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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

EMMONAK, ALASKA

Taken March 2, 2016
Commencing at 3:20 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 42, inclusive

Taken at
Emmonak City Hall
Emmonak, 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 screen. These are both federal and State agencies, as
 2 well as the Native entities that you see on the screen.
 3 They are helping us develop the Environmental Impact
 4 Statement that's currently out for you all to comment on.
 5 The agenda for tonight's meeting is this opening
 6 presentation that will take approximately a half an hour
 7 to run through, followed by a poster session. You can see
 8 that there is about a dozen posters around the room.
 9 Three of those posters define the proposed project, and
 10 then nine of them give you information on resource issues;
 11 in other words, effects that the project might have on
 12 yourselves and the environment.
 13 That poster session is a time at which you will be
 14 able to talk to some of the folks that are in the room
 15 that work primarily for AECOM or Donlin regarding what's
 16 proposed. And we will get to that after this opening
 17 presentation. After that we will come back and take your
 18 comments for the record so that we can respond to any
 19 comments that you have.
 20 We won't be doing a BLM 810 hearing tonight because
 21 BLM's conclusions didn't indicate that we needed to hold
 22 one in Emmonak.
 23 Very briefly I'll run you through what Donlin is
 24 proposing by way of the project. There are three primary
 25 components to Donlin's proposed project: The mine site,

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Good afternoon. Thank
 3 you for the opportunity to visit Emmonak and give you some
 4 information on the status of the Draft Environmental
 5 Impact Statement for the Donlin Gold Mine project.
 6 My name is Keith Gordon. I'm a project manager with
 7 the Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District. I'm the
 8 Corps' regulatory project manager for the proposed Donlin
 9 Gold Mine project. The role of the Army Corps of
 10 Engineers in this project is to be neither a proponent for
 11 the project nor an opponent of the project. Our function
 12 is to facilitate the development of an Environmental
 13 Impact Statement that will disclose to all of you the
 14 potential impacts of the proposed Donlin Gold Mine
 15 project; anything that might benefit you, anything that
 16 might have an effect on the community, the human
 17 environment, the natural environment, the species out
 18 there, et cetera.
 19 So basically the Army Corps of Engineers is a
 20 proponent for the process of giving you all the
 21 information you need to determine what the impacts of this
 22 project might be on yourselves and your community.
 23 The Army Corps of Engineers is assisted in the
 24 development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement by
 25 11 cooperators, the folks you see on the bottom of the

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1 the pipeline that would supply natural gas to the mine if
 2 it were constructed, and the transportation facilities
 3 needed to move materials, cargo, fuel, people, et cetera
 4 to the mine.
 5 What you are looking at is the first primary
 6 component of Donlin's proposed project, which is the mine
 7 site. And it also has three primary components related to
 8 it.
 9 The first one is the pit that you can see on No. 1 on
 10 the screen. That's actually two proposed pits, the ACMA
 11 and Lewis pits that would be opened and eventually would
 12 become one large pit. To give you an idea of the size,
 13 depending on whether you measured the depth of that pit
 14 from the low side of it or the high side, it's either
 15 1,100 feet deep or 1,850 feet deep, and it's about 2.2
 16 square miles in size.
 17 Once mining ceased, if the project goes forward, that
 18 pit would take about 50 to 55 years to fill with water,
 19 and then the water in that pit would be there in
 20 perpetuity. It would just become a large, deep lake.
 21 The second primary component of what Donlin is
 22 proposing is a tailings storage facility. As you are
 23 aware, as Donlin mines the ore, they have to process the
 24 ore to get the gold out of it. So one of the steps they
 25 take is to crush the rock. And that rock is crushed down

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1 to just very fine rubble. And that very fine rubble is
 2 what we are referring to as tailings. It's the crushed
 3 rock and the water that's in it that goes into this valley
 4 and would largely fill the valley with this dam downstream
 5 of it down here [indicating]. That tailings storage
 6 facility is approximately 3.5 square miles in size as they
 7 currently have it planned.
 8 The third primary component of the mine site is the
 9 waste rock facility. Waste rock is the overburden that
 10 has to be removed to get to the ore, or it's any ore that
 11 just doesn't have enough gold in it to be worth processing
 12 through the mill. That facility is also about 3.5 square
 13 miles in size.
 14 And I didn't mention, as I'm sure you are aware, the
 15 proposed mine site is about ten miles north of Crooked
 16 Creek.
 17 As we go to the next slide, you can see a variety of
 18 other facilities on there, the mill and a variety of other
 19 smaller facilities that are related to the mine site.
 20 The second primary component of what Donlin is
 21 proposing is the transportation infrastructure. Primarily
 22 the major component of the transportation infrastructure
 23 is the road that leads from that pink and reddish blob in
 24 the center of the screen at the top. That's the proposed
 25 mine site.

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1 There is a proposed road that would run 30 miles down
 2 to the port at Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim River. That's a
 3 new port that would have to be constructed. It would be
 4 an industrial port that receives cargo and fuel for the
 5 proposed project so it can operate. There is a variety of
 6 potential material sites that would need to be developed
 7 for that road construction and maintenance along the
 8 route. And then in the upper left-hand portion of the
 9 screen you can see a 5,000-foot airstrip that would be
 10 constructed to bring folks in and out of the mine site.
 11 There is also 40 million gallons worth of diesel
 12 storage between the port site and the mine. That 40
 13 million gallons of diesel is what they would burn every
 14 year just to operate the mining equipment as a project,
 15 which brings us to the third primary component of the
 16 project, which is a proposed natural gas pipeline.
 17 We talked about the 40 million gallons of diesel that
 18 would be brought into the -- up the Kuskokwim River every
 19 year to power the mining equipment. Well, to power the
 20 mill and the rest of the facilities, you need -- they are
 21 proposing to use natural gas. And to do that, they are
 22 proposing to run a 315-mile long, 14-inch diameter buried
 23 steel pipeline from the western side of Cook Inlet at
 24 Beluga through the Alaska Range and over to the mine site.
 25 If constructed as Donlin is currently proposing it,

