

Donlin Gold Project EIS

Anchorage Scoping Meeting

Wilda Marston Theatre, Loussac Library

Tuesday, January 22, 2013, 6:00 pm

Attendance:

Over 100 residents attended the scoping meeting held in Anchorage. Don Kuhle of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made a presentation about the Donlin Gold Project EIS. Cooperating agencies in attendance included the BLM, EPA, and Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Issues Raised:

This is a brief summary of issues and comments. A complete Scoping Report with meeting transcripts and detailed analysis of all comments will be issued in May 2013.

- Will the workforce be drawn from the local communities?
- Although the tailings facility is lined, it would also require an impermeable layer on top to avoid contaminated runoff.
- The EIS must make adequate provisions for translation and effective outreach to the Yup'ik communities of the region. This project could have a huge effect in the region, so local people would have the chance to fully understand it.
- The large increase in barge traffic could have many impacts, such as erosion to the river bank, disturbance to wildlife, and conflicts with existing uses including commercial and subsistence fisheries.
- Water levels on the Kuskokwim are lower than before, so it may not be feasible to meet the shipping schedule.
- Where will this project secure a natural gas supply in Cook Inlet, since there is likely to be a shortage in meeting existing demands in the next few years?
- Barge traffic and the risk of fuel spill accidents may affect salmon and other fish, such as whitefish, that local people rely on.
- The EIS should examine the long-term risk for reduced glacial discharge and reduced water levels in the Kuskokwim River. There could be new bottlenecks in the river where shallow water prevents transit.
- The EIS should examine positive benefits of the project, such as low cost energy and reductions in out-migration due to new employment.
- Public health infrastructure and clean water access in the region places many lives at risk. Would the project provide the economic basis for needed improvements?
- Even very low levels of toxins released into the waterways could inhibit fish production. Best practices to prevent discharges must be used.

- The geochemistry of the rock must be fully examined to identify and manage the risks of acid rock drainage and contamination through leaching.
- Fugitive dust impacts on air quality must be examined.
- Dam safety and the risks of failure must be examined.
- With good environmental management, this project could have positive impacts on local employment, environmental protection, and subsistence protection.
- Fear of mercury contamination is already affecting our friends and families in the Kuskokwim River region, so new risks from this project should be examined carefully.
- Examine carefully the water budget for this mine, as this has often been underestimated in other project. The mine may have higher demands for water than estimated.
- Many state permits are required, so the State of Alaska is a cooperating agency in this EIS.
- The project could create population growth to the region and therefore new pressures on fish and wildlife resources.
- The EIS must examine environmental justice along with all other relevant Executive Order issues.
- How can we place a value on the loss of tradition due to a mine, even if there are other benefits?
- Section 106 consultation must be initiated alongside the EIS process.