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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
810(a) PUBLIC HEARING

ANIAK, ALASKA

Taken January 20, 2016
Commencing at 8:20 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 31, inclusive

Taken at
Aniak Community Hall
Aniak, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

Page 2

1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S
 2 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
 3 Alan Bittner
 Anchorage Field Office Manager
 4 Bruce Seppi
 Wildlife Biologist
 5
 6 Taken by:
 7 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR
 8
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 19 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
 20 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
 21 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
 22 Public within and for the State of Alaska.
 23
 24
 25

Page 4

1 comments, please state your name and spell it for the
 2 record, and we will get those comments recorded at this
 3 hearing.
 4 So again, the presentation only takes about 15
 5 minutes, just a brief overview of our subsistence analysis
 6 that's required under ANILCA.
 7 With that, I'll turn it over to Bruce Seppi.
 8 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** Hi, everyone. I'm Bruce
 9 Seppi, and I thank everybody for staying late. Thank you
 10 for coming down from Chuathbaluk and giving comments.
 11 It's much appreciated.
 12 As Alan mentioned, I have been tasked with completing
 13 a analysis of subsistence impacts for the proposed Donlin
 14 Gold mine as it's described in this EIS. And through that
 15 process, I determined a significant restriction of
 16 subsistence uses and needs may result from any one of the
 17 alternatives discussed in the EIS, including cumulative
 18 impacts.
 19 And the following factors -- this is a little bit of
 20 ANILCA and bureaucratic, but I'm just stating how I came
 21 to this conclusion and the things I looked at that are
 22 important to subsistence.
 23 So the evaluation was based on does this proposed
 24 action cause a reduction in the availability of
 25 subsistence resources caused by the decline in population

Page 3

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** My name is Alan
 3 Bittner. I'm the Anchorage field manager for the Bureau
 4 of Land Management. And with me is Bruce Seppi, the
 5 subsistence biologist for our office. Section 810(a) of
 6 the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
 7 requires that an evaluation of subsistence uses and needs
 8 be completed for any federal determination to withdraw,
 9 reserve, lease or otherwise permit the use, occupancy or
 10 disposition of public lands.
 11 Due to the proposed project affecting BLM-managed
 12 public land, BLM prepared a preliminary analysis of
 13 subsistence impacts. The preliminary findings concluded
 14 that the project may result in significant restrictions to
 15 subsistence uses for certain communities.
 16 At this time I'm officially opening the Section
 17 810(a) hearing of the Alaska National Interest Lands
 18 Conservation Act related to the proposed Donlin Gold mine
 19 here in the village of Aniak.
 20 Bruce Seppi has a presentation of about six or seven
 21 slides that takes about 15 minutes. And following this
 22 brief overview of our subsistence analysis, we will open
 23 it for comments on the record. And when you provide
 24 comments, please come to the mike. I'll bring the mike
 25 around just like the last time. But when you provide

Page 5

1 or abundance of the harvestable resources or the animals,
 2 plants and fish that are important to subsistence, or does
 3 this project cause a reduction in the availability of
 4 resources to use for subsistence purposes caused by an
 5 alteration of their distribution, their migration
 6 patterns, and their location. And then finally, does this
 7 project limit access to subsistence people for access to
 8 those resources, including things like physical and legal
 9 barriers or increased competition from people outside this
 10 area, possibly nonqualified subsistence users.
 11 So Donlin Gold has submitted applications to BLM for
 12 a right-of-way, and that was submitted July 2012 and
 13 January of 2013. They are proposing to construct, as you
 14 have heard tonight, to operate -- to construct and operate
 15 a 315-mile-long pipeline. It's buried. And there is an
 16 associated fiberoptic cable that goes along with it from
 17 the west side of Cook Inlet to Crooked Creek within the
 18 Kuskokwim watershed.
 19 The proposed pipeline right-of-way would cross about
 20 97 miles of BLM-managed land north and west of the Alaska
 21 Range in the Kuskokwim watershed. This represents only
 22 about 30 percent of the total length of the pipeline. The
 23 State of Alaska has about 65 percent, and the ANCSA
 24 corporations have about 4 percent. Of course, the
 25 pipeline is part of an energy supply infrastructure for

Page 6

1 the proposed open pit mine that's near Crooked Creek on
 2 the Kuskokwim.
 3 In addition to the pipeline and the mine site, the
 4 project also includes transportation infrastructure for
 5 barge transportation on the Kuskokwim.
 6 We have got a lot of alternatives to look at tonight,
 7 but two of the six alternatives analyzed in this analysis
 8 would affect the pipeline component. So Alternative 3B,
 9 which is the diesel pipeline, a diesel pipeline would be
 10 substituted for the natural gas pipeline within the same
 11 planned right-of-way. And Alternative 6A would route a
 12 portion of the pipeline through Rainy Pass and Dalzell
 13 Gorge, affecting 46 miles of State of Alaska land.
 14 So I evaluated this project in three components: The
 15 mine site, transportation infrastructure, and the natural
 16 gas pipeline. Although the permit to BLM --
 17 BLM-managed -- the permit from us is only for BLM-managed
 18 lands and the right-of-way there, the National
 19 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, prohibits us from
 20 splitting this up and only looking at the pipeline to
 21 minimize the estimates of the environmental impact. So
 22 for that reason, this review of impacts to subsistence
 23 will address the whole project and not just that portion
 24 subject to BLM permitting. So I'm going to go through
 25 each of these components.

Page 7

1 The proposed pipeline includes a 150-foot-wide
 2 cleared construction right-of-way along this whole length;
 3 12 air strips ranging from 3,500 feet to 5,000 feet in
 4 length, nine of which are going to be newly built for
 5 construction in the right-of-way; nine construction camps
 6 clearing 233 acres of land; 65 cleared pipe storage areas;
 7 an estimated 70 gravel pits ranging from one to 50 acres
 8 in size; and the pipeline from Cook Inlet to the Kuskokwim
 9 would cross seven watersheds involving 396 stream
 10 crossings, 77 of which are anadromous, meaning they are
 11 salmon-bearing streams.
 12 For the mine itself, it includes a waste rock
 13 facility that would fill in the upper watershed of
 14 American Creek and involve 2,240 acres and a tailings
 15 storage facility that would fill in Anaconda Creek and the
 16 upper part of that watershed and involve 2,350 acres. The
 17 tailings storage facility would be contained behind a
 18 464-foot high dam.
 19 The mine pit itself has two pits: The ACMA pit,
 20 which is about 1,800 feet deep, and the Lewis pit, which
 21 is about 1,600 feet deep. These two pits, as the mining
 22 operation advances, would merge into one open pit 2.2
 23 miles long and one mile wide by the end of the mining
 24 operations.
 25 At mine closure, runoff from that tailings storage

Page 8

1 facility would have to be pumped into the pit. The pit is
 2 estimated to take roughly 50 years to fill with water.
 3 And pumping would be required -- constant pumping would be
 4 required to keep that water from flowing into Crooked
 5 Creek and the Kuskokwim River. The pit water would not
 6 meet water quality standards and would need to be treated
 7 before it could be released into Crooked Creek. So a
 8 water treatment plant would need to be constructed, but
 9 the proposal says it wouldn't be constructed until 50
 10 years after the mine was closed.
 11 Water from the pit lake would be pumped and treated
 12 at the water treatment plant into perpetuity to prevent
 13 that untreated water from flowing into Crooked Creek and
 14 the Kuskokwim River. So they would have to have it
 15 indefinitely.
 16 For the transportation facilities part of this, that
 17 includes the construction of an expanded port at the
 18 Bethel cargo terminal, a new port at Jungjuk Creek on the
 19 Kuskokwim River, and storage for 2.8 million gallons of
 20 diesel fuel right on the river; a 30-mile-long access road
 21 from the Kuskokwim River that would include 45 stream
 22 crossings and an additional 13 gravel pits; a 5,000-foot
 23 airstrip that would be at the mine itself. Barges would
 24 supply the mine with fuel and cargo, and it would involve
 25 64 cargo barge trips and 58 fuel barge trips, or a total

Page 9

1 of 122 annual round trips from Bethel to Jungjuk Creek
 2 during about a 110-day shipping season, which is basically
 3 June 1st to October 1st. So it's throughout the summer.
 4 River barges would be transported by a tug pushing
 5 four barges at a time in a four-barge configuration each
 6 trip. Each fuel barge would carry 1.29 million gallons of
 7 diesel fuel, and the port at Jungjuk would continue to be
 8 needed to supply fuel and cargo to the water treatment
 9 facility for the pit, treating water in the pit lake into
 10 perpetuity.
 11 So the preliminary analysis of impacts to subsistence
 12 based on the alternatives that are outlined in the draft
 13 EIS was completed by BLM, by me, and I included all six of
 14 those alternatives. It's actually on the back table. I'm
 15 not sure if there is any of them left, but they could be
 16 found in Appendix N of the draft EIS, and it's on page 409
 17 in the .pdf page numbers in Appendix M through O part of
 18 the table of contents. And I do have copies back there.
 19 And if you want some, come and contact me if they are
 20 gone.
 21 The testimony and input from 11 communities where
 22 public hearings will be held on the impacts to subsistence
 23 by the proposed project will be analyzed and included in
 24 our final ANILCA 810 subsistence evaluation, which I will
 25 do, and will be included in that final EIS when it comes