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1 the project takes about three to four years to construct.
 2 It will operate for approximately 27 and a half years and
 3 then go through a closure and reclamation process.
 4 Obviously some things like the pit lake, that pit that
 5 would be opened and filled with water, the tailings
 6 storage facility, the waste rock facility, those things
 7 can never be reclaimed, meaning that they don't exist
 8 anymore; but the waste rock facility would be covered, in
 9 other words, graded and smoothed over with rock and
 10 earthen material. The tailings storage facility would
 11 also be contoured so it blends in with the landscape.
 12 And then there is a whole variety of other facilities
 13 that Donlin is proposing to use either just during a
 14 portion of construction or just during some portion of
 15 operations that would actually be reclaimed before the
 16 project ends.
 17 So my point with this is reclamation doesn't all
 18 happen at the very end of the project. Some of it starts
 19 somewhere through the project. And then, of course, there
 20 is post-closure work. We talked about the fact that the
 21 pit lake would potentially fill with water as proposed.
 22 Well, any water released off the project both during
 23 operations and during -- after closure has to meet State
 24 and federal water quality standards before it can go back
 25 into Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River, et cetera. So

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1 any and all of that water would have to be treated before
 2 it could be released, which means that any water coming
 3 out of that pit lake or the other facilities related to
 4 the project has to be treated basically into perpetuity.
 5 So there is monitoring and water treatment that basically
 6 goes on forever.
 7 This is just an indication of the various federal
 8 permits that are some of the permits and authorizations
 9 required for Donlin to construct the project as they are
 10 proposing it. There is also a variety of State
 11 authorizations required. This is a small number of the
 12 total authorizations, permits, leases, licenses,
 13 et cetera, that would be required for the project to go
 14 forward. There is over 100 authorizations. The point of
 15 all this is no single entity's decision on whether or not
 16 they would permit the project or not permit the project
 17 drives the entire process.
 18 So the Army Corps of Engineers has authority under
 19 Section 10 and Section 404 related to this project, and if
 20 it were -- if the project were to be permitted and go
 21 forward, we would have to issue permits under those
 22 authorities before the project could be completed.
 23 Well, there is a whole variety of other folks that
 24 have to do the same thing. And our decision does not
 25 obligate anyone else to make the same decision or a

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1 similar decision, and likewise with virtually anybody
 2 else. We have got a lot of folks involved who need to
 3 review the project and evaluate the potential effects of
 4 it.
 5 So I told you I was going to give you some
 6 information on the status of this Environmental Impact
 7 Statement that is out for you all to comment on if you
 8 would like to. We were here in Emmonak somewhere between
 9 December and March of -- December 2012 and March of 2013.
 10 I wasn't working on the project at that time, but the
 11 Corps came out with a variety of the folks you see in the
 12 room to get your input on what you think the effects of
 13 this project might be if it went forward, and that's part
 14 of what was used to develop the Environmental Impact
 15 Statement.
 16 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement went out on
 17 November 27th of 2015. So it's been out there since then.
 18 And the current closure of the comment period is April 30,
 19 2016. So we have got about two months left in the comment
 20 period.
 21 After we review all the comments that we get on the
 22 Environmental Impact Statement, we will look back and see
 23 if there is any additional work we need to do in relation
 24 to the analyses that we did, whether there is things out
 25 there that we don't know about that you all indicate in

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1 your comments that we need to do more work on, whether
 2 there are other alternatives that we need to look at,
 3 et cetera.
 4 And then we would develop what's referred to as a
 5 Final Environmental Impact Statement. That also would go
 6 out to the public to provide information on the final
 7 conclusions that we have come to in relation to the
 8 project. That doesn't mean decisions on whether or not it
 9 would be permitted. That just means decisions on what we
 10 think the impacts of the project would be if it went
 11 forward.
 12 The thing that follows the Final Environmental Impact
 13 Statement is the Record of Decision that the three federal
 14 agencies would develop and use to determine whether or not
 15 they would permit the project or not. And those three
 16 federal agencies are the Army Corps of Engineers, the
 17 Bureau of Land Management, and the Pipeline Hazardous
 18 Materials and Safety Administration.
 19 Okay. I'll give you just a few minutes of
 20 information on what's in the first half a dozen chapters
 21 of the EIS so you know -- you might have an idea of
 22 whether or not you want to comment on those half a dozen
 23 chapters and give you an idea what's in them.
 24 Chapter 1 is the purpose and need, primarily, for the
 25 proposed project. Obviously Donlin has a purpose for the

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1 development of a gold mine. Because of the Army Corps of
 2 Engineers' role in the process, it's incumbent upon us to
 3 develop the basic and overall purpose for the project as
 4 proposed. And our purpose that we derived is listed on
 5 the top of the screen.
 6 The thing that I need to point out is if you look at
 7 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that went out,
 8 there is another half a sentence after the word "Alaska"
 9 that appears in the document. That last half a sentence
 10 notes that part of the purpose is maximizing the economic
 11 benefit for Donlin's stockholders, Calista and TKC
 12 shareholders.
 13 We are very aware of the potential positive
 14 socioeconomic benefits of this project. We are aware of
 15 some of the potential socioeconomic impacts of the
 16 project, but because the Army Corps of Engineers needs to
 17 do middle-of-the-road unbiased analyses of the potential
 18 effects of the project, while we are aware of those and
 19 they are a component of our process and our analyses, we
 20 can't unduly weight the potential economic benefits to any
 21 one entity over another too substantially and still be
 22 going down the middle of the road to do unbiased analyses.
 23 So that last half a sentence that appears in the
 24 Draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding maximizing
 25 benefits for several entities was intended to be removed.

