 But this is -- this is very important. That's why I
 12 wish we had more younger people here. Even school kids
 13 should be attending these, attending these meetings, stuff
 14 that they are giving out, to learn, to be aware of what's
 15 going on. A lot of times, you know, I go to meetings,
 16 there is nobody. You know, there is just the board of
 17 directors there, the council members, no audience. And
 18 when something passes, something goes through, everybody
 19 asks, what happened, why this, why that.
 20 So there is a lot of issues. I wish I could go
 21 through every one of these, but --
 22 Of course, there is the spill risk. We all heard of
 23 spills going on. Recently one happened down in Southeast
 24 Alaska where a dam -- dam gave through, gave out and
 25 spilled millions and millions of gallons of whatever they

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1 were holding in there. Tailings. A tailings dam, maybe.
 2 And it went into the rivers. Then we hear about all these
 3 big storage tanks. You can see pictures. Those hold a
 4 lot of millions of gallons of diesel fuel, or whatever it
 5 takes to run all this equipment. Because this is going to
 6 be a huge project.
 7 Can you imagine something, whatever it is, two miles
 8 wide and seven miles long, or something like that? That's
 9 a big area. That's just like a trip here to the airport.
 10 1,800 feet deep. I went to a gold mine down in
 11 Montana. They had an open pit mine a lot similar to what
 12 they are going to do at Donlin Creek, but that was
 13 smaller. And you can stand on the top of this pit and you
 14 look down there, and you see these huge, humongous trucks
 15 that haul all the ore out. They looked like toys out
 16 there. And you just can imagine what's going to happen
 17 out here.
 18 Like I say, it's not going to really affect us lower
 19 Yukon people, you know, the Yukon people, but Kuskokwim, I
 20 hope they get a ton at their meetings in force because
 21 that's really going to affect -- because everything that's
 22 upriver flows downriver. And if some kind of a disaster
 23 happens up there, it's going to affect all the lower
 24 villages.
 25 And I'm glad George brought up the corridor they are

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1 talking about. I hope that -- I hope they never do that
 2 to kind of overland ship oil or whatever and pick them up
 3 up there in the corridor and bring them up, or whatever
 4 they are going to do, or haul it down from the Railbelt.
 5 If anything happens up there above us, especially our
 6 lower river communities, it's going to affect us.
 7 And we all know that we all depend on fish every
 8 summer. That's going to -- you know, that will have
 9 really disastrous effects on our subsistence way of life
 10 if something ever happens. So that's all -- you know,
 11 that's all the risk we are looking at. There is even
 12 more.
 13 You know, look at all that. Look around you. See
 14 all the posters up there. Mine site, tailings dam, spill
 15 risk, hazardous chemicals, water flow, whatever, erosion
 16 and water -- water, whatever. I don't know what those are
 17 in the back. But you should have them in here.
 18 It seems like the risks outweigh the benefits.
 19 Sorry. Today -- I'm sorry to say we need economical -- an
 20 economical boost out here, but who is going to get the
 21 jobs? They figure about 3-, 4-, 5,000 jobs. They are
 22 talking about heavy equipment and stuff like that. Of
 23 course, some of our people out here might be getting the
 24 jobs, but most of the jobs, you know, to support that many
 25 people in a camp, you got to have your -- most of the

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1 jobs, I think, are going to be what they call minimum
 2 jobs: Housekeeping, cooking, washing dishes. Not really
 3 high-paying jobs. We have kind of a smattering of people
 4 here that get the training and get some of these good
 5 jobs.
 6 It will boost the economy a little, but how long is
 7 it going to be? What is that mine -- when they are all
 8 done with it, reclamation and stuff like that, what's it
 9 going to be used for? There is no plans. It will just be
 10 a big hole in the ground unless they go and find something
 11 else around here. It's really -- you know, it's really --
 12 we got to think while we're gone and what you see in the
 13 future. You want to risk all this for your grandkids, for
 14 their kids? For -- I don't think it's going to support
 15 the whole workforce because all our kids are -- they are
 16 not going to be working at Donlin Creek.
 17 Of course, there is a lot of support groups and stuff
 18 like that and they might be at the mine, but like river
 19 traffic and -- so there is all kinds of -- you got to look
 20 at this from all angles, you know, whether it's going
 21 to -- what's it going to do to our way of life out here?
 22 Like I said, any kind of material, mineral in the
 23 earth, it's a nonrenewable resource. I'd rather -- I'd
 24 rather see fish coming up this river every summer than see
 25 something disastrous happen and wipe them out. It's not

