

**From:** [Kelley Hegarty](#)  
**To:** [donlingoldeis, POA](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Donlin Gold Draft EIS comment  
**Date:** Sunday, May 29, 2016 4:56:26 PM

---

Please accept the following as my public comment on the Donlin Gold EIS and the proposed project.

I am a community planning consultant that has worked on many federal EIS projects (EPA and Corps) in Alaska. Having worked closely with both of these agencies and all of the applicable cooperating agencies, I trust them to take their stewardship of Alaska's land, waters, wildlife and peoples very seriously and not to let any project be permitted unless potential significant impacts have been mitigated.

For this reason, and because I have reviewed the Socioeconomic and Cultural elements (my areas of expertise) of the Donlin Gold EIS, I fully support a positive permitting outcome for the Donlin Gold Project as proposed, analyzed and mitigated in the EIS.

I have been working in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region of Alaska for more than 30 years. Many of the people in this region have become dear friends of mine over the years. I believe that the Yup'ik, Cup'ik and Koyukon-Athabaskan cultures in this area are some of the most precious cultural resources in our Nation. But without an economic engine of some kind, these unique cultures are at risk of extinction.

We have seen the beginning of this when heating oil and gas prices escalate, fishing declines, State funding is cut, etc. This is what triggers out-migration and attrition to urban areas where assimilation, or more commonly failure to thrive, occur for the displaced people of our State's rural cultures.

I have witnessed firsthand the positive effects of employment at Donlin during the mine's 15-plus year exploration phase especially in the Middle Kuskokwim villages. If and when the mine is permitted to develop, the number of jobs available will increase exponentially, creating a situation where anyone from the region who wants a job will get one. The EIS documents this.

Donlin's commitment to local hire – with a record 90+ percent workforce from the region's villages – has yielded happier, healthier families in nearby villages. My observation as a social scientist working in the region, is that residents that have well-paying jobs nearby choose much more often to remain with family and friends in the villages that they love.

For these reasons, I believe that the proposed Donlin gold mine is a godsend for the YK region. I encourage the Corps to permit it to begin construction and operation as described in the EIS.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Kelley Hegarty Lammers  
501 Prospectors Trail  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712

planners@gci.net