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1 The editorial fix just didn't get made. So the purpose
 2 for the project is what you see on the screen. So if you
 3 have any comments on Chapter 1, please let us know what
 4 they are.
 5 I'll talk in a few minutes about how you can give us
 6 the most substantive comments that we can use to fix the
 7 document in any way that you feel that it needs fixed.
 8 Chapter 2 talks about alternatives. We develop
 9 alternatives in relation to a project someone is proposing
 10 to minimize impacts where we potentially can. They
 11 developed over 300 alternative options for Donlin's
 12 proposed project. Seven of those were -- a variety of
 13 those options were combined into seven alternatives that
 14 we carried forward for more detailed analyses in the Draft
 15 EIS. Those are listed on the screen. Because we are
 16 about to go through them, I won't read them off.
 17 We won't go back through Alternative 2, which is
 18 Donlin Gold's proposed action, because basically we just
 19 talked about that.
 20 Alternative 1 is what we refer to as a no action
 21 alternative. Again, to do unbiased analyses, we need to
 22 start with what's referred to as a no action alternative.
 23 That alternative means that nothing changes. Nothing is
 24 constructed. Nothing happens out there beyond what's
 25 currently out there. So we are using -- we use that

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1 alternative to compare and contrast the proposed action,
 2 Donlin's alternatives, to all the others against it so
 3 that we might accurately analyze the potential impacts,
 4 not only of what Donlin is proposing, but what the impacts
 5 of the other alternatives might be.
 6 I mentioned that we develop alternatives by way of
 7 potentially minimizing impacts of proposed projects. What
 8 we are giving you as we go through Alternatives 3A through
 9 6A are just how these alternatives might minimize some
 10 impacts, not all the various potential resource issues
 11 that are out there. So in other words, we are just giving
 12 you a couple of examples of how these things might
 13 minimize impacts.
 14 Alternative 3A is referred to as the LNG-powered haul
 15 truck alternative. What that means is the haul trucks,
 16 the 300-ton payload trucks that would move rock and ore
 17 inside the mine, are actually powered by liquid natural
 18 gas instead of diesel. The benefit of that is that less
 19 diesel would have to be barged up the Kuskokwim, so there
 20 is less impacts from barging up and down the Kuskokwim.
 21 But at the same time, if that alternative goes forward, it
 22 means that there needs to be a liquid natural gas plant
 23 constructed at the mine site to turn the natural gas
 24 that's coming into the mine site into liquid natural gas.
 25 So there are tradeoffs. Anytime we look at one

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1 alternative versus another, we have to change the weight
 2 and balance of the analyses and how it might impact the
 3 human and natural environment.
 4 Alternative 3B is the diesel pipeline alternative.
 5 What this alternative means is that instead of a natural
 6 gas pipeline being constructed, a diesel pipeline would be
 7 constructed in the same footprint. Therefore, we would
 8 not be, except during construction, barging diesel up the
 9 Kuskokwim River. It would all come through that pipeline.
 10 If we -- if we go forward with that alternative, what that
 11 means is there is a 19-mile-long segment that would have
 12 to be added to the proposed pipeline that would run south
 13 from Beluga Point to Tyonek. It means the barge facility
 14 at Tyonek would have to be expanded.
 15 And then it changes potential spill issues in
 16 relation to a diesel pipeline versus a natural gas line.
 17 If you put a natural gas line in and it leaks or it
 18 ruptures, basically the natural gas goes into the air. If
 19 you put a diesel pipeline in and it leaks or ruptures,
 20 well, it can potentially go on the ground or in the water
 21 or both. So that also means we have to change how spill
 22 response equipment would be staged, where it is,
 23 et cetera. So again, if we change alternatives, we change
 24 potential impacts. So while that alternative has some
 25 positives in some ways, it potentially has negatives in

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1 another direction.
 2 Alternative 4, the Birch Tree Crossing port, I'll
 3 show you a picture of this in a moment. When we are
 4 talking about Donlin's proposed port site at Jungjuk, if
 5 the Birch Tree Crossing alternative were built, what that
 6 would mean is instead of this 30-mile road, which is the
 7 red line on the screen here that would go down to the
 8 proposed port site at Jungjuk, there would be a 76-mile
 9 road, that purple line, that would go from the mine site
 10 all the way down to Birch Tree Crossing.
 11 Well, one of the benefits of this alternative -- one
 12 of the concerns with barging on the Kuskokwim River, as
 13 you all are aware, is barges getting stranded somewhere on
 14 the river due to shallow conditions. Five of the six
 15 areas where we know there are shallow spots on the upper
 16 Kuskokwim River are upstream of Birch Tree Crossing. So
 17 that leaves one shallow spot that we are aware of below
 18 Birch Tree Crossing that would have potential for
 19 stranding in normal water years. So that's just one of
 20 the tradeoffs of this alternative versus Donlin's proposed
 21 action.
 22 Alternative 5A, the dry stack tailings method. So
 23 far we have talked about alternatives that might minimize
 24 impacts from barging, in part. Well, now we will talk
 25 about this alternative, which is intended potentially to

