

Calista Comments on the Donlin Gold Draft Environmental Impact Statement

February 1, 2016 at Bethel, Alaska

Good evening, I am June McAtee, Vice President of Lands at Calista Corporation. Calista Corporation is a regional Native Corporation organized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Together with The Kuskokwim Corporation, Calista owns surface lands at Donlin Creek and Calista owns the mineral estate that is the focus of the Donlin Gold Project.

Calista is mandated under ANCSA to manage its lands to provide maximum benefit for its shareholders. This was the underlying intent of the Act itself, to provide lands for exactly such purposes.

The land at Donlin was selected in the 1970's for its mineral potential which has always been seen as a resource that could provide economic benefits to the region as a whole. After years of its own exploration at Donlin Creek, Calista brought in an industry partner that has been thoughtful about development, mindful of the environment and dedicated to training and hiring our shareholders from the very beginning of the project 20 years ago.

Calista has two primary goals as an ANCSA corporation, 1.) to generate profits for the corporation and its shareholders, and 2.) to provide economic benefits and opportunities for its shareholders and descendants. Finally, the Donlin Gold Project, after many years of study and development, and in partnership with Calista and The Kuskokwim Corporation, has sought permits to build a mine.

During exploration and development, the Project provided vocational training and employment to Calista shareholders and descendants, who comprised up to 90% of the workforce at Donlin. In the future, the project will provide these benefits on a greatly expanded scale. An estimated 1,600 to 1,900 workers would be employed during construction and 500 to 600 during operations at the mine.

During operation, 650 jobs and \$40 million in annual wages would be generated statewide. Sales of goods and services in the state would increase by \$150 million per year. The land owners will receive royalty payments and Calista will share its resource revenue with other regional and village corporations across the state through 7(i) and 7(j) revenue sharing. State and local governments will receive tax revenues from the project. We expect the project's port and pipeline facilities have potential to provide better services and lower the cost of some goods locally.

These economic benefits from such a large project can do much to help the region achieve self-sufficiency and fulfil the much broader goal of self-determination. With declining oil production and struggling state economy, a large resource project in rural Alaska can help offset reductions in governmental funding. We see this project as an integral part of our self-determination as a rural people. We intend to be active and involved participants in the development of our own land and resources at Donlin Creek.

Calista supports Alternative 2, the proposed action to build the mine, which has benefited from years of research and input from local residents and has been carefully designed to minimize environmental and negative social impacts. We encourage the Army Corps of Engineers to permit this Alternative.

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