Page 10

1 out.
 2 So from this preliminary analysis, I'll just do --
 3 I'll talk about -- the following will be kind of an
 4 evaluation of the effects of the Donlin Gold Project on
 5 subsistence uses and needs, and I'll do it separately for
 6 the mine and natural gas pipeline and the transportation
 7 infrastructure.
 8 So for the mine site itself, the villages closest to
 9 the mine would potentially experience the most effects to
 10 subsistence, including Napaimute and especially Crooked
 11 Creek. Mine activities, such as ore trucks in the mine,
 12 trucks on the road, drilling, blasting, power generation
 13 and activity at the port would likely change the
 14 distribution of wildlife species important to subsistence
 15 like moose, caribou, fur bearers, and would be long term
 16 and would cause potential impacts during the construction
 17 phases and during mining activities throughout the life of
 18 the mine. And adjacent areas would potentially be
 19 contaminated by dust emissions coming from the mine itself
 20 and from ore processing and from haul trucks on the road
 21 and access roads coming up from the port.
 22 From a subsistence point of view, this could make
 23 berry picking areas undesirable and unusable to
 24 subsistence users. Water released from the mine during
 25 operations has the potential to affect salmon and resident

Page 11

1 fish populations important to subsistence, as well as the
 2 aquatic food web in Crooked Creek and in the Kuskokwim
 3 River itself.
 4 After the mine closes in 27 and a half years, the pit
 5 lake would fill with untreated water that could not --
 6 would not meet water quality standards and could
 7 potentially impact fish and wildlife. Potential runoff
 8 from the tailings dam and the pit lake would have
 9 potential to contaminate fish resources important to
 10 subsistence in Crooked Creek and the Lower Kuskokwim River
 11 into perpetuity, impacting subsistence fish resources
 12 important to all communities from Crooked Creek to the
 13 mouth of the Kuskokwim.
 14 For the pipeline itself, potential impacts to
 15 subsistence from the construction and operating of the
 16 pipe itself would affect the villages of Tyonek, Skwentna,
 17 Nicolai, McGrath and Takotna, as well as the downriver
 18 villages of Sleetmute, Stony River, Georgetown, and
 19 Crooked Creek.
 20 During construction, the effects of clearing the
 21 right-of-way, trenching, drilling and the presence of
 22 machinery, pipeline transport, workers in construction
 23 camps and infrastructure out and along the pipeline
 24 right-of-way would cause a redistribution of wildlife,
 25 particularly moose and caribou and fur bearers, and will

Page 12

1 negatively affect access to subsistence use areas and
 2 availability of subsistence resources.
 3 During mine operations, the airstrip that would
 4 remain along the pipeline right-of-way at Farewell, which
 5 would be improved -- it exists now, but it would be
 6 improved -- would potentially increase access to
 7 subsistence resources by nonlocal residents or people
 8 interested in hunting that are not from the area, using
 9 aircraft and four-wheelers like they do now, and increased
 10 competition for those subsistence resources along and
 11 adjacent to the pipeline right-of-way.
 12 Villages negatively affected by the increased access
 13 to and the competition in the area are McGrath, Nicolai
 14 and Takotna.
 15 So for the transportation infrastructure, what we are
 16 calling barging, the potential effects to subsistence for
 17 transportation include barging of cargo and fuel. And the
 18 construction of a port at Jungjuk Creek on the Kuskokwim
 19 River would affect all the villages on the river from
 20 Crooked Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 21 Impacts from barging include a displacement and
 22 disruption of subsistence activities by barge traffic or
 23 reduced access to subsistence fishing areas and sites for
 24 set nets, for fish wheels and processing rafts. It may
 25 also negatively affect the magnitude and intensity of the

Page 13

1 barge traffic proposed in Alternative 2. That's 122
 2 annual barge trips a year with a raft of four barges.
 3 Effects to fishing may increase when the river water
 4 levels are low as the barge rafts may need to be uncoupled
 5 and barges towed individually or in pairs or lighter barge
 6 loads per trip would be required to navigate to Jungjuk
 7 port. This would require an additional barge -- number of
 8 barge round trips on the river and potentially increase
 9 impacts to subsistence fishers on the Kuskokwim and the
 10 subsistence fish resources themselves.
 11 So for an overall finding of those three components,
 12 this evaluation concludes that Alternative 2 may result in
 13 a significant restriction to subsistence uses for the
 14 communities of Crooked Creek and Napaimute in relation to
 15 the mine site; the communities on the Kuskokwim River from
 16 barge traffic on the river, and that includes Bethel,
 17 Napaskiak, Oscarville, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Akiak,
 18 Tuluksak, Upper and Lower Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk,
 19 Napaimute and Crooked Creek; and the communities of
 20 McGrath, Nikolai and Takotna for increased access and
 21 competition from nonlocal users at the Farewell airstrip
 22 along the pipeline right-of-way.
 23 In addition, potential spill scenarios involving
 24 ocean and river barges' release of diesel fuel, cyanide,
 25 mercury, tailings dam failure and release of untreated

Page 14

1 water from the pit lake and tailings dam after mine
 2 closure may result in significant restrictions to
 3 subsistence users on the Kuskokwim River for those
 4 communities I've just listed.
 5 So BLM has found from this preliminary analysis which
 6 I just described that all the alternatives -- No. 2, 3A,
 7 3B, 4, 5A and 6 and the cumulative case -- considered in
 8 the draft EIS may significantly restrict subsistence uses.
 9 These findings require BLM to conduct hearings and solicit
 10 comments from the public for potentially affected
 11 communities and subsistence users.
 12 So that's why I'm here, and that's why we are having
 13 this hearing and why I'm asking for your comments. So
 14 following those public hearings, a finding may be
 15 reversed, revised to will not significantly restrict based
 16 on changes in alternatives, new information or new
 17 mitigation measures resulting from these hearings. If the
 18 finding of may significantly restrict uses are not
 19 revised, if this can't be done without having these
 20 impacts, then we have to go on to a three-part
 21 determination that must be made before the authorization
 22 can be -- before this proposal can be authorized by BLM.
 23 An 810 determination section is to be prepared only
 24 when the finding of may significantly restrict subsistence
 25 uses is selected for the alternative. The determination

Page 15

1 shall clearly state why the proposed action is necessary
 2 and how the action complies with each of these
 3 determinations. And they are -- they ask the questions --
 4 these three items in this determination require -- ask the
 5 question why is such a significant restriction of
 6 subsistence uses necessary and how is it consistent with
 7 sound management principles for multiple use of public
 8 lands.
 9 And secondly, how will this proposal involve a
 10 minimum amount of impact to public lands necessary to
 11 accomplish it and to permit it. And finally, what
 12 reasonable steps will be taken to minimize those impacts
 13 upon subsistence resources resulting from the proposal.
 14 After that process is gone through, a manager could
 15 proceed with the action, but we are a long way from that
 16 right now.
 17 So I'll now open the public hearing. And I was
 18 encouraged by everyone talking during the EIS, but this
 19 part will be subsistence impacts. We want to know your
 20 comments on how this will affect your subsistence
 21 activities and your way of life. And I heard that in your
 22 comments. And that's the type of comments I'm looking
 23 for. And when you do comment, please consider what
 24 additional specific information about the proposed mine
 25 would affect you, abundance or the availability of

Page 16

1 subsistence resources important to you, or how would it
 2 affect access to the river for those activities that are
 3 important to you.
 4 You can give your comments tonight right here at the
 5 hearing, or they can be written or mailed in at this
 6 address to BLM. Any comments that come in to the Corps of
 7 Engineers at the other address that Keith gave you earlier
 8 will also be included in the overall subsistence comments.
 9 There were quite of a few of them earlier tonight.
 10 So I guess we will open it up for public testimony
 11 now. And as much as we are doing, we will come around
 12 with the microphone, and state your name and where you are
 13 from. Thank you.
 14 **MR. DAVE CANNON:** My name is Dave Cannon
 15 with the Kuskokwim River Watershed Council. And I guess
 16 one concern that has since popped up in my mind right away
 17 would be smelt and the concern for that population. Now,
 18 I know that the smelt basically spawn down near Kalskag,
 19 so that would be part of BLM's permit here. And there has
 20 been a few studies done to find out where they actually
 21 spawn. And it is in the vicinity of Upper and Lower
 22 Kalskag.
 23 But my concern is that it's more or less one
 24 population because, that is, all of the smelt that come up
 25 river spawn basically in that one location. So if there

Page 17

1 are impacts, it's going to affect the smelt population in
 2 the river. And I think it's already been determined that
 3 there will be some effects from, say, prop wash and things
 4 like that on the developing eggs. And I think the concern
 5 is that we have no idea what the population is. So if
 6 there were impacts, we wouldn't know to what extent.
 7 So I think it's imperative that somehow -- and I know
 8 it will be tricky to get a population estimate of the
 9 smelt run.
 10 Thank you.
 11 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Also, if you did want
 12 to comment and don't like to go on record, I have some
 13 sheets of paper here if you prefer to write something.
 14 Anybody else?
 15 **MR. CARL MORGAN:** Hi. I'm Carl Morgan.
 16 I'm from Aniak. I'm going to be 66 tomorrow. And as long
 17 as I have lived here in the Kuskokwim River, we have had
 18 the barges. I'd like to know if there are any studies of
 19 these barges coming up, leaving Bethel all the way to
 20 McGrath. But every -- I'm 66. I know my cousin is older
 21 than me, and he's known barges come up this river. But
 22 has there ever been any studies of what kinds of prop wash
 23 is [indiscernible]? Because when I was growing up, we got
 24 our year's supply of groceries, fuel, everything on that
 25 fall barge. It replenished them in the spring.

