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Public Comment Letter IN SUPPORT OF THE DONLIN GOLD MINE AS PROPOSED IN ALTERNATIVE 2

My name is Susan Gamache and I am a Calista Corporation and Kuskokwim Corporation shareholder, a Crooked Creek Tribal member and 60 year resident of Alaska. I worked at Calista Corporation in 1982-2010 and for Donlin Gold in 2011-2016. I observed the Donlin project from the very beginning when the Calista land department started doing some field camp work in the area to gather information to attract a mineral exploration company to develop the area into an economic mining project.

In my job in the Shareholder Services Department of Calista; and later in the Community Relations Department of Donlin, I have attended many shareholder and community meetings where various aspects of the Donlin Project were discussed. I have written and taken photos for shareholder publications helping to communicate information to shareholders and the public. Nearly all of the topics that are being brought up during the public scoping and DEIS process are ones that have been heard and looked in to by Donlin. Power generation from diesel, wind, peat, coal fired plant have all been studied. The concern about barging lead to Donlin adding a natural gas pipeline to the project to reduce the amount of diesel needed via river barging. The environmental concerns are addressed in detail in the Draft EIS and in the design of the project. Since 1996 there has been an ongoing base line study program that included air quality, cultural resources, fish and aquatic resources, geochemistry, hydrology, ground and surface water quality and quantity, land use, marine and river use, mercury, noise, public health, recreation, snow surveys, socioeconomic surveys, stream and sediment, subsistence surveys, vegetation, visual aesthetics, wetlands and wildlife studies. Information from these studies were used in the planning and design of the mine and to establish environmental conditions that existed previously.

In my village of Crooked Creek only a few people can afford to buy nets, boats, motors, guns and ammunition, snow machines and other gear to do subsistence, let alone buy the gas and oil to run equipment and heat their homes. Subsistence fishing in the middle and upper Kuskokwim has been drastically reduced as it is, by commercial and subsistence fishing downriver, and when they get openings upriver the fish are few.

The village has a sawmill purchased through a grant, but the sawmill requires gas and oil to operate. Logs the size for milling are harvested up river so a boat and motor are required to get those too. People

are cutting more wood for firewood too as a way to heat their homes since fuel is so expensive. Chainsaws cost money and the fuel to operate them.

There is also potential that a regional energy company could tap in to the natural gas pipeline that will be built in support of the Donlin Gold Mine which could potentially create a cleaner, more cost efficient energy source over diesel and wood stoves.

On another subject, I was disgusted to hear that the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation stated job creation is bad for the region because of out-migration. Why is YKHC opposing a project that will create jobs in rural Alaska which will give young families a reason to stay in the village. I would rather have that happen than continue the increasing out-migration to the village grave yard because people are feeling hopeless and depressed. Doesn't YKHC think that more jobs will keep more people in the villages, and clinics will grow to provide more medical services and hire more medical staff. There will be many indirect jobs in the medical field if a mine is built including clinics that might provide some of the drug and alcohol testing needed for employee hire. The Indian Health Service/ANTHC here in Anchorage wants people with paid medical insurance to come to ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation for medical so they can bill insurance companies which helps to offset people that do not pay. I would think the medical field would be overjoyed to have 3,000 people with medical insurance in the region and state.

Employees will not only have paid medical insurance, they will earn vacation and sick leave and be able to pay in to retirement programs. I think this will go a long way in raising people's self-confidence and peace of mind knowing they don't have to depend on welfare and other government handouts. That's another aspect of health YKHC should be thinking about too.

While I was tending a Donlin booth at a recent trade show I had a group of youth summarize their support of natural resources development. They talked about their parent and grandparent's generation working on the Trans Alaska Pipeline and the North Slope to establish a financial start in life; and these youth are looking to a project like the Donlin Mine and Natural Gas Pipeline Projects to provide jobs so they could get the financial start and raise their family in Alaska. That is what economic development should be focused on---kids going to school in Alaska, going to college and trade schools in Alaska and going to work on projects in Alaska.

Some of the people raising environmental concerns about the project are young people, which I encourage to go to school and study environmental science, fisheries, engineering, and go to work on the Donlin Project directly or with some of the numerous contractors that will be involved in the construction and mine operations. Put yourself in the position to be employed making sure all the environmental issues are managed.

I read the executive summary and parts of the DEIS. Many people comment at our meetings why is it taking so long to get this project going, you have been talking about jobs for almost 20 years. My response is because the Donlin Gold team is committed to building an environmentally responsible project that takes in to consideration all aspects of the development with input from local, regional and

state residents, and incorporates the best technology available in the design, construction and operations. Many feasibility studies were completed and refined over the years before the permit documents were submitted.

Recently I was told by a stakeholder, you work for Donlin Gold and it is understandable that you promote the project and speak in favor of it. My response to that is--because I believe in this project and see it as a catalyst for creating a stable economy in the region and state; and because our middle Kuskokwim region is dying; and because I have participated in the project for the 20 years it has been in development and seen for myself the efforts to design an environmentally responsible project—that is why I chose to work at Donlin. If I didn't believe in the project I wouldn't be here.

I have had elders tell me, "I hope I see it in my lifetime". They want to see young people will jobs and hope for the future. They want to see healthy communities with schools and clinics and safe runways, efficient affordable utilities, housing for young families to have a home of their own.

This is a critical time in the rural areas and the state. The Donlin project is an important opportunity to diversify the local and urban economy. In addition to partnerships with Calista and the Kuskokwim Corporation, there will be many businesses in many sectors that will supply mining operations with goods and services.

For these reasons I believe the time to develop the Donlin Gold mine is now. I support the Donlin project as proposed in Alternative 2.



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