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

TYONEK, ALASKA

Taken March 25, 2016
Commencing at 3:15 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 16, inclusive

Taken at
Tyonek Native Village Office Building
Tyonek, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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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
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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

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1 testimony for the 810 subsistence analysis?
 2 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** On what?
 3 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Based on the 810
 4 subsistence analysis, the draft analysis that was done.
 5 You weren't here during our presentation.
 6 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** I wasn't. I had to
 7 go to the plane. Sorry.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** At this point today,
 9 the Bureau of Land Management is taking testimony. This
 10 is a formal hearing in relation to potential subsistence
 11 impacts of Donlin's proposed project or any of the
 12 alternatives. So if you would like to make any comments
 13 about potential subsistence impacts --
 14 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Okay. My name is
 15 Harriet Kaufman. I am the tribal administrator for the
 16 Native Village of Tyonek. I am also a tribal rural
 17 member. One of my big concerns with it is if you are
 18 opening -- if you go by the pipeline, you are going
 19 through the creeks and stuff where the salmon are
 20 spawning. You will know that Tyonek is very big -- it's
 21 our livelihood, salmon, for a food source and also for
 22 commercial. And another one is the pike. I would sure
 23 hate to see more of it move down from where it's already
 24 invaded all those like Alexander Creek, Beluga Lake. I
 25 wouldn't want to see an opening for that.

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Again, my name is Alan
 3 Bittner, Anchorage field manager for the Bureau of Land
 4 Management. And in our involvement as a cooperating
 5 agency on the proposed Donlin Gold mine EIS Draft
 6 Environmental Impact Statement, we are required to do an
 7 analysis of subsistence resources under ANILCA, and that
 8 810 analysis is back there on the table and is also
 9 included as an appendix to the EIS.
 10 At this time I'm officially opening an ANILCA 810
 11 hearing on the potential subsistence impacts of the
 12 proposed Donlin Gold Project here in Tyonek. If you would
 13 like to provide comment, please use the microphone and
 14 state your name for the record. Anybody that would like
 15 to provide testimony?
 16 **MR. DAVID KROTO:** David Kroto with Tyonek
 17 Native Corporation. TNC, like I said, is in support of a
 18 project that is done right, that respects the community's
 19 needs for access to natural resources and protects those
 20 same resources for the use of the community. TNC has
 21 concern with bringing in diesel fuel within the community
 22 of Tyonek under the impact of a greater risk of affecting
 23 the natural resources, should any of it occur within the
 24 Tyonek area. Thank you.
 25 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anybody else with

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1 Also not only for us on the moose and the bear, but
 2 in the mine itself, you have to think about the people for
 3 the -- their subsistence lifestyle. It's how we live.
 4 And I'm pretty sure it's how they live. Not to disturb
 5 their -- their natural habitat.
 6 And then with the opening of other than vehicles
 7 going through your pipeline, what else is going to go
 8 through there? So we all know that the moose and
 9 everything, they travel. They travel far on their
 10 migration. Safeguard that. The spawning of the salmon,
 11 the trout, whatever they have over there and what we have
 12 over here, make sure you pay attention to their spawning
 13 areas because if they lose that, we lose our salmon. They
 14 don't go back. Take care of that. Keep the waters clean.
 15 Thank you.
 16 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anyone else on
 17 testimony?
 18 **MS. MARIAN KING:** My name is Marian King.
 19 I'm a tribal member here in Tyonek. My concern is as of
 20 right now we do have our tribal conservation district that
 21 is over -- that is working over here spending thousands
 22 and thousands of dollars trying to improve our subsistence
 23 lifestyle. They are opening up -- what do you call it --
 24 habitat, salmon habitat. They are going to be in the
 25 process of planting spruce willows to -- for our moose.

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1 And they are doing this for our people. Is this just
 2 going to set us back even worse than what we are now?
 3 Thank you.
 4 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Anyone else with
 5 testimony related to subsistence? Okay. All right.
 6 Thank you for your testimony. And at this time the ANILCA
 7 810 hearing on potential subsistence impacts of the
 8 proposed Donlin Gold Project is now closed. Thank you.
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. We thank
 10 you all very much for the opportunity to come into Tyonek.
 11 We thank you for your participation. And as I mentioned,
 12 the comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact
 13 Statement is currently open until April 30, just over
 14 another month. And so as Alan mentioned, comments you
 15 make related to subsistence either on the Draft
 16 Environmental Impact Statement or anything else will be
 17 used by both agencies. And so if you have additional
 18 subsistence comments or any other comments on the project,
 19 you can make them until April 30, and we will take that
 20 input and see what we need to do in relation to the Draft
 21 Environmental Impact Statement.
 22 Is there any other comments anyone would like to make
 23 before we close?
 24 **MS. CASSANDRA KROTO:** The written comments
 25 will go right to Donlin, the ones on the comment form?