1 I'd like to know, was there any studies on those of
 2 how it did impact the fish? I'll tell you what. When I
 3 was growing up, there was a lot of fish.
 4 Another thing, the impact on our fish has not been on
 5 the river system. It's been out there in the ocean. And
 6 we are looking at climate change. The subsistence users
 7 have never put a dent on the fish. It was the
 8 commercialization of the fish.
 9 And I'd like to know another thing. Does BLM on the
 10 Kuskokwim or the Yukon have any contaminated sites? And
 11 if you do have them, contaminated sites on the Kuskokwim
 12 or the Yukon, what are you doing? Are you doing the best,
 13 or you doing mediocre? I know that we have got a lot of
 14 mercury coming down from a mine where it's right above
 15 Crooked Creek: Red Devil. BLM, do you abide by State
 16 law, or you are federally recognized so you don't abide by
 17 State law?
 18 I seen the proposals on Red Devil. You do the second
 19 best. You put all that contaminated -- right now it's
 20 leaching into the Kuskokwim right there above Red Devil.
 21 You can -- when I see one proposal -- you are going to,
 22 like this one, put all the contamination and line the top.
 23 But then they can put a pipeline from that contaminated
 24 site to the river. And the last time I seen it, they
 25 proposed 90,000 gallons you got to bring up the barge to

1 put -- and barge it back down. I'd like to see that one.
 2 I know your concern is that you are concerned about
 3 subsistence users. But what about Red Devil?
 4 **MS. PATRICIA YASKA:** I'm Patricia Yaska.
 5 My last name is Y-A-S-K-A. I'm from Chuathbaluk. And I'd
 6 like to reiterate what I said earlier about the
 7 alternative route or Alternative No. 4, that when you go
 8 behind Chuathbaluk, that's when you have -- I'm not sure
 9 how significant impacts to our subsistence way of life,
 10 but not only, you know, in Chuathbaluk, but people from
 11 all over the river when we go moose hunting, we have 20
 12 days to go moose hunting in Unit 19A, and that is part of
 13 our hunting grounds. And it might -- our moose migrate
 14 further north where that's not part of our unit. And
 15 people go bird hunting and fishing back there.
 16 And I would also like to make a comment about the
 17 salmon fishing, and especially the Chinook or the king
 18 salmon, that everyone keeps talking about the barges; and
 19 what if the barges get stuck and what if they are passing
 20 the villages at night? As Ricky was saying earlier in the
 21 EIS comments, there is no real safe way to let the barges
 22 pass. It's going to impact us either way because this
 23 summer -- or in 2015, we had limited openers. And I,
 24 myself, never did even get a king because they were so
 25 limited, and there was hardly anything.

1 My grandma Sophie, she's one of the elders from
 2 Chuathbaluk, she only had a couple of kings, and she's,
 3 like, that's her gold. And the barge impacts, that is
 4 going to have a significant effect on our way of life. I
 5 mean, in 30 years when the mine is done and it passes,
 6 what's going to happen? Because those double-hulled
 7 barges, I just don't see a way there is not going to be
 8 any disaster, small or big, that's going to affect the
 9 fish.
 10 **MR. DAN GILLIKIN:** My name is Dan
 11 Gillikin, and I'm representing myself here. I don't have
 12 a comment, but I do have a question for Bruce, if I may.
 13 I'm curious as to why your findings differ so
 14 significantly from what is the conclusions in the EIS.
 15 Could you explain how you came to your conclusions,
 16 please?
 17 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** My conclusions are with
 18 BLM, and they are my own. And the conclusions on the back
 19 wall are with AECOM.
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Alan, can you all tell
 21 me how you are going to deal with this? As a
 22 representative of the Army Corps of Engineers, I am not
 23 giving testimony at the hearing, but in relation to what
 24 your -- the statements you made and questions you have
 25 asked, this is exactly why we are out here. We have --

1 the analyses that AECOM developed and that they have used
 2 to come to their draft conclusions is the same analyses
 3 that Bruce has used to come to BLM's draft conclusions.
 4 So it is not uncommon for different experts to come to
 5 different conclusions using, in some cases, very similar
 6 or the same information.
 7 So this is one of the reasons we are here for the
 8 public comment session on the draft EIS. It's one of the
 9 reasons we are here for BLM's hearing in relation to
 10 potential subsistence impacts.
 11 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** I appreciate your
 12 comment for the record relating to this, and both
 13 conclusions are in draft at this stage. And we are going
 14 to continue to work through the EIS process and to get
 15 closer on subsistence on this important issue. But right
 16 now that's our draft conclusion. It's a draft conclusion
 17 that we are required under ANILCA to do so. That's where
 18 we are at right now.
 19 Anybody else?
 20 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** How long do these folks
 21 have to comment after the testimony concludes here to get
 22 their comment in to this particular area?
 23 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** We will close the
 24 hearing here in a minute if there is no other comments,
 25 but we will continue to receive comments from you through

Page 22

1 the draft period for the draft EIS, which is April 30th.
 2 So if you want to give comments to us on the screen that
 3 Bruce put up here, or if you want to provide something to
 4 us in writing while you are still here this evening, you
 5 are welcome to do that. And also any comments for the
 6 draft EIS for the Corps of Engineers, we will also be
 7 receiving those comments related to subsistence, and they
 8 could influence the analysis we have for subsistence under
 9 ANILCA.
 10 **MR. JOHN BOROWSKI:** I got a question.
 11 I've heard on the radio that Anchorage has barely got
 12 enough natural gas for a cold spell, and I wonder if they
 13 are really going to have the gas to put in that line.
 14 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** We can take that as a
 15 comment, too. I don't have that answer for your question,
 16 but that's a good comment for maybe more appropriately the
 17 EIS.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Donlin is currently
 19 proposing to buy gas on the open market. What that means
 20 is it could be purchased from sources that don't affect
 21 folks in the Cook Inlet area, or it could be purchased
 22 from sources that it does affect that. So that is one of
 23 the things that the EIS has to look at that, again, we
 24 need your comments as to whether or not we need to look at
 25 it in greater detail.

Page 23

1 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Any other comments for
 2 the subsistence hearing?
 3 **MR. MARK MATTER:** The comments I've heard
 4 here today from the few people from the last EIS meeting
 5 was some people made the statements that subsistence
 6 really isn't important and it's not a factor. Well, I
 7 want to address two definitions of subsistence as I've
 8 seen it. And I've worked with Taylor in bringing
 9 subsistence rights [inaudible]. I was worried about the
 10 subsistence.
 11 But on one hand you have the old subsistence, like in
 12 the '40s where people like my wife's family, they could
 13 take their dog teams up on a sled and go out, and the
 14 whole family would go out and camp and hunt muskrats.
 15 When the ice went out, they would go down to Kalskag and
 16 [indiscernible], sell the muskrat, buy gas, and spend the
 17 summer at fish camp with fish all summer long. And when
 18 the fall time came, the kids went to school and the men
 19 went trapping. That was the subsistence lifestyle.
 20 Nowadays, people are working jobs here, but they're
 21 still below the poverty line. They don't pay very much,
 22 and they still work. And fishing and hunting and trapping
 23 are every bit as important to subsistence as it was back
 24 there in the '40s.
 25 And so people shouldn't try to diminish subsistence

Page 24

1 in that the definition of subsistence has changed since
 2 the 1940s. So subsistence is very important.
 3 But I also want to say that -- this is going to be
 4 hard for some people to take, but mining at Donlin
 5 actually could be a form of subsistence for the people if
 6 they had a work schedule that would fit in with their
 7 trapping and hunting and fishing. It's a form of
 8 subsistence, in a way. They could have some cash income.
 9 That doesn't mean I'm in favor of the mine. I'm just
 10 saying it's something to be considered.
 11 Nobody should diminish subsistence out here. It's
 12 one of the comments I've heard from some people. And I've
 13 heard from some people in Kalskag that subsistence isn't
 14 important anymore, and it's not true.
 15 That's all I have to say.
 16 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anybody else?
 17 **MR. ALLEN SIMEON:** My name is Allen
 18 Simeon. On the Kuskokwim River, we've always had these
 19 issues of federal and State jurisdiction. When you start
 20 hauling all this material, if the mine goes through, and
 21 our people are doing our subsistence activities, and
 22 someone gets hurt, i.e., gets run over by a barge --
 23 sometimes you can't see 50 feet for the fog here, but I'm
 24 pretty sure your barges are going to go no matter what.
 25 So if they get hurt, say, in the Aniak area, who is in

Page 25

1 charge of that? The federal government, as this is
 2 navigable waters? Or is this a State issue, State Trooper
 3 issue, or what? You guys ought to get this finalized from
 4 Bethel to McGrath. Who is in charge of this river and
 5 who -- and what authority over it to enforce maritime
 6 rules and our fishing rights and hunting? And that would
 7 be a job for you guys to clarify. Thank you.
 8 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anybody else?
 9 **MS. GAIL VANDERPOOL:** I have a quick
 10 question. When are the comments for the -- you have a
 11 timeline on the comments?
 12 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** The same time frame.
 13 April 30th on the draft EIS comments close. Like I said
 14 before, we would take comments directly to us, but we
 15 also -- anything related to subsistence in the draft EIS
 16 comments we will consider.
 17 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:** Just a quick
 18 question: Can we access this presentation with that
 19 information on your website, or can we ask for --
 20 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Can we access the
 21 presentation was the question. No. We don't have these
 22 few slides in there, but we can get you the information if
 23 you contact Bruce.
 24 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** If BLM is willing, we
 25 can put this presentation on the shared board site.