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1 only going to affect the rivers. Look at the atmosphere,
 2 the fallout, all this stuff that comes down, and rain
 3 comes down, gets on our vegetation. Our animals eat
 4 vegetation. We go out there and eat berries. You know,
 5 we go out there and gather food, herbs; all our moose,
 6 animals, what effect it's going to have on them.
 7 You got to think -- you got to think way outside the
 8 box to say, you know, is this beneficial for our people.
 9 And I know I can say more, but it is getting late. I
 10 know there is probably more people that want to get up
 11 here and do their thing. But, you know, it's just
 12 mind-boggling. We see this. We are just going from the
 13 Stone Age to -- to the computer age in a matter of years,
 14 you know. Because it wasn't very long ago our ancestors,
 15 our grandfathers, our folks, our grandfathers -- you know,
 16 it wasn't very long ago. I still remember in 1963 when
 17 electricity first came around. And that's not even, what,
 18 50 years ago, maybe more? And look -- look what we got
 19 now. You can flip a switch and, you know, magic, lights.
 20 Look all around you, all the -- all the stuff that
 21 technology and modern things have done for people. It is
 22 good. It makes life a lot easier. But then there is our
 23 culture, our cultural side. We got to think about that,
 24 too, especially for our younger kids so that they can
 25 enjoy what we enjoyed as we were growing up.

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1 Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Gordon. I sure
 2 appreciate the opportunity to speak to you guys,
 3 especially the Army Corps of Engineers. I hope -- of
 4 course, you have got written comments coming up, and I'm
 5 pretty sure more written comments will be coming in. And
 6 thank you very much.
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you,
 8 sir. We appreciate your comments. And as I mentioned,
 9 the comment period is open until April 30 at this time, so
 10 feel free to make comments at any method you choose.
 11 No. 5.
 12 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** Hi. My name is Nancy
 13 Andrew, CEO for St. Mary's Native Corporation, for those
 14 who don't know me. And I want to thank you for coming and
 15 including St. Mary's on the environmental -- sharing with
 16 us the environmental studies.
 17 So my understanding is that with these presentations,
 18 you are looking at the environmental impact studies and,
 19 in specific, Chapter 5, mitigation, and getting all
 20 comments from all the communities.
 21 And looking at all the information -- I went to the
 22 one in January in Anchorage, and the -- having heard that,
 23 now hearing the presentation again and looked and having
 24 more time to listen, there is a lot of information.
 25 And, you know, St. Mary's Native Corporation is a

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1 for-profit corporation, a lot like a lot of the village
 2 corporations are for profit, but we also are more than
 3 that. We are not just like Walmart or Coca-Cola. We are
 4 actually more holistic. We are for profit, but we are
 5 also concerned about our land, our culture, our
 6 socioeconomics, and also training the next generation of
 7 leaders. So I'm glad that we are having this opportunity
 8 to look at and share.
 9 And I have some comments, too, in regards to what was
 10 actually shared. And one of the things that I was looking
 11 at is the barge traffic. And that is a lot of -- one
 12 barge has a little footprint. And when the mine opens,
 13 it's going to be four. One of the questions I have is, as
 14 I was reading, depending on the water levels, they are
 15 probably going to be, you know, making those loads
 16 lighter, so that that would mean they are going to
 17 probably have more barge traffic.
 18 And have you looked at, you know, those impacts, what
 19 it would do to our fish and -- you know, it would have a
 20 greater impact on the upper river because the barges are
 21 more turbulent. But in looking at the designs and the
 22 options, it just seems like it would be more beneficial,
 23 if the mine does go through, that the option for diesel or
 24 liquefied natural gas to actually be utilized and create
 25 less impact on the land.