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1 minimize the impacts of the tailings storage facility,
 2 that 3.5-square-mile valley that was filled with crushed
 3 rock.
 4 Well, in this case, what you see on the next screen
 5 is that if we use the dry stack tailings method instead of
 6 what Donlin is proposing, you have a smaller footprint for
 7 the dry stack tailings facility. This area right over
 8 here [indicating] just doesn't take up as much space, but
 9 then because dry tailings mean you are removing the water
 10 that's entrained in the tailings, well, then you have
 11 something downstream of that smaller tailings pile. You
 12 have an operating pond that's the water that you removed
 13 from it. So that means that you have to have a hydraulic
 14 dam downstream of that.
 15 The operating pond would exist during the operating
 16 life of the mine. At the end of the mine's life, that
 17 basically would be dried up; but again, all that water has
 18 to be treated before it could be released into Crooked
 19 Creek or the Kuskokwim River.
 20 And another tradeoff with the dry stack tailings
 21 alternative if this alternative went forward, those
 22 tailings are drier and they are stacked substantially
 23 higher than what Donlin is proposing, so you have a
 24 potential for more windborne erosion and dust deposition
 25 related to that style tailings facility versus what Donlin

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1 is proposing.
 2 The last alternative we will talk about is 6A. This
 3 is the Dalzell Gorge pipeline route. There were a variety
 4 of potential alternatives to Donlin's proposed pipeline
 5 route. This is the one that survived for detailed
 6 analyses. This route is two miles shorter than the route
 7 Donlin is proposing, but as you can see, it has the
 8 potential to have a greater impact on the Iditarod
 9 National Historic Trail. Donlin's proposed route is in
 10 gold on the screen, and the Dalzell George route is in
 11 purple, running through Happy River, the Dalzell George
 12 and the south fork of the Kuskokwim. That was Chapter 2.
 13 So what is Chapter 3? Well, Chapter 3 is basically
 14 the heart of the whole document. So if you are wanting to
 15 know what does the draft analyses in the document include,
 16 the draft analyses are in Chapter 3. It includes the
 17 baseline environmental condition, what's currently out
 18 there in the human and natural environment, and what are
 19 the potential impacts of Donlin's project to the human and
 20 natural environment, and what are the potential impacts of
 21 those other alternatives that we talked about so you can
 22 compare and contrast them to each other.
 23 The purpose of this slide is just to give you an idea
 24 of what -- barge traffic, as an example, the type of
 25 impacts barge traffic might have on the various resource

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1 issues identified in the document.
 2 There were 26 resource issues identified in the
 3 document. 14 of them are potentially impacted by barging,
 4 and they run from subsistence to noise to surface water
 5 impacts to climate change. So there is just a wide
 6 variety of potential impacts of the proposed project, and
 7 they are contained in Chapter 3.
 8 To continue the barging example, to give you an idea
 9 of the potential impacts of what Donlin is proposing
 10 versus what currently exists, this slide breaks out the
 11 potential impacts of barging between construction on this
 12 side of the screen and operations on the other side of the
 13 screen. And it breaks it out by alternative. On the left
 14 side, the burnt gold bar is Alternative 1. And then the
 15 next one is Alternative 2, 4, 5A and 6A, followed by
 16 Alternative 3A and 3B.
 17 And what we are depicting in this slide is that
 18 current barge traffic, as we understand it, on the
 19 Kuskokwim River -- and we need your help to know if we
 20 understand it correctly -- current barge traffic on the
 21 Kuskokwim River is about 68 barge trips a year leaving
 22 Bethel. And this is riverine barge traffic versus marine
 23 barge traffic further downstream of Bethel.
 24 As we currently understand it, there are 68 barges
 25 that leave Bethel a year and go upstream. That means a

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1 barge pushing a tug. So if you were standing on the
 2 riverbank upstream of Bethel last summer, in a 24-hour
 3 period you might have seen a barge -- or a tug pushing a
 4 barge going upstream. If Donlin's project were
 5 constructed, you would see industrial barging, which means
 6 what you would see is a tug pushing four barges going
 7 upstream, and three of those would pass you in a 24-hour
 8 period. So the amount of barge traffic goes up by 179
 9 percent over what currently exists.
 10 This side of the screen [indicating], the light blue
 11 color impacts the amount of increased barging related to
 12 construction in relation to each one of the alternatives.
 13 So as you can see, any one of the alternatives selected
 14 has the same impact on barge traffic if the project goes
 15 forward, with the exception of -- remember that we talked
 16 about Alternative 2 and the barging goes up to the new
 17 port site at Jungjuk if that were constructed? Well, you
 18 can also see that Alternative 4 is right there, as well.
 19 But while the volume of barge traffic is the same,
 20 Alternative 2 versus Alternative 4, the barge traffic only
 21 goes as far as Birch Tree Crossing. So it's about 75
 22 miles less of activity on the river. So in other words,
 23 almost no barging upstream of Birch Tree Crossing.
 24 The next slide is a clearer depiction of the
 25 modification of barge operations, one alternative versus

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1 another. Again, we have the alternatives broken out in
 2 the same way, but you can see that Alternatives 2, 4, 5A
 3 and 6A, that blue line represents the increase in traffic,
 4 both cargo and fuel, that would have to be pushed upstream
 5 on barges. If you went to Alternative 3A, the LNG haul
 6 truck alternative where there is less diesel going
 7 upstream, well, it just means less barges go upstream.
 8 If you went to Alternative 3B where there is a diesel
 9 pipeline, well, that means there is virtually no diesel
 10 barging, except a small amount during construction on the
 11 river. So again, there is less barging with that
 12 alternative.
 13 And again, keep in mind that you have the same
 14 difference between Alternatives 2 and 4 under operations
 15 that you did under construction, which means that there
 16 would be very little barging upstream of Birch Tree
 17 Crossing.
 18 So as far as the analyses in Chapter 3, this is an
 19 example of the draft conclusions that have been reached
 20 just in relation to fish impacts as a result of barging.
 21 And it's important to note that the analyses in the
 22 document are draft. They are not final. The conclusions
 23 in the document are draft. They are not final. That's
 24 why it's up for comment. We need you all to tell us if
 25 you think it's right, wrong or otherwise.