Page 26

1 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** We can add it to the
2 website for the project.

3 **MS. CHERYL ALOYSIUS:** Cheryl Aloysius. I
4 live here in Aniak. I was wondering, does the BLM have
5 any -- like with the other mine sites in Alaska, how has
6 subsistence affected those areas?

7 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** We aren't really
8 prepared to answer questions like that. For now we are
9 just trying to take testimony into the record, but we can
10 visit afterwards about that.

11 **MR. DAVE CANNON:** I have a question for
12 Keith. As far as the shared access site, just the average
13 person, if they want to find information on your
14 website -- I've gone just to your site, whatever I see.
15 Do we have access to that shared part where there is
16 additional information?

17 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** The website that was
18 explained on the screen tonight is a website you all have
19 access to. It's the Army Corps of Engineers public
20 website for the project managed by AECOM. So we will put
21 BLM's hearing slides up there. But given we are in the
22 field right now, you probably will not see those until
23 early next week.

24 **MR. DAVE CANNON:** But they wouldn't have
25 anything to do with the shared site, right? It's just

Page 27

1 your main website as is?

2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yeah. So if I'm not
3 reading what you mean by shared website, there is another
4 website which all the cooperating agencies use. Yeah, the
5 cooperating agency website is not currently open to the
6 general public, but the vast majority of all the
7 information on it should be available to the public via
8 the draft EIS.

9 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Any other comments for
10 the subsistence hearing?

11 Do you want to make a comment for the draft EIS or
12 the subsistence?

13 **MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS:** Draft EIS. No.
14 I'll do subsistence. Annie Fredericks from Chuathbaluk.
15 You know, I heard some -- you mentioned Napaimute would be
16 affected. We are not too far from Napaimute, I'm sure.
17 Some of the things happening there, Chuathbaluk would
18 probably be affected, too, and people living in the
19 summertime fishing between Napaimute and Chuathbaluk. I
20 don't know. It will affect those areas, too, for
21 subsistence. I just want it to be known, too, that
22 Chuathbaluk has subsistence people between Napaimute and
23 Chuathbaluk. It will affect Napaimute. It will affect
24 that area, fish camps.

25 **MR. DAN GILLIKIN:** Dan Gillikin again

Page 28

1 speaking for myself here. I don't have a direct
2 subsistence comment, but I do have a request that you
3 consider relative to possibly making your conclusions, and
4 that would be to require a higher level of preparedness in
5 the event of a spill, any of the spill scenarios that you
6 evaluated. I noticed in your analysis that you did look
7 at it quite closely. In my mind, that has one of the
8 greatest potentials to impact subsistence resources in the
9 context of this project.

10 Having lived through several very large spills and
11 worked on them personally over the years, I can tell you
12 personally that being prepared, that means having trained
13 personnel. Equipment staged on site ready to go if
14 something should happen buys you more -- more mitigation
15 than all the planning and all the anything. That's what
16 always happens is nobody is ready. It wasn't going to
17 happen, you know. And the equipment takes days and days
18 to get in place. You need to just assume from the get-go
19 that if it can happen, it will, because it will
20 eventually. And if you are prepared for it, you may be
21 able to mitigate those effects.

22 Just offering a suggestion. Thank you.

23 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anyone else?

24 **MS. TERESA SIMEON HUNTER:** Teresa Simeon
25 Hunter from Chuathbaluk. My subsistence use, I love good

Page 29

1 subsistence. I have done it most of my life. And now I'm
2 a young grandma. I want, you know, that to be passed down
3 to my grandchildren. And I don't know about these barges,
4 you know, going up and down this little river. It's so
5 narrow compared to the Yukon. And my thoughts on these
6 barges going back and forth will probably make our river a
7 bigger river by erosion. So that would really affect our
8 fish. And our people along the river depend on fish
9 mainly. A lot of us depend on fish throughout the whole
10 year, even winter because we go ice fishing. And I don't
11 know -- you know, that really effects things during the
12 winter.

13 So my main concern is my subsistence lifestyle. I
14 love to go berry picking. I love to go hunting. I
15 haven't gotten to go trapping, so -- but I love to go
16 hunting and fishing.

17 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anyone else?

18 Okay. Thank you for your comments today. The
19 Section 810(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands
20 Conservation Act hearing related to the proposed Donlin
21 Gold mine here in the village of Aniak is now closed. If
22 you would like to provide additional comments, please
23 visit with us or write something down. Or as we have
24 provided on the screen, you can mail, fax or email them to
25 us through April 30th. Thank you.

[12:12;14:10;26:6; 27:16,18	28:6	16:16	BLM-managed (4) 3:11;5:20;6:17,17
[inaudible] (1) 23:9 [indiscernible] (2) 17:23;23:16	affecting (2) 3:11;6:13 afterwards (1) 26:10 again (3) 4:4;22:23;27:25	analyzed (2) 6:7;9:23 Anchorage (2) 3:3;22:11 ANCSA (1) 5:23	B	BLM's (4) 16:19;21:3,9;26:21
A	agencies (1) 27:4	Aniak (6) 3:19;13:18;17:16; 24:25;26:4;29:21	back (7) 9:14,18;19:1,15; 20:18;23:23;29:6	board (1) 25:25
abide (2) 18:15,16	agency (1) 27:5	ANILCA (5) 4:6,20;9:24;21:17; 22:9	barely (1) 22:11	BOROWSKI (1) 22:10
able (1) 28:21	air (1) 7:3	animals (1) 5:1	barge (17) 6:5;8:25,25;9:6; 12:22;13:1,2,4,5,7,8, 16;17:25;18:25;19:1; 20:3;24:22	both (1) 21:12
above (2) 18:14,20	aircraft (1) 12:9	ANNIE (2) 27:13,14	Barges (15) 8:23;9:4,5;13:2,5; 17:18,19,21;19:18,19, 21;20:7;24:24;29:3,6	bring (2) 3:24;18:25
abundance (2) 5:1;15:25	airstrip (3) 8:23;12:3;13:21	annual (2) 9:1;13:2	barges' (1) 13:24	bringing (1) 23:8
access (15) 5:7,7;8:20;10:21; 12:1,6,12,23;13:20; 16:2;25:18,20;26:12, 15,19	Akiak (1) 13:17	anymore (1) 24:14	barging (3) 12:16,17,21	Bruce (10) 3:4,20;4:7,8,8;20:12, 17;21:3;22:3;25:23
accomplish (1) 15:11	Akiakchak (1) 13:17	Appendix (2) 9:16,17	barriers (1) 5:9	built (1) 7:4
ACMA (1) 7:19	ALAN (18) 3:2,2;4:12;17:11; 20:20;21:11,23;22:14; 23:1;24:16;25:8,12,20; 26:1,7;27:9;28:23; 29:17	applications (1) 5:11	based (3) 4:23;9:12;14:15	Bureau (1) 3:3
acres (4) 7:6,7,14,16	Alaska (7) 3:6,17;5:20,23;6:13; 26:5;29:19	appreciate (1) 21:11	basically (3) 9:2;16:18,25	bureaucratic (1) 4:20
Act (4) 3:6,18;6:19;29:20	Allen (2) 24:17,17	appreciated (1) 4:11	bearers (2) 10:15;11:25	buried (1) 5:15
action (4) 4:24;15:1,2,15	along (7) 5:16;7:2;11:23;12:4, 10;13:22;29:8	appropriately (1) 22:16	behind (2) 7:17;19:8	buy (2) 22:19;23:16
activities (6) 10:11,17;12:22; 15:21;16:2;24:21	ALOYSIUS (2) 26:3,3	April (4) 22:1;25:13;29:25; 30:3	below (1) 23:21	buys (1) 28:14
activity (1) 10:13	alteration (1) 5:5	aquatic (1) 11:2	berry (2) 10:23;29:14	C
actually (3) 9:14;16:20;24:5	Alternative (7) 6:8,11;13:1,12; 14:25;19:7,7	area (7) 5:10;12:8,13;21:22; 22:21;24:25;27:24	best (2) 18:12,19	cable (1) 5:16
add (1) 26:1	alternatives (7) 4:17;6:6,7;9:12,14; 14:6,16	areas (7) 7:6;10:18,23;12:1, 23;26:6;27:20	Bethel (5) 8:18;9:1;13:16; 17:19;25:4	calling (1) 12:16
addition (2) 6:3;13:23	Although (1) 6:16	Army (2) 20:22;26:19	big (1) 20:8	came (3) 4:20;20:15;23:18
additional (5) 8:22;13:7;15:24; 26:16;29:22	always (2) 24:18;28:16	around (2) 3:25;16:11	bigger (1) 29:7	camp (2) 23:14,17
address (4) 6:23;16:6,7;23:7	American (1) 7:14	associated (1) 5:16	biologist (1) 3:5	camp (3) 7:5;11:23;27:24
adjacent (2) 10:18;12:11	amount (1) 15:10	assume (1) 28:18	bird (1) 19:15	can (19) 14:22,22;16:4,5; 18:21,23;20:20;22:14; 25:18,19,20,22,25; 26:1,9;28:11,19;29:24; 30:2
adjourned (1) 30:4	Anaconda (1) 7:15	authority (1) 25:5	bit (2) 4:19;23:23	CANNON (4) 16:14,14;26:11,24
advances (1) 7:22	anadromous (1) 7:10	authorization (1) 14:21	BITTNER (16) 3:2,3;17:11;21:11, 23;22:14;23:1;24:16; 25:8,12,20;26:1,7; 27:9;28:23;29:17	cargo (5) 8:18,24,25;9:8;12:17
AECOM (3) 20:19;21:1;26:20	analyses (2) 21:1,2	authorized (1) 14:22	blasting (1) 10:12	caribou (2) 10:15;11:25
affect (17) 6:8;10:25;11:16; 12:1,19,25;15:20,25; 16:2;17:1;20:8;22:20, 22;27:20,23,23;29:7	analysis (10) 3:12,22;4:5,13;6:7; 9:11;10:2;14:5;22:8;	availability (4) 4:24;5:3;12:2;15:25	BLM (14) 3:12;5:11;6:16,24; 9:13;14:5,9,22;16:6; 18:9,15;20:18;25:24; 26:4	Carl (2) 17:15,15
affected (5)		available (1) 27:7		carry (1) 9:6
		average (1) 26:12		case (1) 14:7
		away (1)		cases (1)