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1 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** The written comments
 2 will come to the Army Corps of Engineers, and we and AECOM
 3 will address those comments. And Donlin will see the
 4 comments, but unless we ask Donlin to respond to a
 5 comment -- in other words, unless there is some technical
 6 issue that we need information on -- Donlin is not
 7 actually responding to the vast majority of all comments
 8 because they are not the ones doing the analyses of the
 9 project; AECOM is. And then the Corps, the Bureau of Land
 10 Management, the tribal cooperators, the other cooperators
 11 are reviewing the comments and the response to the
 12 comments to determine what they think the potential
 13 impacts to the project are.
 14 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Do you have an
 15 estimate of just how much impact it's going to have up
 16 around Alexander, Beluga, up on the north side of the Cook
 17 Inlet?
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. What kind of
 19 impacts?
 20 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Yeah, for
 21 subsistence use and all of that good stuff.
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. So Bruce and
 23 Alan, in relation to the subsistence impacts to Tyonek, if
 24 the North Foreland Barge Facility is expanded, if we put
 25 multimillion gallon storage tanks out there, if we run a

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1 pipeline west of Tyonek going north to Beluga, what are
 2 the kind of impacts this community is expected to see?
 3 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** The main types of
 4 impacts for Tyonek would be probably access and how people
 5 from outside the area could access it better after the
 6 pipeline is built, and that's one of the concerns we have
 7 or the things we look at, the potential for that. We
 8 don't know -- we can't give you a figure of how much that
 9 is right now, but that's what we are looking at. We call
 10 that nonqualified subsistence users, or people from other
 11 places, Anchorage, up the road, that sort of thing, they
 12 could access this area easier once the pipeline is there.
 13 That's the sort of thing we are looking at, but we
 14 really can't give you a number to tell you what that is.
 15 But that's part of our concern and part of the things that
 16 we bring up in this process.
 17 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** And what we really need
 18 to hear is from everyone that's out here in these
 19 communities that could potentially be affected and is
 20 there an effect, either positively or negatively, that you
 21 see might be possible. And so commenting during this
 22 process and letting us know that, if you think subsistence
 23 resources would be affected because you would have more
 24 jobs and more money and you could subsist better, or if
 25 you think access to subsistence resources might be

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1 affected or the game populations might be affected, those
 2 are the kinds of things we need to hear from each of the
 3 communities.
 4 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** I do know that there
 5 will be effects with the people coming in, trespassers.
 6 In the past they used to have a -- I don't know if it was
 7 an oil company -- an ice road in wintertime. We had a
 8 lot. And the worst part is the drugs and alcohol that
 9 comes in that people bring in. So we just have to get
 10 ready for our security, I think.
 11 **MS. CASSANDRA KROTO:** What if there is a
 12 reduction in salmon, you know, the reds, silvers, kings,
 13 and you guys are using the river for access to barging
 14 your stuff; are you guys doing a study on the returns, or
 15 are you going to wait until they increase in numbers?
 16 Because you guys were talking about -- someone mentioned
 17 about dredging. Some people mentioned something about
 18 when you guys use the barges, they get hit with the prop
 19 things. There is blasting that could affect the fish.
 20 And the same with the mine. When you guys do that
 21 little mine that's left in place for the next 55 years or
 22 longer for the water to raise, that's kind of like
 23 disturbance of the habitat for the animals and all the
 24 marine life, all the rivers that you guys are accessing
 25 and getting to and the water that may be dumping out. Are

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1 you guys going to find another route if the salmon is low
 2 in numbers?
 3 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. I'll -- there is
 4 a couple of questions there. No. Regarding the proposed
 5 route, whether they went out the Kuskokwim River or
 6 whether they come through Cook Inlet, if that has an
 7 impact on the numbers of salmon, there is no other route
 8 to get there. If you are going up the Kuskokwim, you are
 9 going up the Kuskokwim. If you are coming into Cook
 10 Inlet, you are coming into Cook Inlet. The effects it has
 11 on those species are the effects that they have.
 12 So I'll transition to an earlier question you asked.
 13 Other studies that might be done in relation to fish
 14 returning, et cetera, Donlin has done some fisheries
 15 studies in relation to salmon and other species. There is
 16 the expectation that there might -- there is a possibility
 17 of some level of monitoring in relation to impacts of the
 18 project, whether that's to air quality, water quality,
 19 fish, et cetera.
 20 But if via this Environmental Impact Statement our
 21 analyses -- either our analyses in the EIS or BLM's
 22 analyses of subsistence impacts, the other analyses
 23 indicate a given level of impact and then we permit the
 24 project with whatever conditions are on it, regardless of
 25 whether or not we permit Donlin's proposed action or one

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1 of the alternatives, once the project is permitted, if
 2 there are effects beyond what we think there would be,
 3 then it's some other regulatory entity that would have to
 4 deal with those impacts.
 5 So on the Kuskokwim River, if we are talking about
 6 people's ability to catch fish, if the impacts are greater
 7 than what we think they would be, well, then, it would be
 8 up to federal and/or State agencies that regulate the
 9 catch of fish to regulate what people were able to take.
 10 So this is the standard scenario of the more impact you
 11 have to a resource, the less access you typically have or
 12 the less use you have of that resource because it's -- it
 13 has a greater impact to it.
 14 So what I'm saying is, in relation to the analyses in
 15 the Environmental Impact Statement, the draft analyses and
 16 the draft conclusions are indicating given levels of
 17 impact. If those levels of impact are greater and the
 18 project or one of its alternatives is permitted, the
 19 solution to that greater level of impact is some other
 20 regulatory entity to resolve. It's not -- the Corps of
 21 Engineers would not be coming back.
 22 For instance, let's say Donlin has more air quality
 23 impact and whatever means -- by whatever type of air
 24 quality impact they are having. One of the solutions for
 25 that could be the EPA or the State of Alaska saying, okay,