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1 As you can see, the draft conclusion of the potential
 2 impacts of the barging on fish, whether that's disturbance
 3 of fish habitat, disturbing their behavior, injuring or
 4 killing fish, for Alternative 2 is that there would be a
 5 moderate impact on fish in most parts of the river with
 6 potential greater impacts in shallow or narrow segments.
 7 And again, Alternatives 3A, 3B and 4 all have lesser
 8 impacts one way or another in relation to what Donlin is
 9 proposing but, again, the question is, is that change in
 10 alternatives warranted as you weigh and balance the
 11 different impacts of those alternatives.
 12 This is another example of tradeoffs in alternatives.
 13 In this alternative we are talking about, in the case of
 14 Alternative 3B, the diesel pipeline, the change in air
 15 emissions. If you are not burning natural gas and burning
 16 more diesel, well, you potentially have more negative air
 17 emissions via the consumption of more diesel versus some
 18 of it being natural gas. And again, we give you an
 19 indication of the potential changes in impacts of
 20 alternative 3A and 4 in relation to what Donlin is
 21 proposing.
 22 Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 is cumulative impacts.
 23 Cumulative impacts are all past, present and reasonably
 24 foreseeable future impacts. The purpose of cumulative
 25 impacts largely is it allows us to forecast the potential

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1 impacts of projects that someone wants to construct. So
 2 if we combine all past activities, present activities and
 3 reasonably foreseeable future activities, we effectively
 4 generate a forecast of the potential impacts of a proposed
 5 project.
 6 Chapter 5 is mitigation. This chapter talks about
 7 other ways other than the alternatives by which we might
 8 minimize impacts of a proposed project. For instance,
 9 there were some things Donlin eliminated in their design
 10 simply because it might have too much of a negative impact
 11 or there was a less impactful way to do it. Then there is
 12 a whole variety of regulatory requirements and other
 13 methods by which you can compensate for the effects of a
 14 project to minimize impacts.
 15 And so what we are looking for with Chapter 5 is not
 16 only to disclose that information to you, but to get your
 17 comments on the potential effects the project might have.
 18 When we go into the poster session in a few minutes,
 19 before we start that, I'll ask the folks that are with me
 20 in the room to introduce themselves and give you an idea
 21 of their role in the project so you know who you might
 22 want to talk to in relation to some of the impacts. We
 23 will take the time you all would like to take to look at
 24 the posters, and then we will reconvene and take your
 25 comments so that we can respond to them and make any

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1 modifications needed in the EIS.
 2 Please note that when we do that, Mary Vavrik, our
 3 court reporter, needs to document your comments. So if
 4 you can state your name, any affiliation you have, if you
 5 are formally representing someone, and then whatever
 6 comments you have. And I'll repeat that again before we
 7 get started.
 8 So the purpose for us being here today is basically
 9 to give you information not only on the status of the EIS,
 10 but how you can most substantively comment to us so that
 11 we can determine if the draft analyses and the draft
 12 conclusions are adequate, what you think of the project.
 13 We need your input on whether you think the project should
 14 go forward, if you think the project should not go
 15 forward, if you think there is -- the project should be
 16 modified; in other words, go forward in some other form,
 17 whatever comments you have.
 18 The example I've used in the past is not real clear
 19 to some folks regarding what we mean. Your comments to us
 20 are very important. We want your comments regardless of
 21 what your comments are. What we need if you are for the
 22 project or against the project or somewhere in between is
 23 some "why" related to your comments.
 24 So if you support the project, we need to know why.
 25 If you oppose the project, we need to know why. If you

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1 are somewhere in between, it would help to know why
 2 because what we are trying to do is determine whether or
 3 not our analyses in the document are adequate; in other
 4 words, do we understand the current existing environment
 5 out here, both human and natural.
 6 When we, in relation to a given community in the
 7 document, talk about the importance of an individual fish
 8 species to subsistence and sharing, did we get it right?
 9 The same thing goes for just about everything else we have
 10 got in the document. So what we are after is the most
 11 detailed comments you can give us regarding whether we are
 12 right or wrong or somewhere in between.
 13 There is a variety of ways you can comment on the
 14 draft EIS. Obviously you can do that today. As I
 15 mentioned, the comment period at this point in time is
 16 currently open until April 30. You can also comment in
 17 writing. We have got some comment forms back here you can
 18 use you can send to us. You can email it to us. You can
 19 mail it to us. You can fax them to us. And you can go to
 20 the website and provide comments on the website. And we
 21 will have this information for you in the back of the room
 22 and up on the screen in a few minutes; so if you didn't
 23 get it, you will be able to.
 24 These are meetings that we have already had and
 25 meetings that we will have. And of course, you or anybody

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1 else can attend any one of these meetings and comment
 2 again or make additional comments.
 3 This is the website that I mentioned. It contains
 4 the draft EIS. Under the EIS documents tab, various
 5 background information and related information on Donlin's
 6 proposed project, my contact information. And if you have
 7 comments that are specifically related to tribal issues
 8 and you would like to make those comments to Ms. Amanda
 9 Andraschko, our tribal liaison, her contact information is
 10 here on the screen.
 11 So at this point in time, I'll start with Mark, an
 12 employee of the State of Alaska who is here. He can give
 13 you some information on what his role and his agency's
 14 role in the project is, and then we will go from there.
 15 **MR. MORONES:** Good afternoon. Thank you
 16 all for letting us come to your community today. My name
 17 is Mark Morones. I'm with the Department of Natural
 18 Resources Office of Project Management and Permitting.
 19 That's our name, but essentially our office works with
 20 projects to help do coordination.
 21 We have multiple roles. We participate on behalf of
 22 the State as a cooperating agency to help provide
 23 information and to help inform this process that you all
 24 are participating on. We also have -- in addition to
 25 everything that's kind of going on on the environmental