21:5 cash (1) 24:8 cause (4) 4:24;5:3;10:16; 11:24 caused (2) 4:25;5:4 certain (1) 3:15 change (2) 10:13;18:6 changed (1) 24:1 changes (1) 14:16 charge (2) 25:1,4 Cheryl (2) 26:3,3 Chinook (1) 19:17 Chuathbaluk (12) 4:10;13:18;19:5,8, 10;20:2;27:14,17,19, 22,23;28:25 clarify (1) 25:7 cleared (2) 7:2,6 clearing (2) 7:6;11:20 clearly (1) 15:1 climate (1) 18:6 close (2) 21:23;25:13 closed (2) 8:10;29:21 closely (1) 28:7 closer (1) 21:15 closes (1) 11:4 closest (1) 10:8 closure (2) 7:25;14:2 cold (1) 22:12 coming (5) 4:10;10:19,21;17:19; 18:14 comment (12) 15:23;17:12;19:16; 20:12;21:8,12,21,22; 22:15,16;27:11;28:2 commenting (1) 30:3 comments (31) 3:23,24;4:1,2,10;	14:10,13;15:20,22,22; 16:4,6,8;19:21;21:24, 25;22:2,5,7,24;23:1,3; 24:12;25:10,11,13,14, 16;27:9;29:18,22 commercialization (1) 18:8 communities (8) 3:15;9:21;11:12; 13:14,15,19;14:4,11 compared (1) 29:5 competition (4) 5:9;12:10,13;13:21 completed (2) 3:8;9:13 completing (1) 4:12 complies (1) 15:2 component (1) 6:8 components (3) 6:14,25;13:11 concern (6) 16:16,17,23;17:4; 19:2;29:13 concerned (1) 19:2 concluded (1) 3:13 concludes (2) 13:12;21:21 conclusion (3) 4:21;21:16,16 conclusions (9) 20:14,15,17,18;21:2, 3,5,13;28:3 conduct (1) 14:9 configuration (1) 9:5 Conservation (3) 3:6,18;29:20 consider (3) 15:23;25:16;28:3 considered (2) 14:7;24:10 consistent (1) 15:6 constant (1) 8:3 construct (2) 5:13,14 constructed (2) 8:8,9 construction (9) 7:2,5,5;8:17;10:16; 11:15,20,22;12:18 contact (2) 9:19;25:23 contained (1) 7:17	contaminate (1) 11:9 contaminated (5) 10:19;18:10,11,19, 23 contamination (1) 18:22 contents (1) 9:18 context (1) 28:9 continue (3) 9:7;21:14,25 Cook (3) 5:17;7:8;22:21 cooperating (2) 27:4,5 copies (1) 9:18 corporations (1) 5:24 Corps (4) 16:6;20:22;22:6; 26:19 Council (1) 16:15 couple (1) 20:2 course (1) 5:24 cousin (1) 17:20 Creek (19) 5:17;6:1;7:14,15;8:5, 7,13,18;9:1;10:11; 11:2,10,12,19;12:18, 20;13:14,19;18:15 Crooked (14) 5:17;6:1;8:4,7,13; 10:10;11:2,10,12,19; 12:20;13:14,19;18:15 cross (2) 5:19;7:9 crossings (2) 7:10;8:22 cumulative (2) 4:17;14:7 curious (1) 20:13 currently (2) 22:18;27:5 cyanide (1) 13:24	DAVE (4) 16:14,14;26:11,24 days (3) 19:12;28:17,17 deal (1) 20:21 decline (1) 4:25 deep (2) 7:20,21 definition (1) 24:1 definitions (1) 23:7 dent (1) 18:7 depend (2) 29:8,9 described (2) 4:14;14:6 detail (1) 22:25 determination (5) 3:8;14:21,23,25;15:4 determinations (1) 15:3 determined (2) 4:15;17:2 developed (1) 21:1 developing (1) 17:4 Devil (4) 18:15,18,20;19:3 diesel (5) 6:9,9;8:20;9:7;13:24 differ (1) 20:13 different (2) 21:4,5 diminish (2) 23:25;24:11 direct (1) 28:1 directly (1) 25:14 disaster (1) 20:8 discussed (1) 4:17 displacement (1) 12:21 disposition (1) 3:10 disruption (1) 12:22 distribution (2) 5:5;10:14 dog (1) 23:13 done (4) 14:19;16:20;20:5; 29:1	Donlin (7) 3:18;4:13;5:11;10:4; 22:18;24:4;29:20 double-hulled (1) 20:6 down (8) 4:10;16:18;18:14; 19:1;23:15;29:2,4,23 downriver (1) 11:17 draft (17) 9:12,16;14:8;21:2,3, 8,13,16,16;22:1,1,6; 25:13,15;27:8,11,13 drilling (2) 10:12;11:21 Due (1) 3:11 during (8) 9:2;10:16,17,24; 11:20;12:3;15:18; 29:11 dust (1) 10:19
E				
			earlier (4) 16:7,9;19:6,20 early (1) 26:23 effect (1) 20:4 effects (8) 10:4,9;11:20;12:16; 13:3;17:3;28:21;29:11 eggs (1) 17:4 EIS (21) 4:14,17;9:13,16,25; 14:8;15:18;19:21; 20:14;21:8,14;22:1,6, 17,23;23:4;25:13,15; 27:8,11,13 either (1) 19:22 elders (1) 20:1 else (6) 17:14;21:19;24:16; 25:8;28:23;29:17 email (1) 29:24 emissions (1) 10:19 encouraged (1) 15:18 end (1) 7:23 energy (1) 5:25 enforce (1) 25:5	