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1 And was your name Dave? So he was talking about the
 2 roads, and I forget the name -- I heard -- I think you
 3 said they were kind of -- what was the name of the road?
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Shoofly roads,
 5 temporary construction roads.
 6 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** So what they were
 7 saying is that the roads would be utilized during the
 8 winter to have less of a footprint on, but they will have
 9 some -- they will have roads that are in there. Because I
 10 was thinking, you know, if they are going to have a road
 11 from Cook Inlet going to rural Alaska, you know, that will
 12 provide opportunity for economic infrastructure and, you
 13 know, lowering the cost of gas. But that's not going to
 14 be the case because those are going to be reclaimed.
 15 And I'm just wondering, you know -- and I forgot --
 16 is it David with NOVAGOLD? So I know you have a vested
 17 interest in wanting this project to go forward. What
 18 would that also entail if it was not just -- what's that
 19 name of the -- shoestring?
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Shoofly.
 21 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** Shoofly roads versus
 22 actual roads. Was it the cost that was prohibitive for
 23 that infrastructure?
 24 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Well, if I can clarify,
 25 what I was mentioning is that in relation to the pipeline

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1 construction from Cook Inlet over to the mine site, Donlin
 2 is proposing -- there is no road, as you mentioned, that
 3 would run from Cook Inlet to the mine site. Donlin is
 4 proposing in some areas, because of changes in topography,
 5 et cetera, that they would have short segments of road
 6 alongside or around the pipeline just for construction.
 7 And those roads would be either -- just because they had
 8 to get around a topographic feature or they had to access
 9 a materials site to get gravel, or they had to access
 10 water so they could construct a road, but they are not
 11 actually proposing in virtually all cases to take those
 12 temporary construction roads out. They just stay there
 13 forever.
 14 So no, there is no road proposed that would run from
 15 Cook Inlet over to the mine site. There are little short
 16 segments of road here and there, and they are temporary
 17 construction roads, but they don't ever really go away.
 18 So --
 19 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** And my understanding
 20 was that they -- if they did the option where they were
 21 going to a diesel or liquefied natural gas pipeline,
 22 especially if it was the diesel, that at certain segments,
 23 if there was ever a spill, they are going to have to have
 24 the spill response at certain points.
 25 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes. That's one of the

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1 impacts of going with a diesel pipeline versus a natural
 2 gas pipeline. If you have a leak or a rupture in a
 3 natural gas pipeline, basically that natural gas goes into
 4 the air. If you have a leak or a rupture of a diesel
 5 pipeline, well, that diesel is going to go on the ground
 6 and/or in the water. So because the spill modality or
 7 effect is different, the spill response is different.
 8 So if a diesel pipeline were constructed versus a
 9 natural gas pipeline, it changes where spill response
 10 material needs to be staged and how. But there is still
 11 no road proposed that would run along that entire diesel
 12 pipeline route if that alternative went forward.
 13 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** Okay. And then if it
 14 was a diesel pipeline, are there sensors that alert you if
 15 there is a spill?
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** In both cases in
 17 relation to what Donlin is proposing with a natural gas
 18 pipeline and in relation to the alternative that has a
 19 diesel pipeline, there is monitoring on that pipeline that
 20 would indicate if there is a leak.
 21 Now, we all understand that monitoring occurs within
 22 a range. And this same question was asked at a previous
 23 meeting. The question was asked, well, can it detect any
 24 leak of any quantity at any time. Well, no. If it's a
 25 really tiny leak, little tiny leaks can go on for a period