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1 posters available to answer any questions that you might
 2 have.
 3 And I'm going to introduce our team now. I'll start
 4 with Nancy Darigo, who is in the back here. She is the
 5 lead for the physical environment resources. She will be
 6 able to answer questions about air and water discharges,
 7 water flow, hazardous chemicals, and also will be
 8 discussing the spill risk posters here in the front.
 9 Dave Every is right here in the front. He is the
 10 lead for the biological resources. And he will be at the
 11 posters sort of by the back door discussing fisheries and
 12 also the barge traffic that a lot of people are concerned
 13 about.
 14 My name, again, is Amy, and I'm the social science
 15 lead, and I will be at the posters discussing
 16 socioeconomics and subsistence resources.
 17 Jessica Evans is in the back of the room waving her
 18 hand. She is the public involvement lead, and she has
 19 been involved in a number of different sections on the
 20 project, as well. She will be up here in the front by the
 21 project component posters; so the mine site, the
 22 transportation facilities and the pipeline posters up
 23 here.
 24 And then many of you met Donne Fleagle here in the
 25 back. She is also part of our public involvement team and

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1 review side, there are a number of State authorizations
 2 that are going to need to be had; so our office
 3 coordinates with DEC, Fish & Game and within the
 4 Department of Natural Resources, a number of offices that
 5 have been working together to put together the
 6 right-of-way for the proposed pipeline -- 315-mile
 7 pipeline that involves a lot of coordination with Fish &
 8 Game to preserve and look at habitat issues for fish, air
 9 quality, water quality.
 10 So I will be around during the poster session, and I
 11 can answer any of your questions.
 12 And again, thank you for letting us be here.
 13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Also here are some
 14 folks from AECOM. AECOM is an international engineering
 15 and environmental sciences firm. They are the folks that
 16 are doing the primary analyses of the impacts to the
 17 project, and they are working with Donlin and all the
 18 various cooperators in developing the EIS. So Amy will
 19 introduce the folks that are here and tell you what
 20 information they can provide.
 21 **MS. AMY ROSENTHAL:** Thank you. My name is
 22 Amy Rosenthal, and I'm a member of the AECOM team. We are
 23 working with the Corps of Engineers and Donlin, and we are
 24 writing the Environmental Impact Statement. And we have a
 25 number of folks here in the room that will be standing at

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1 available to answer questions that you might have, as
 2 well.
 3 And John Active here in the front is also a member of
 4 our team and has been providing translation and will help
 5 translate if any of you would like to make comments later,
 6 as well.
 7 So thank you.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
 9 To give you information on what Donlin is proposing, we
 10 also have a representative from Donlin Gold and NOVAGOLD
 11 with us today.
 12 **MR. MIKE RIESER:** Hi. I'm Mike Rieser,
 13 Donlin Gold.
 14 **MR. DAVE DEISLEY:** I'm Dave Deisley. I'm
 15 with NOVAGOLD. Donlin Gold is owned by two other mining
 16 companies, NOVAGOLD and Barrick Gold, and I work with one
 17 of the two owner companies. Thank you for having us.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. With that, if
 19 you all would like to move to the posters. As we
 20 mentioned, there is three of them that describe Donlin's
 21 proposed project in more detail than what obviously I was
 22 able to go through up here. And there is nine of them
 23 that deal with some of the major resource issues that
 24 folks commented on during scoping and indicated that we
 25 needed to analyze in the document. So we will just -- we

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1 will go to the posters until you all would like to
 2 reconvene and start making comments. Thank you very much.
 3 (Off the record.)
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Good evening, folks.
 5 It looks like we are ready to start the formal comments
 6 session. Sorry, but it looks like we have a problem with
 7 our phone. If you know of anybody in the community who
 8 wanted to call in to this meeting and listen, there's a
 9 good probability that they weren't able to listen to the
 10 presentation, but the phone line has been reestablished,
 11 and so they will be able to comment after we are done
 12 taking comments from everybody in the room.
 13 So if you are aware of anybody out there, if you can
 14 call them or let us know so we can call them so they know
 15 they have the opportunity to comment via the phone.
 16 We have a number of numbers out there. You don't
 17 have to have a number to comment, but we will start and go
 18 through the folks who have numbers and then see if there
 19 is anybody else who would like to comment.
 20 No. 1? Okay. No. 2?
 21 **MR. VITUS REDFOX:** Pass.
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. No. 3?
 23 **MS. ERNESTINE ANDREW:** I had a comment.
 24 When I was over there at the transportation
 25 infrastructure, the City of Emmonak is trying to get a

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1 port started. And if we were to get our port started,
 2 would we be in any way affiliated or included into the
 3 Donlin Creek barging, you know, barging of materials and
 4 stuff? Because that would bring income for our community
 5 and our area, which is much needed. And it would also
 6 include the Yukon River, up and down the Yukon River.
 7 And then another comment I had was the socioeconomics
 8 of our region or our village, our community. We are
 9 trying to get a learning center started up, and we could
 10 have job trainings for people here. If they want to have,
 11 you know, jobs connected to Donlin Creek, we could have
 12 our own training center and have the basics of any kind of
 13 training, education, and that would greatly help our
 14 village, even our area.
 15 The Kuskokwim has their Yuut Elitnaurviat Training
 16 Center, but it seems to me that's mainly for the Kuskokwim
 17 people. And the Yukon, it would be nice to see something
 18 happen out here that would benefit our people, get our
 19 people educated, get them interested in learning and get
 20 them prepared for future jobs at Donlin or anywhere in our
 21 community.
 22 The environmental impacts, the only thing I have a
 23 concern on is the air quality. Everything else, like
 24 fish, river, birds, anything, I'm not really concerned
 25 because our water is different on the Yukon.