<p>Engineers (4) 16:7;20:22;22:6; 26:19 enough (1) 22:12 Environmental (2) 6:19,21 Equipment (2) 28:13,17 erosion (1) 29:7 especially (2) 10:10;19:17 estimate (1) 17:8 estimated (2) 7:7;8:2 estimates (1) 6:21 evaluated (2) 6:14;28:6 evaluation (5) 3:7;4:23;9:24;10:4; 13:12 even (2) 19:24;29:10 evening (1) 22:4 event (1) 28:5 eventually (1) 28:20 everybody (1) 4:9 everyone (3) 4:8;15:18;19:18 exactly (1) 20:25 exists (1) 12:5 expanded (1) 8:17 experience (1) 10:9 experts (1) 21:4 explain (1) 20:15 explained (1) 26:18 extent (1) 17:6</p>	<p>failure (1) 13:25 fall (2) 17:25;23:18 family (2) 23:12,14 far (2) 26:12;27:16 Farewell (2) 12:4;13:21 favor (1) 24:9 fax (1) 29:24 federal (3) 3:8;24:19;25:1 federally (1) 18:16 feet (5) 7:3,3,20,21;24:23 few (4) 16:9,20;23:4;25:22 fiberoptic (1) 5:16 field (2) 3:3;26:22 fill (4) 7:13,15;8:2;11:5 final (2) 9:24,25 finalized (1) 25:3 finally (2) 5:6;15:11 find (2) 16:20;26:13 finding (4) 13:11;14:14,18,24 findings (3) 3:13;14:9;20:13 fish (19) 5:2;11:1,7,9,11; 12:24;13:10;18:2,3,4,7, 8;20:9;23:17,17;27:24; 29:8,8,9 fishers (1) 13:9 fishing (10) 12:23;13:3;19:15,17; 23:22;24:7;25:6;27:19; 29:10,16 fit (1) 24:6 flowing (2) 8:4,13 fog (1) 24:23 folks (2) 21:20;22:21 following (4) 3:21;4:19;10:3; 14:14 food (1)</p>	<p>11:2 form (2) 24:5,7 forth (1) 29:6 found (2) 9:16;14:5 four (2) 9:5;13:2 four-barge (1) 9:5 four-wheelers (1) 12:9 frame (1) 25:12 FREDERICKS (2) 27:13,14 fuel (9) 8:20,24,25;9:6,7,8; 12:17;13:24;17:24 fur (2) 10:15;11:25 further (1) 19:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>GAIL (1) 25:9 gallons (3) 8:19;9:6;18:25 gas (7) 6:10,16;10:6;22:12, 13,19;23:16 gave (1) 16:7 general (1) 27:6 generation (1) 10:12 Georgetown (1) 11:18 get-go (1) 28:18 gets (2) 24:22,22 GILLIKIN (4) 20:10,11;27:25,25 given (1) 26:21 giving (2) 4:10;20:23 goes (2) 5:16;24:20 Gold (6) 3:18;4:14;5:11;10:4; 20:3;29:21 good (2) 22:16;28:25 GORDON (7) 20:20;21:20;22:18; 25:24;26:17;27:2;30:1 Gorge (1)</p>	<p>6:13 government (1) 25:1 grandchildren (1) 29:3 grandma (2) 20:1;29:2 gravel (2) 7:7;8:22 greater (1) 22:25 greatest (1) 28:8 groceries (1) 17:24 grounds (1) 19:13 growing (2) 17:23;18:3 guess (2) 16:10,15 guys (2) 25:3,7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>half (1) 11:4 hand (1) 23:11 happen (4) 20:6;28:14,17,19 happening (1) 27:17 happens (1) 28:16 hard (1) 24:4 hardly (1) 19:25 harvestable (1) 5:1 haul (1) 10:20 hauling (1) 24:20 heard (7) 5:14;15:21;22:11; 23:3;24:12,13;27:15 hearing (12) 3:17;4:3;14:13; 15:17;16:5;20:23;21:9, 24;23:2;26:21;27:10; 29:20 hearings (4) 9:22;14:9,14,17 held (1) 9:22 Hi (2) 4:8;17:15 high (1) 7:18 higher (1)</p>	<p>28:4 hunt (1) 23:14 HUNTER (2) 28:24,25 hunting (10) 12:8;19:11,12,13,15; 23:22;24:7;25:6;29:14, 16 hurt (2) 24:22,25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>ice (2) 23:15;29:10 idea (1) 17:5 ie (1) 24:22 impact (7) 6:21;11:7;15:10; 18:2,4;19:22;28:8 impacting (1) 11:11 impacts (18) 3:13;4:13,18;6:22; 9:11,22;10:16;11:14; 12:21;13:9;14:20; 15:12,19;17:1,6;19:9; 20:3;21:10 imperative (1) 17:7 important (13) 4:22;5:2;10:14;11:1, 9,12;16:1,3;21:15; 23:6,23;24:2,14 improved (2) 12:5,6 include (3) 8:21;12:17,21 included (4) 9:13,23,25;16:8 includes (5) 6:4;7:1,12;8:17; 13:16 including (3) 4:17;5:8;10:10 income (1) 24:8 increase (3) 12:6;13:3,8 increased (4) 5:9;12:9,12;13:20 indefinitely (1) 8:15 individually (1) 13:5 influence (1) 22:8 information (8) 14:16;15:24;21:6; 25:19,22;26:13,16;</p>
--	--	--	--	--

<p>27:7 infrastructure (6) 5:25;6:4,15;10:7; 11:23;12:15 Inlet (3) 5:17;7:8;22:21 input (1) 9:21 intensity (1) 12:25 Interest (3) 3:6,17;29:19 interested (1) 12:8 into (10) 7:22;8:1,4,7,12,13; 9:9;11:11;18:20;26:9 involve (4) 7:14,16;8:24;15:9 involving (2) 7:9;13:23 issue (3) 21:15;25:2,3 issues (1) 24:19 items (1) 15:4</p>	<p>kind (1) 10:3 kinds (1) 17:22 king (2) 19:17,24 kings (1) 20:2 known (2) 17:21;27:21 Kuskokwim (23) 5:18,21;6:2,5;7:8; 8:5,14,19,21;11:2,10, 13;12:18,20;13:9,15; 14:3;16:15;17:17; 18:10,11,20;24:18 Kwethluk (1) 13:17</p>	<p>13:5 likely (1) 10:13 limit (1) 5:7 limited (2) 19:23,25 line (3) 18:22;22:13;23:21 listed (1) 14:4 little (2) 4:19;29:4 live (1) 26:4 lived (2) 17:17;28:10 living (1) 27:18 loads (1) 13:6 location (2) 5:6;16:25 long (6) 7:23;10:15;15:15; 17:16;21:20;23:17 look (4) 6:6;22:23,24;28:6 looked (1) 4:21 looking (3) 6:20;15:22;18:6 lot (4) 6:6;18:3,13;29:9 love (4) 28:25;29:14,14,15 low (1) 13:4 Lower (3) 11:10;13:18;16:21</p>	<p>Management (2) 3:4;15:7 manager (2) 3:3;15:14 maritime (1) 25:5 MARK (1) 23:3 market (1) 22:19 material (1) 24:20 MATTER (2) 23:3;24:24 may (13) 3:14;4:16;12:24; 13:3,4,12;14:2,8,14,18, 24:20;12;28:20 maybe (1) 22:16 McGrath (5) 11:17;12:13;13:20; 17:20;25:4 mean (3) 20:5;24:9;27:3 meaning (1) 7:10 means (2) 22:19;28:12 measures (1) 14:17 mediocre (1) 18:13 meet (2) 8:6;11:6 meeting (1) 23:4 men (1) 23:18 mentioned (2) 4:12;27:15 mercury (2) 13:25;18:14 merge (1) 7:22 microphone (1) 16:12 might (1) 19:13 migrate (1) 19:13 migration (1) 5:5 mike (2) 3:24,24 mile (1) 7:23 miles (3) 5:20;6:13;7:23 million (2) 8:19;9:6 mind (2) 16:16;28:7</p>	<p>mine (30) 3:18;4:14;6:1,3,15; 7:12,19,25;8:10,23,24; 10:6,8,9,11,11,18,19, 24;11:4;12:3;13:15; 14:1;15:24;18:14;20:5; 24:9,20;26:5;29:21 minimize (2) 6:21;15:12 minimum (1) 15:10 mining (4) 7:21,23;10:17;24:4 minute (1) 21:24 minutes (2) 3:21;4:5 mitigate (1) 28:21 mitigation (2) 14:17;28:14 moose (5) 10:15;11:25;19:11, 12,13 more (4) 16:23;22:16;28:14, 14 MORGAN (2) 17:15,15 most (2) 10:9;29:1 mouth (2) 11:13;12:20 much (5) 4:11;16:11;23:21; 30:1,3 multiple (1) 15:7 muskrat (1) 23:16 muskrats (1) 23:14 must (1) 14:21 myself (3) 19:24;20:11;28:1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">J</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">M</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N</p>	
<p>January (1) 5:13 job (1) 25:7 jobs (1) 23:20 JOHN (1) 22:10 July (1) 5:12 June (1) 9:3 Jungjuk (5) 8:18;9:1,7;12:18; 13:6 jurisdiction (1) 24:19</p>	<p>lake (5) 8:11;9:9;11:5,8;14:1 Land (5) 3:4,12;5:20;6:13;7:6 Lands (7) 3:6,10,17;6:18;15:8, 10;29:19 large (1) 28:10 last (4) 3:25;18:24;19:5; 23:4 late (1) 4:9 law (2) 18:16,17 leaching (1) 18:20 lease (1) 3:9 leaving (1) 17:19 left (1) 9:15 legal (1) 5:8 length (3) 5:22;7:2,4 less (1) 16:23 level (1) 28:4 levels (1) 13:4 Lewis (1) 7:20 life (5) 10:17;15:21;19:9; 20:4;29:1 lifestyle (2) 23:19;29:13 lighter (1)</p>	<p>machinery (1) 11:22 magnitude (1) 12:25 mail (1) 29:24 mailed (1) 16:5 main (2) 27:1;29:13 mainly (1) 29:9 majority (1) 27:6 making (1) 28:3 MALE (1) 25:17 managed (1) 26:20</p>	<p>name (7) 3:2;4:1;16:12,14; 19:5;20:10;24:17 Napaimute (8) 10:10;13:14,19; 27:15,16,19,22,23 Napaskiak (1) 13:17 narrow (1) 29:5 National (4) 3:6,17;6:18;29:19 natural (4) 6:10,15;10:6;22:12</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>Kalskag (5) 13:18;16:18,22; 23:15;24:13 keep (2) 8:4;30:3 keeps (1) 19:18 Keith (9) 16:7;20:20;21:20; 22:18;25:24;26:12,17; 27:2;30:1 kids (1) 23:18</p>	<p>length (3) 5:22;7:2,4 less (1) 16:23 level (1) 28:4 levels (1) 13:4 Lewis (1) 7:20 life (5) 10:17;15:21;19:9; 20:4;29:1 lifestyle (2) 23:19;29:13 lighter (1)</p>	<p>machinery (1) 11:22 magnitude (1) 12:25 mail (1) 29:24 mailed (1) 16:5 main (2) 27:1;29:13 mainly (1) 29:9 majority (1) 27:6 making (1) 28:3 MALE (1) 25:17 managed (1) 26:20</p>	<p>name (7) 3:2;4:1;16:12,14; 19:5;20:10;24:17 Napaimute (8) 10:10;13:14,19; 27:15,16,19,22,23 Napaskiak (1) 13:17 narrow (1) 29:5 National (4) 3:6,17;6:18;29:19 natural (4) 6:10,15;10:6;22:12</p>	