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1 we said you had to have these scrubbers on your stack to
 2 limit your air emissions. Well, the air emissions are
 3 5 percent more than we expected, so now you have to put a
 4 different scrubber on your stack to meet those same
 5 emissions standards.
 6 So there is varying ways it could be done. It just
 7 depends on the resource impacted and the level of impact.
 8 But the Corps of Engineers will not be coming back unless
 9 it's an impact that specifically falls under our
 10 jurisdiction, which basically is impacts related to fill
 11 into wetlands or other waters of the U.S. or impacts to
 12 navigation.
 13 Did I answer all of your questions?
 14 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Who is in charge of
 15 making sure that all the permits are followed?
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Each entity. Any
 17 entity that has any authority to authorize this project in
 18 any way, shape or form, typically that entity that gives
 19 the authorization is responsible for making sure there is
 20 compliance, unless they delegate that authority to someone
 21 else.
 22 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** You are talking
 23 about diesel. In the wintertime sometimes it gets below
 24 freezing, and you have to -- if you are using diesel, you
 25 have to keep your vehicle going, and all of that stuff

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1 that gets in the air. And that's a lot of diesel going
 2 into the air. So how often would the air quality testing
 3 be done? And you know, is it going to impact the -- you
 4 know, all the fresh air we breathe? Is it going to be
 5 coming -- you know, you are talking about down here, but
 6 you are also talking about up there. And we will be
 7 getting hit both ways if there was a diesel line.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yeah. The air quality
 9 impacts, as you mentioned, there would be some in Cook
 10 Inlet, there would be some over at the mine site.
 11 Depending on wherever those emissions went, that's where
 12 the impact is going to be. And while the emissions would
 13 have to meet federal and State standards, the reality is
 14 we are putting some level of pollutant into the air
 15 anytime we start a vehicle or operate a piece of
 16 equipment. So while it would be required to meet federal
 17 and State standards, there is still impact.
 18 The other thing you mentioned, you mentioned, you
 19 know, you have to deal with diesel in relation to --
 20 diesel has to be a given temperature to be able to use it
 21 in the winter. In other words, it can gel if it gets too
 22 cold. Well, if the diesel pipeline alternative went
 23 through, we are talking about a buried line. We are going
 24 through areas of discontinuous permafrost. So much like
 25 they do on the North Slope, if a pipeline were buried and

1 ran through permafrost, they would have to have
 2 thermistors or something else on it to make sure they
 3 weren't melting or degrading that permafrost, therefore
 4 causing erosion of the tundra, et cetera.
 5 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** How long have you
 6 guys been here in Alaska?
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Are you referring to
 8 Donlin?
 9 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Donlin Gold,
 10 yes.
 11 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I don't know how long
 12 they have been in Alaska. I don't know how long they have
 13 existed as a corporation. I do know that Donlin -- formal
 14 work at the Donlin exploration camp has been going on
 15 since 1995.
 16 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Is that the only
 17 open pit mine they are doing in Alaska?
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** As far as the Donlin
 19 Corporation, it's my understanding that this is the only
 20 activity they have in Alaska. Now, their owner companies,
 21 Barrick and NOVAGOLD, these are international mining
 22 companies. They have mines in various places in the
 23 world.
 24 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Is it Barrick?
 25 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Barrick, B-A-R-R-I-C-K,

1 and NOVAGOLD, N-O-V-A.
 2 Okay. Is there anything anybody else would like to
 3 mention?
 4 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** We just hope you
 5 don't affect our subsistence way of hunting and fishing.
 6 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. I thank you very
 7 much. And like I said, we are open for additional
 8 comments through April 30. Again, we appreciate your
 9 participation and the opportunity to come out here. Let
 10 us know if you have got any other comments or questions.
 11 Have a good afternoon.
 12 (Proceedings adjourned at 3:34 p.m.)
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1 **REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE**
 2 I, MARY A. VAVRIK, RMR, Notary Public in and for
 3 the State of Alaska do hereby certify:
 4 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before
 5 me at the time and place herein set forth; that the
 6 proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later
 7 transcribed under my direction by computer transcription;
 8 that the foregoing is a true record of the proceedings
 9 taken at that time; and that I am not a party to nor have
 10 I any interest in the outcome of the action herein
 11 contained.
 12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed
 13 my hand and affixed my seal this 27th day of March 2016.
 14
 15
 16 **MARY A. VAVRIK,**
 17 Registered Merit Reporter
 18 Notary Public for Alaska
 19
 20 My Commission Expires: November 5, 2016
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