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1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Regarding your comment
 2 about an Emmonak port, early on in the process before I
 3 was involved in the project they looked at a potential
 4 road connection from somewhere on the Kuskokwim to the
 5 Yukon so that barging potentially could go up the Yukon
 6 and then material could be trucked to the mine. So there
 7 is also another project out there that I believe the State
 8 has considered a road connection between the two.
 9 So I can't definitively answer whether or not a port
 10 established at Emmonak could be part of this project, but
 11 if the port were established in a time frame that resulted
 12 in the potential of a road from this area down to the
 13 Kuskokwim in some means that appeared feasible to supply
 14 materials to the project and there were benefits -- in
 15 other words, it reduced impacts of Donlin's proposed
 16 project in one way or another -- then that alternative
 17 might be considered reasonably foreseeable and would need
 18 to be one that might need to be addressed in the EIS.
 19 But you are talking about a pretty short time frame.
 20 Your port would have to be in place, actually operational
 21 probably within about three years or less.
 22 **MS. ERNESTINE ANDREW:** Our port is already
 23 under -- we are waiting for more funding to get it shovel
 24 ready, and we are waiting for funding to complete it. We
 25 already had the engineering done. We had people work on

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1 the first phase. So right now we are trying to get it
 2 going off ground and get it constructed.
 3 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Do you know what
 4 the status is of permits for the project?
 5 **MS. ERNESTINE ANDREW:** No. I wish our
 6 city manager was here to talk more about it because he's
 7 the one that is working on it.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Jessica, is this
 9 something -- we need to note this so that somebody can
 10 contact Emmonak and get some further information on the
 11 status of the port, and then we can take a look at it in
 12 relation to the draft EIS as a comment on it and determine
 13 if there is something, an alternative that we need to
 14 address in relation to Emmonak potentially supplying some
 15 aspect of the project. But of course, we also need a road
 16 connection from Emmonak that direction or some other
 17 marine connection or something. So we will -- we will get
 18 some additional information.
 19 As I said, I wasn't involved in the project when they
 20 did the alternative analyses related to the Yukon River
 21 ports and the various road connections, et cetera. So we
 22 will get some information from those folks who did the
 23 analyses at that time and some additional information from
 24 you all and see where it might go. This is something that
 25 we will start on now instead of waiting until April 30

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1 because this is just the kind of thing we need more
 2 information on to know where we go with the comment.
 3 As far as the learning center, I don't know.
 4 That's -- you know, there is a variety of ways to address
 5 that. I do not know exactly what Donlin is proposing in
 6 relation to how folks would be trained and where they will
 7 be trained and who would do the training in relation to
 8 work at the mine. Obviously some training would be in
 9 this region for work at the mine, and there is other
 10 training that would have to be done somewhere else in the
 11 country or world, just depending on what type of job it
 12 is.
 13 So that's another one that we will take that as a
 14 comment, and we will see where that -- where that goes
 15 when the folks look back at what was included in the EIS
 16 to date.
 17 All right. No. 4.
 18 **MR. AMBROSE SHORTY:** My name is Ambrose
 19 Shorty. I'm from Emmonak.
 20 [speaking in Yup'ik.] I can do it in English, but I
 21 want to do it in Yup'ik. Well, this thing Donlin Gold
 22 wants to put in, the mine, and here on the Yukon, here in
 23 Emmonak we don't really understand this project. And I
 24 don't know much about the project anyway, but what I've
 25 heard so far, there are some dangerous aspects to the mine

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1 if it gets started. Yeah.
 2 And also taking the gold out of the ore, using
 3 cyanide and stuff is kind of dangerous to me. And how if
 4 there is an accident with -- that cyanide, you know, I'm
 5 kind of afraid that there would be a bad detriment to the
 6 birds, the migratory birds and the animals that we hunt.
 7 The plants won't grow. I'm kind of worried about those.
 8 And if we here on the Yukon push for this project, we want
 9 to make sure that none of what we subsist off of will be
 10 hurt.
 11 And yeah, I really don't understand how it will
 12 affect our livelihood here on the Yukon. I'm kind of for
 13 it, but I need to understand it completely.
 14 And also, I'm worried about these barges with diesel,
 15 this boat coming out of the exhaust. When it rains it
 16 will come down onto the land. And I don't know how it's
 17 going to affect the plants that grow and how it will
 18 affect the things that we subsist off of.
 19 Thank you.
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** No. 6.
 21 **MR. LAWRENCE YUPANIK:** I'm Lawrence
 22 Yupanik. I would like to elaborate a little bit on
 23 Ambrose's comment. Looking at the map, I notice Donlin
 24 Gold is not very far from where we live here on the
 25 emissions. I don't know how far that carries and will

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1 affect kind of our small game we eat, like the blackfish,
 2 our air-breathing little fish. And that's one there.
 3 But then I also want to ask about the media. I've
 4 read where someone commented about Donlin Gold to try to
 5 extend our information, our discussions. Is the media
 6 comment being used for -- followed or passed on to Donlin
 7 Gold? I just want to mention that. Thank you.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you. Can you
 9 give me a little more information on what you mean by
 10 media comments? Are you referring to what your comments
 11 to the media is making or comments other people are making
 12 that appear in the media?
 13 **MR. LAWRENCE YUPANIK:** Yes, yes, like in
 14 the Discovery, an article where someone wrote a letter to
 15 the people of our region in the delta, to share our
 16 comment to -- of concern, is it going to affect our food,
 17 our -- what's in the food. Because I know that comes in
 18 and out easier than processed -- processed food. Are
 19 they -- is there someone to comment on there? Is it
 20 getting passed on to Donlin Gold later or stuff like that?
 21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** For folks who are
 22 writing comments that appear in the media, in other words,
 23 it's an editorial or they write a news article about the
 24 project, et cetera, those are not comments on the Draft
 25 Environmental Impact Statement, so those would not be