navigable (1) 25:2	3:5	paper (1) 17:13	11;13;22;18:23	11:21
navigate (1) 13:6	officially (1) 3:16	part (9) 5:25;7:16;8:16;9:17; 15:19;16:19;19:12,14; 26:15	pit (14) 6:1;7:19,19,20,22; 8:1,1,5,11;9:9,9;11:4,8; 14:1	presentation (5) 3:20;4:4;25:18,21,25
near (2) 6:1;16:18	old (1) 23:11	participation (1) 30:2	pits (4) 7:7,19,21;8:22	pretty (1) 24:24
necessary (3) 15:1,6,10	older (1) 17:20	particular (1) 21:22	place (1) 28:18	prevent (1) 8:12
need (6) 8:6,8;13:4;22:24,24; 28:18	one (17) 4:16;7:7,22,23; 16:16,23,25;18:21,22; 19:1;20:1;21:7,8; 22:22;23:11;24:12; 28:7	particularly (1) 11:25	planned (1) 6:11	principles (1) 15:7
needed (1) 9:8	only (7) 4:4;5:21;6:17,20; 14:23;19:10;20:2	Pass (2) 6:12;19:22	planting (1) 28:15	probably (3) 26:22;27:18;29:6
needs (3) 3:7;4:16;10:5	open (7) 3:22;6:1;7:22;15:17; 16:10;22:19;27:5	passed (1) 29:2	plant (2) 8:8,12	proceed (1) 15:15
negatively (3) 12:1,12,25	openers (1) 19:23	passes (1) 20:5	plants (1) 5:2	Proceedings (1) 30:4
NEPA (1) 6:19	opening (1) 3:16	passing (1) 19:19	please (6) 3:24;4:1;15:23; 20:16;29:22;30:2	P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S (1) 3:1
nets (1) 12:24	operate (2) 5:14,14	PATRICIA (2) 19:4,4	pm (1) 30:4	process (3) 4:15;15:14;21:14
new (3) 8:18;14:16,16	operating (1) 11:15	patterns (1) 5:6	point (1) 10:22	processing (2) 10:20;12:24
newly (1) 7:4	operation (1) 7:22	pay (1) 23:21	Policy (1) 6:19	prohibits (1) 6:19
next (1) 26:23	operations (3) 7:24;10:25;12:3	pdf (1) 9:17	popped (1) 16:16	project (12) 3:11,14;5:3,7;6:4,14, 23:9;23;10:4;26:2,20; 28:9
Nicolai (2) 11:17;12:13	ore (2) 10:11,20	people (18) 5:7,9;12:7;19:10,15; 23:4,5,12,20,25;24:4,5, 12,13,21;27:18,22;29:8	population (6) 4:25;16:17,24;17:1, 5,8	prop (2) 17:3,22
night (1) 19:20	Oscarville (1) 13:17	per (1) 13:6	populations (1) 11:1	proposal (5) 8:9;14:22;15:9,13; 18:21
Nikolai (1) 13:20	otherwise (1) 3:9	percent (3) 5:22,23,24	port (7) 8:17,18;9:7;10:13, 21;12:18;13:7	proposals (1) 18:18
nine (2) 7:4,5	ought (1) 25:3	period (1) 22:1	portion (2) 6:12,23	proposed (13) 3:11,18;4:13,23; 5:19;6:1;7:1;9:23; 13:1;15:1,24;18:25; 29:20
Nobody (2) 24:11;28:16	out (9) 10:1;11:23;16:20; 18:5;20:25;23:13,14, 15;24:11	permit (5) 3:9;6:16,17;15:11; 16:19	possibly (2) 5:10;28:3	proposing (2) 5:13;22:19
nonlocal (2) 12:7;13:21	outlined (1) 9:12	permitting (1) 6:24	potential (8) 10:16,25;11:7,9,14; 12:16;13:23;21:10	provide (4) 3:23,25;22:3;29:22
nonqualified (1) 5:10	outside (1) 5:9	perpetuity (3) 8:12;9:10;11:11	potentially (6) 10:9,18;11:7;12:6; 13:8;14:10	provided (1) 29:24
north (2) 5:20;19:14	over (5) 4:7;19:11;24:22; 25:5;28:11	person (1) 26:13	potentials (1) 28:8	public (13) 3:10,12;9:22;14:10, 14;15:7,10,17;16:10; 21:8;26:19;27:6,7
noticed (1) 28:6	overall (2) 13:11;16:8	personally (2) 28:11,12	poverty (1) 23:21	pumped (2) 8:1,11
Nowadays (1) 23:20	overview (2) 3:22;4:5	personnel (1) 28:13	power (1) 10:12	pumping (2) 8:3,3
number (1) 13:7	own (1) 20:18	phases (1) 10:17	prefer (1) 17:13	purchased (2) 22:20,21
numbers (1) 9:17		physical (1) 5:8	preliminary (5) 3:12,13;9:11;10:2; 14:5	purposes (1) 5:4
O		picking (2) 10:23;29:14	prepared (5) 3:12;14:23;26:8; 28:12,20	pushing (1) 9:4
occupancy (1) 3:9		pipe (2) 7:6;11:16	preparedness (1) 28:4	put (9) 18:7,19,22,23;19:1; 22:3,13;25:25;26:20
ocean (2) 13:24;18:5	P	pipeline (22) 5:15,19,22,25;6:3,8, 9,9,10,12,16,20;7:1,8; 10:6;11:14,22,23;12:4,	presence (1)	
October (1) 9:3	page (2) 9:16,17			
offering (1) 28:22	pairs (1) 13:5			
office (1)				

	relating (1) 21:12	right-of-way (11) 5:12,19;6:11,18;7:2, 5:11;21,24;12:4,11; 13:22	23:16	Sophie (1) 20:1
Q	relation (3) 13:14;20:23;21:9	rights (2) 23:9;25:6	separately (1) 10:5	sound (1) 15:7
quality (2) 8:6;11:6	relative (1) 28:3	River (33) 8:5,14,19,20,21;9:4; 11:3,10,18;12:19,19, 20;13:3,8,15,16,24; 14:3;16:2,15,25;17:2, 17,21;18:5,24;19:11; 24:18;25:4;29:4,6,7,8	Seppi (6) 3:4,20;4:7,8,9;20:17	sources (2) 22:20,22
quick (2) 25:9,17	release (2) 13:24,25		session (1) 21:8	spawn (3) 16:18,21,25
quite (2) 16:9;28:7	released (2) 8:7;10:24		set (1) 12:24	SPEAKER (1) 25:17
R	remain (1) 12:4		seven (2) 3:20;7:9	speaking (1) 28:1
radio (1) 22:11	remember (1) 30:2	road (3) 8:20;10:12,20	several (1) 28:10	species (1) 10:14
raft (1) 13:2	replenished (1) 17:25	roads (1) 10:21	shall (1) 15:1	specific (1) 15:24
rafts (2) 12:24;13:4	representative (1) 20:22	rock (1) 7:12	shared (5) 25:25;26:12,15,25; 27:3	spell (2) 4:1;22:12
Rainy (1) 6:12	representing (1) 20:11	roughly (1) 8:2	sheets (1) 17:13	spend (1) 23:16
Range (1) 5:21	represents (1) 5:21	round (2) 9:1;13:8	shipping (1) 9:2	spill (3) 13:23;28:5,5
ranging (2) 7:3,7	request (1) 28:2	route (2) 6:11;19:7	side (1) 5:17	spills (1) 28:10
reading (1) 27:3	require (4) 13:7;14:9;15:4;28:4	rules (1) 25:6	significant (7) 3:14;4:15;13:13; 14:2;15:5;19:9;20:4	splitting (1) 6:20
ready (2) 28:13,16	required (5) 4:6;8:3,4;13:6;21:17	run (2) 17:9;24:22	significantly (5) 14:8,15,18,24;20:14	spring (1) 17:25
real (1) 19:21	requires (1) 3:7	runoff (2) 7:25;11:7	SIMEON (4) 24:17,18;28:24,24	stage (1) 21:13
really (5) 22:13;23:6;26:7; 29:7,11	reserve (1) 3:9	S	similar (1) 21:5	staged (1) 28:13
reason (1) 6:22	resident (1) 10:25	safe (1) 19:21	site (10) 6:3,15;10:8;13:15; 18:24;25:25;26:12,14, 25;28:13	standards (2) 8:6;11:6
reasonable (1) 15:12	residents (1) 12:7	salmon (3) 10:25;19:17,18	sites (4) 12:23;18:10,11;26:5	start (1) 24:19
reasons (2) 21:7,9	resources (13) 4:25;5:1,4,8;11:9,11; 12:2,7,10;13:10;15:13; 16:1;28:8	salmon-bearing (1) 7:11	six (3) 3:20;6:7;9:13	state (10) 4:1;5:23;6:13;15:1; 16:12;18:15,17;24:19; 25:2,2
receive (1) 21:25	restrict (4) 14:8,15,18,24	same (4) 6:10;21:2,6;25:12	size (1) 7:8	statements (2) 20:24;23:5
receiving (1) 22:7	restriction (3) 4:15;13:13;15:5	saying (2) 19:20;24:10	Skwentna (1) 11:16	stating (1) 4:20
recognized (1) 18:16	restrictions (2) 3:14;14:2	scenarios (2) 13:23;28:5	sled (1) 23:13	staying (1) 4:9
record (5) 3:23;4:2;17:12; 21:12;26:9	result (4) 3:14;4:16;13:12; 14:2	schedule (1) 24:6	Sleetmute (1) 11:18	steps (1) 15:12
recorded (1) 4:2	resulting (2) 14:17;15:13	school (1) 23:18	slides (3) 3:21;25:22;26:21	still (3) 22:4;23:21,22
Red (4) 18:15,18,20;19:3	reversed (1) 14:15	screen (3) 22:2;26:18;29:24	small (1) 20:8	Stony (1) 11:18
redistribution (1) 11:24	review (1) 6:22	season (1) 9:2	smelt (5) 16:17,18,24;17:1,9	storage (5) 7:6,15,17,25;8:19
reduced (1) 12:23	revised (2) 14:15,19	second (1) 18:18	solicit (1) 14:9	stream (2) 7:9;8:21
reduction (2) 4:24;5:3	Ricky (1) 19:20	secondly (1) 15:9	somehow (1) 17:7	streams (1) 7:11
reiterate (1) 19:6	right (11) 8:20;15:16;16:4,16; 18:14,19,20;21:15,18; 26:22,25	Section (4) 3:5,16;14:23;29:19	someone (1) 24:22	strips (1) 7:3
related (4) 3:18;22:7;25:15; 29:20		selected (1) 14:25	sometimes (1) 24:23	stuck (1) 19:19
		sell (1)		studies (4)

