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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

TYONEK, ALASKA

Taken March 25, 2016
Commencing at 1:00 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 63, 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. Army Corps of Engineers:
3 Keith Gordon
4 Project Manager
5 David Hobbie
6 Regional Division Chief
7 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:
8 Alan Bittner
9 Anchorage Field Office Manager
10 Bruce Seppi
11 Wildlife Biologist
12 For Alaska Department of Natural Resources:
13 Jeff Bruno
14 Deputy Director
15 Office of Project Management and Permitting
16 For AECOM:
17 Bill Craig
18 Project Manager
19 Nancy Darigo
20 Physical Science Lead
21 Jessica Evans
22 Public Involvement Lead
23 Donne Fleagle
24 Senior Rural Outreach Lead
25 Amy Rosenthal
 Social Science Lead
Taken by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Good afternoon. My
3 name is Keith Gordon. I'm a project manager with the
4 United States Army Corps of Engineers. We're here today
5 to give you a little bit of information on the status of
6 the Donlin Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The
7 purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement is to
8 disclose the potential impacts of the project to you and
9 specifically to give you an opportunity to comment on the
10 proposed project.
11 We are also going to do an ANILCA 810 hearing this
12 afternoon regarding potential subsistence impacts of the
13 project, give you an opportunity to testify on those
14 impacts.
15 One of the things that it is beneficial for you all
16 to know is basically why the Army Corps of Engineers is
17 doing this meeting and what our role is in relation to the
18 proposed project. The Corps of Engineers is the federal
19 lead for the development of a Draft Environmental Impact
20 Statement simply because of our role in the project
21 overall. Because of that role as the lead agency, we are
22 conducting these meetings and facilitating development of
23 the EIS.
24 You can see on the bottom of the screen that the Army
25 Corps of Engineers has five cooperating agencies, federal

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1 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
2 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
3 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
4 Public within and for the State of Alaska.
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1 and State, that are assisting us in development of the
2 draft EIS and half a dozen Native cooperators who are
3 assisting us with development of it, as well. With me
4 today are a variety of other folks from the Army Corps of
5 Engineers, the State of Alaska, the Bureau of Land
6 Management, and AECOM, an international engineering and
7 environmental analysis firm. I'll ask most of those folks
8 to introduce themselves in just a couple of minutes just
9 before we go to a poster session that will give you some
10 information on the proposed project.
11 Our agenda today, I'll go through an opening
12 presentation about the status of the EIS and what Donlin
13 is proposing to do versus some of the potential
14 alternatives to Donlin's proposal. That will take just a
15 little bit less than 30 minutes, or about 30 minutes.
16 Then the Bureau of Land Management will introduce the
17 ANILCA 810 hearing that they are going to do. After those
18 two presentations, we will stop. And we have got about a
19 dozen posters around the room. Three of these posters
20 describe the proposed project Donlin is wanting to
21 construct, as well as nine posters that depict some of the
22 potential impacts of that project.
23 After that poster session, we will reconvene and take
24 your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement,
25 and immediately after that the Bureau of Land Management

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1 will do an ANILCA 810 hearing and give you the opportunity
 2 to provide testimony on that.
 3 Alan, would you like to make a brief statement about
 4 the hearing.
 5 Please note that any comments you make in relation to
 6 subsistence, whether it's on the draft EIS or the ANILCA
 7 810 hearing, will be used by both agencies in our analysis
 8 of the proposed project.
 9 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Good afternoon. My
 10 name is Alan Bittner. I'm the Anchorage field manager for
 11 the Bureau of Land Management. And the Alaska National
 12 Interest Lands Conservation Act Section 810 requires that
 13 we do an 810 analysis on subsistence resources where there
 14 is a potential for impacts. So we have done that draft
 15 preliminary analysis, and there is copies back there on
 16 the table if you would like to look at that. But because
 17 of our requirement to do an 810 analysis in the
 18 communities that are potentially affected, we also conduct
 19 an 810 hearing. So we will, at the end of the proceedings
 20 today, conduct a short 810 hearing, opening and closing
 21 the hearing session and allowing you the opportunity to
 22 give testimony related to subsistence impacts.
 23 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** All right. Thank you
 24 very much.
 25 At this point in time, it's beneficial to give you an