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1 of time before they are detected. It just depends on what
 2 your monitoring equipment is designed to detect. But
 3 substantial releases of natural gas or diesel would be
 4 expected to be detected in a short period of time. And in
 5 some cases there has been discussions of this pipeline
 6 needing to have valves on it that would automatically shut
 7 flow down of either gas or diesel if it did start to leak.
 8 But again, this is all -- this is all discussion of
 9 what's proposed and how it might be constructed.
 10 So again, give us your comments, and we will see
 11 what -- look at what we have done versus what we might
 12 need to do to give you additional information and look at
 13 our conclusions.
 14 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** And digging into that,
 15 I'm just also wondering about the barge traffic and fish.
 16 And are there other models out there where other mines and
 17 rivers -- where there are studies how it impacted the
 18 fish? So I don't know. And I don't know if you guys
 19 looked at that.
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Dave, can you address
 21 to a degree the degree to which other mines that involve
 22 bargaining were looked at in relation to this project?
 23 **MR. DAVE EVERY:** Well, there is no other
 24 project close to the same as this one, but we do look at
 25 all kinds of bargaining effects. There is quite a few

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1 studies on the Mississippi River, for instance, where
 2 barges have been studied affecting fish there. They are
 3 different kinds of fish, but some of the same issues. So
 4 we have looked at all the examples we can find of anything
 5 closely related, spills from other places.
 6 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** So I don't know -- I
 7 haven't ever seen the Mississippi, so I don't know what --
 8 how it relates in comparison to our rivers or the Yukon or
 9 the Kuskokwim. Is it twice as wide? The same size?
 10 **MR. DAVE EVERY:** Well, there is different
 11 places where it's different, but comparable.
 12 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** It's comparable?
 13 **MR. DAVE EVERY:** Uh-huh.
 14 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** And then a couple other
 15 comments. I think it was George, you talked about -- or
 16 maybe it was Bill. You were talking about a borough, and
 17 TKC and Bethel looking at organizing a borough. That's
 18 kind of funny that they are doing it now and in relation
 19 to hop on the bandwagon so that they can tax Donlin if
 20 this mine goes through. And that's, you know,
 21 benefiting -- I'm not sure who it would benefit, but if
 22 they are creating a borough just for, like, TKC, which is
 23 ten villages and Bethel, which I'm not sure setting the
 24 land boundaries -- but just recently I think it was in
 25 2012 or '13 -- George, do you remember when the YK Delta

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1 conversations were going on for the YK Regional Committee?
 2 '14, '15?
 3 **MR. GEORGE OWLETUCK:** '15.
 4 **MS. NANCY ANDREW:** '13, '14? It was
 5 recently. Anyway, that -- during that YK Regional
 6 Committee, they were -- we were, you know, looking at
 7 either expanding, or there was discussions on how to best
 8 provide economic and social -- make it better for our
 9 whole region and our people. There was strife in AVCP who
 10 was doing nothing at all, or there was also talk of
 11 creating a YK Delta -- and one of the organizations was --
 12 like to have, like, a house of the people, which would
 13 encompass tribes, all the tribes, and then having another
 14 other side as checks and balances with other Native
 15 organizations.
 16 And also, you know, those boroughs or -- you were
 17 talking about them being able to tax and who is it going
 18 to benefit. Is it just going to benefit that small
 19 population compared to 56 villages within the YK Delta
 20 region, our whole population of our region? So Calista,
 21 if this mine goes through, you know, that will enable us
 22 to have 7(i) money on Calista side, but that also flows
 23 down for 7(j) money coming down to the village
 24 corporations.
 25 And I shared -- my last comment that if we could have

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1 another Anchorage meeting because I saw the dates, and if
 2 you went to all the villages and you are doing this
 3 presentation, why not, you know, have one final one in
 4 Anchorage; and that would give opportunity for any one of
 5 the 56 villages to come in and present, and you will
 6 have -- they will have more time to look at all the
 7 impacts and comment.
 8 That's all I have. Thank you.
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you very
 10 much. We will consider the request for another Anchorage
 11 meeting, as well as the request for other meetings in some
 12 of the other communities.
 13 No. 6.
 14 **MR. MIKE JOE, SR.:** No comment.
 15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you, sir.
 16 You do not have to have a number to comment. Is there
 17 anybody else who would like to comment this evening?
 18 Okay. Is there anybody on the phone who would like to
 19 comment?
 20 Okay. As I mentioned, the comment period is
 21 currently open until April 30. We do have requests to
 22 extend. That's something evaluated by my management and
 23 in cooperation with the cooperating agencies to consider
 24 whether or not we extend the comment period. But as I
 25 noted, you can email comments, mail comments, fax