16:20;17:18,22;18:1 subject (1) 6:24 submitted (2) 5:11,12 subsistence (82) 3:5,7,13,15,22;4:5, 13,16,22,25;5:2,4,7,10; 6:22;9:11,22,24;10:5, 10,14,22,24;11:1,10, 11,15;12:1,2,7,10,16, 22,23;13:9,10,13,14,3, 8,11,24;15:6,13,19,20; 16:1,8;18:6;19:3,9; 21:10,15;22:7,8;23:2,5, 7,9,10,11,19,23,25; 24:1,2,5,8,11,13,21; 25:15;26:6;27:10,12, 14,21,22;28:2,8,25; 29:1,13 substituted (1) 6:10 suggestion (1) 28:22 summer (4) 9:3;19:23;23:17,17 summertime (1) 27:19 supply (4) 5:25;8:24;9:8;17:24 sure (4) 9:15;19:8;24:24; 27:16 system (1) 18:5	21:21;26:9 thoughts (1) 29:5 three (3) 6:14;13:11;15:4 three-part (1) 14:20 throughout (3) 9:3;10:17;29:9 timeline (1) 25:11 today (2) 23:4;29:18 tomorrow (1) 17:16 tonight (5) 5:14;6:6;16:4,9; 26:18 top (1) 18:22 total (2) 5:22;8:25 towed (1) 13:5 traffic (3) 12:22;13:1,16 trained (1) 28:12 transport (1) 11:22 transportation (7) 6:4,5,15;8:16;10:6; 12:15,17 transported (1) 9:4 trapping (4) 23:19,22;24:7;29:15 treated (2) 8:6,11 treating (1) 9:9 treatment (3) 8:8,12;9:8 trenching (1) 11:21 tricky (1) 17:8 trip (2) 9:6;13:6 trips (5) 8:25,25;9:1;13:2,8 Trooper (1) 25:2 trucks (3) 10:11,12,20 true (1) 24:14 try (1) 23:25 trying (1) 26:9 tug (1) 9:4	Tuluksak (1) 13:18 turn (1) 4:7 two (4) 6:7;7:19,21;23:7 Tyonek (1) 11:16 type (1) 15:22	10:22 village (2) 3:19;29:21 villages (6) 10:8;11:16,18;12:12, 19;19:20 visit (2) 26:10;29:23	14:19 wonder (1) 22:12 wondering (1) 26:4 work (3) 21:14;23:22;24:6 worked (2) 23:8;28:11 workers (1) 11:22 working (1) 23:20 worried (1) 23:9 write (2) 17:13;29:23 writing (1) 22:4 written (1) 16:5
T		U	W	Y
table (2) 9:14,18 tailings (6) 7:14,17,25;11:8; 13:25;14:1 Takotna (3) 11:17;12:14;13:20 talk (1) 10:3 talking (2) 15:18;19:18 tasked (1) 4:12 Taylor (1) 23:8 teams (1) 23:13 TERESA (2) 28:24,24 term (1) 10:15 terminal (1) 8:18 testimony (5) 9:21;16:10;20:23;	uncommon (1) 21:4 uncoupled (1) 13:4 under (3) 4:6;21:17;22:8 undesirable (1) 10:23 UNIDENTIFIED (1) 25:17 Unit (2) 19:12,14 untreated (3) 8:13;11:5;13:25 unusable (1) 10:23 up (14) 6:20;10:21;16:10,16, 24;17:19,21,23;18:3, 25;22:3;23:13;26:21; 29:4 upon (1) 15:13 upper (4) 7:13,16;13:18;16:21 use (6) 3:9;5:4;12:1;15:7; 27:4;28:25 used (2) 21:1,3 users (7) 5:10;10:24;13:21; 14:3,11;18:6;19:3 uses (9) 3:7,15;4:16;10:5; 13:13;14:8,18,25;15:6 using (2) 12:8;21:5	wall (1) 20:19 wash (2) 17:3,22 waste (1) 7:12 water (15) 8:2,4,5,6,8,11,12,13; 9:8,9;10:24;11:5,6; 13:3;14:1 waters (1) 25:2 watershed (5) 5:18,21;7:13,16; 16:15 watersheds (1) 7:9 way (9) 15:15,21;17:19;19:9, 21,22;20:4,7;24:8 web (1) 11:2 website (10) 25:19;26:2,14,17,18, 20;27:1,3,4,5 week (1) 26:23 welcome (1) 22:5 west (2) 5:17,20 what's (1) 20:6 wheels (1) 12:24 whole (4) 6:23;7:2;23:14;29:9 wide (1) 7:23 wife's (1) 23:12 wildlife (3) 10:14;11:7,24 willing (1) 25:24 winter (2) 29:10,12 withdraw (1) 3:8 within (2) 5:17;6:10 without (1)	YASKA (2) 19:4,4 Y-A-S-K-A (1) 19:5 year (2) 13:2;29:10 years (5) 8:2,10;11:4;20:5; 28:11 year's (1) 17:24 young (1) 29:2 Yukon (3) 18:10,12;29:5	
		V		1
		VANDERPOOL (1) 25:9 vast (1) 27:6 via (1) 27:7 vicinity (1) 16:21 vig (1) 9:4		1,600 (1) 7:21 1,800 (1) 7:20 1.29 (1) 9:6 11 (1) 9:21 110-day (1) 9:2 12 (1) 7:3 122 (2) 9:1;13:1 13 (1) 8:22 15 (2) 3:21;4:4 150-foot-wide (1) 7:1 1940s (1)

24:2 19A (1) 19:12 1st (2) 9:3,3	464-foot (1) 7:18			
	5			
2	5,000 (1) 7:3 5,000-foot (1) 8:22 50 (4) 7:7;8:2,9;24:23 58 (1) 8:25 5A (1) 14:7			
2 (3) 13:1,12;14:6 2,240 (1) 7:14 2,350 (1) 7:16 2.2 (1) 7:22 2.8 (1) 8:19 20 (1) 19:11 2012 (1) 5:12 2013 (1) 5:13 2015 (1) 19:23 233 (1) 7:6 27 (1) 11:4	6			
3	6 (1) 14:7 64 (1) 8:25 65 (2) 5:23;7:6 66 (2) 17:16,20 6A (1) 6:11			
	7			
	70 (1) 7:7 77 (1) 7:10			
3,500 (1) 7:3 30 (2) 5:22;20:5 30-mile-long (1) 8:20 30th (4) 22:1;25:13;29:25; 30:3 315-mile-long (1) 5:15 396 (1) 7:9 3A (1) 14:6 3B (2) 6:8;14:7	8			
	8			
	810 (2) 9:24;14:23 810a (3) 3:5,17;29:19			
4	9			
	9:07 (1) 30:4 90,000 (1) 18:25 97 (1) 5:20			
4 (3) 5:24;14:7;19:7 409 (1) 9:16 40s (2) 23:12,24 45 (1) 8:21 46 (1) 6:13				