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1 comments we would be responding to. We are typically
 2 aware of those articles and the comments made in them, but
 3 if you have folks that are making comments to the media or
 4 through the media that we need to have and we need to
 5 determine if we can respond to as part of the EIS, those
 6 actually need to be sent to us at one of these -- via one
 7 of these methodologies by April 30. If somebody writes a
 8 letter, an editorial, and it appears in the paper, we are
 9 not responding to that unless it comes to us.
 10 **MR. LAWRENCE YUPANIK:** Okay. Thank you.
 11 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much.
 12 No. 6? Now we are at 23.
 13 **MR. WILBUR HOOTCH:** Hello. My name is
 14 Wilbur Hootch. I have a comment on proposed action
 15 transportation and natural gas pipeline. The first one is
 16 this proposed transportation, like from the mine to those
 17 creeks above Bethel along the Crooked Creek. Can you
 18 reply about liquefied natural gas from the Cook Inlet
 19 area?
 20 About a year or two ago, we had an application from
 21 the State of Alaska to do a 50-mile radius in our region
 22 for oil and gas exploration. Why do our Calista or the
 23 Donlin Gold has to go way over to Cook Inlet to get the
 24 natural gas or the diesel pipeline that's going to go
 25 through? It could be exploratory. I know we are ready

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1 for exploration. We just got an application from the
 2 State of Alaska to do oil and natural gas exploration. We
 3 have trillions of natural gas that's in our region, a
 4 50-mile radius.
 5 And the other comment I'd like to emphasize is there
 6 is -- you know, like one of our commenters emphasized not
 7 enough of our young adults have information on Donlin
 8 Gold, but if we give them a chance to give them -- educate
 9 them, train them and give them employment in our region --
 10 like Hooper Bay, Bethel area, they would have training
 11 centers, they would have learning center. And you know,
 12 it would be nice -- just here in our region near Emmonak
 13 and Kotlik, we are usually intertied. We have an intertie
 14 on our community here, which is one -- like a learning
 15 center or training center.
 16 We have a -- back 20 years ago when CDQ came around,
 17 maybe even more, a lot of our young people went to
 18 training like in Palmer, Seward, some in Bethel. And we
 19 have a lot of trained young people in carpentry,
 20 mechanics, plumbing. And we -- our young people learning
 21 about Donlin Gold, and they don't have emphasis of what's
 22 going on over there. They just think about Donlin Gold.
 23 They don't know like you explained on your profile over
 24 here. They have no source of information what's going on
 25 over there. But if you put that learning center to

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1 educate, train, and possibly employment in Donlin Gold.
 2 Thank you.
 3 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Thank you very
 4 much. Jessica, I don't know if we had oil and gas
 5 development in this region as a reasonably foreseeable
 6 future impact. So if we didn't, we need to talk to the
 7 city about the status of the application and whether or
 8 not that's something that would go forward in the
 9 appropriate time frame, and we need to include it.
 10 Is there anybody else in the room who would like to
 11 make a comment?
 12 **MR. WILBUR HOOTCH:** One more comment.
 13 Back some years, back in 2011 I went under a tribal --
 14 what's called an Indian Roads Reservation, and one of our
 15 people talked about ports and docks. And there is -- we
 16 have a port and dock designed, and we have -- we were
 17 appropriated from the State of Alaska \$3,000,000 to get it
 18 going. We have all our material here. We have
 19 permitting, and we did assessment. And they talked
 20 about -- when we went through that at Fairbanks, the
 21 northern region, they were talking about a port in
 22 Marshall. They emphasized a port in Emmonak. And they
 23 talked about a road from the Yukon to Bethel area or
 24 possibly to Donlin Gold.
 25 There is a lot of projects going on here in our

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1 community, and it could intertie with, you know,
 2 educating, training and possibly employment if we had all
 3 the information from this profile you guys are doing.
 4 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
 5 very much.
 6 **MS. MARY YUPANIK:** I'm Mary Yupanik. When
 7 you guys have meetings like this, you guys should write a
 8 letter to the community to let us know when you guys are
 9 coming because this was last minute, yesterday, when
 10 Wilbur told us that the meeting was going to be today.
 11 And you guys should have let us know ahead of time, and
 12 there would probably be more people here.
 13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. No. 25? Is
 14 there anybody else in the room who would like to make a
 15 comment? Is there anybody on the phone who would like to
 16 comment?
 17 Okay. If nobody else has anything they would like,
 18 we very much appreciate the opportunity to come into the
 19 community.
 20 Mr. Mayor, is there anything you would like to say to
 21 conclude the meeting?
 22 **MR. WILBUR HOOTCH:** I would just like to
 23 thank AECOM, Army Corps of Engineers, and the rest of the
 24 guests for coming to our community for this Environmental
 25 Impact Statement for our people. I know that there are a

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1 lot of concerns that other people have but,
 2 unfortunately -- I know we posted this information
 3 sometime last week to notify the people that we were going
 4 to have a shorter -- like a gathering about this EIS.
 5 Thanks again for coming and sharing Donlin and Corps
 6 of Engineers, you know, even though we didn't get enough
 7 information from what we want to hear, but it's good to
 8 know that you guys are, you know -- you guys are caring
 9 for our environment and people's concerns. Thank you.
 10 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you,
 11 sir. And thank you all very much. We will be around for
 12 a few minutes as we put things away, if you have got any
 13 other questions or comments you would like to make. Thank
 14 you for your time.
 15 (Proceedings adjourned at 5:05 p.m.)
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