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1 comments. You can go to the website and comment there.
 2 And if you -- if there is other information you all need
 3 to comment on this, please feel free to contact us.
 4 If there is nothing else, we will wrap it up for this
 5 evening, and thank you very much for allowing us to come
 6 into the community. And thank you very much for your
 7 participation and your comments.
 8 **MR. BILL ALSTROM:** On behalf of the City
 9 of St. Mary's and the surrounding villages -- we got
 10 people here from Marshall, Pitka's Point. I believe we
 11 had some from Pilot Station. It's meetings like this, we
 12 are concerned for all our people. When you go back to
 13 your villages, go to the tribal or city meetings, make
 14 sure -- I don't think we are ever going to see one of
 15 these out here again. Probably not. Are we ever going to
 16 see one of these Environmental Impact Statement meetings
 17 out here again? Once you are here, you are gone, right?
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Unless we add meetings
 19 or unless we come back based on someone's request, yeah,
 20 then we would not be coming back.
 21 **MR. BILL ALSTROM:** Okay. Like he said, we
 22 got to make comments, probably call them in or comments
 23 through email and stuff like that. Encourage your tribal
 24 governments and go to meetings to look into this and
 25 submit their comments.

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1 And once again, I thank the people that all came out
 2 here to do this presentation. I know you got to do this
 3 in all these villages. It must get old after awhile, but
 4 it's really beneficial for our people. Thank you.
 5 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir. Thank
 6 you for your time. We will start packing it up so we can
 7 give you your meeting facility back.
 8 (Off the record.)
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I have been asked to
 10 clarify something, if you have got another minute. The
 11 question was asked about a couple of comments I made, one
 12 where I stated that the Army Corps of Engineers is neither
 13 a proponent for the project nor an opponent of the
 14 project. That's our role. We are just -- we are in --
 15 regarding the NEPA process and the development of the EIS,
 16 we are in the middle of the road, and we are not for or
 17 against the project. Once we get to making our permitting
 18 decision, then we have to decide whether or not we would
 19 permit the project or not.
 20 But then the next question was, how does that relate
 21 to what I said about if somebody says they are -- I
 22 support the project or somebody says I oppose the project,
 23 that that doesn't seem to matter because NEPA is not a
 24 voting process. Well, NEPA really isn't really a voting
 25 process.

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1 What we are trying to do is get substantive comments
 2 on our analyses and whether we've done it right or wrong,
 3 whether we have done enough. It does matter if you
 4 support the project. It does matter if you oppose the
 5 project. But for NEPA to appear to be a voting process,
 6 for projects to not go forward because people say we don't
 7 like the project, typically that has to be a substantial
 8 percentage of the people commenting, or they have to give
 9 us a defined reason that we can see why the project
 10 shouldn't go forward. That's what I'm saying.
 11 I'm not saying that you shouldn't say you are for or
 12 against the project. I am saying that if you are saying
 13 you are for or against it, we need some clarification as
 14 to why and how that relates to the analyses we did so we
 15 can understand better why the project either should go
 16 forward or should not go forward.
 17 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:** Like William
 18 did.
 19 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Exactly. So I thank
 20 you very much for the question because if I -- if I made
 21 it sound like I don't want you to say I support it or I
 22 oppose it, I didn't mean that. What I meant was I
 23 need more information as to why someone agrees with it or
 24 doesn't agree with it so we can figure out whether it
 25 should go forward or not.

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1 Okay. I thank you very much. That's a very good
 2 comment.
 3 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:** Okay. Thank
 4 you.
 5 (Proceedings adjourned at 8:48 p.m.)
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