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1 idea of what Donlin is proposing in case you are not
 2 familiar with their proposed project. Donlin's proposed
 3 project consists of three primary components: the mine
 4 site, the transportation infrastructure, and the proposed
 5 pipeline to facilitate energy transfer to the project.
 6 Donlin's proposed mine site has three primary
 7 components to it, as well. As you can see on the screen,
 8 No. 1 is the pit Donlin is proposing to construct. That
 9 pit is actually two pits, the ACMA and Lewis pits, that,
 10 as mining continues, would converge into a single pit.
 11 That pit, depending on whether you are measuring the
 12 elevation from the low side or the high side, is anywhere
 13 from 1,100 feet deep to 1,850 feet deep. And the pit is
 14 approximately 2.2 square miles in size.
 15 The next primary component of Donlin's mine site
 16 facility is the tailings storage facility, No. 2 on the
 17 slide. That facility is approximately 3.5 square miles in
 18 size. Tailings are basically what's left over after ore
 19 runs through the mill. The rock is mined, goes into a
 20 stockpile, and then it goes through the mill, goes through
 21 a crushing process, a chemical process to remove gold from
 22 it, and then the remainder, that crushed rock that was
 23 actually mixed with water and forms somewhat of a slurry,
 24 is piped into this tailings storage facility. As I
 25 mentioned, that facility is about 3.5 square miles in size

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1 as proposed and would fill the valley, as you can see in
 2 the slide.
 3 Downslope of that facility is the dam that would
 4 retain both the crushed rock and the water that would be
 5 entrained in it and some residual chemicals from the
 6 milling process.
 7 The third primary component of Donlin's mine site
 8 facility is the waste rock facility, No. 3 on the screen.
 9 Again, that waste rock facility is also about 3.5 square
 10 miles in size. That waste rock effectively is either the
 11 overburden that has to be removed to get to the ore or
 12 it's gold-bearing rock ore that just doesn't have enough
 13 gold in it to be worth processing.
 14 There is a variety of other facilities you can see on
 15 the screen: Donlin's proposed mine site itself that's
 16 between the waste rock facility and the tailings storage
 17 facility. So there is a variety of infrastructure that
 18 would exist in that area.
 19 To give you a scale for the project, if you combine
 20 all of the infrastructure that we are going to talk about
 21 today, all the work they would do, their proposed project
 22 is 26 square miles in size.
 23 The second primary component of Donlin's proposed
 24 project is the transportation infrastructure. You can see
 25 by the pink and reddish blob in the center of that screen,

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1 that's the proposed mine site, the tailings facility, the
 2 waste rock facility, the mill, et cetera. Donlin is
 3 proposing to construct a 30-mile road from the mine site
 4 to a new industrial private port facility at Jungjuk just
 5 downstream of Crooked Creek. That 30-mile access road
 6 would have a series of materials sites along it, whether
 7 Donlin needed to get gravel or water to maintain the road,
 8 et cetera.
 9 There is also proposed to be a 5,000-foot airstrip
 10 that would bring personnel in and out of the mine
 11 facility. And then there is camp facilities, et cetera,
 12 for workers, whether it's during construction or
 13 operations.
 14 In addition to the facilities we have discussed,
 15 Donlin would need to transport in approximately 40 million
 16 gallons of diesel every year up the Kuskokwim River. It
 17 would come to that private industrial port facility at
 18 Jungjuk. Some small quantity would be stored at the port
 19 facility, but the vast majority at the mine site. And
 20 that diesel would be used to power the heavy mining
 21 equipment at the mine versus the mill facility, which we
 22 will talk about momentarily.
 23 The third primary component of the project, as I
 24 mentioned earlier, is a 315-mile, 14-inch diameter steel
 25 buried pipeline. This is a proposed natural gas pipeline

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1 that would run from Cook Inlet through the Alaska Range
 2 over to the mine site. The natural gas is what
 3 effectively would power the mill and a variety of the
 4 other facilities, versus the diesel which would power the
 5 mining trucks and the mining equipment.
 6 The time frame for the project as proposed, assuming
 7 the project is permitted, would take approximately three
 8 or four years to construct, is proposed to operate for
 9 about 27 and a half years, after which closure and
 10 reclamation would take place.
 11 However, it's important to note that closure and
 12 reclamation doesn't all entirely begin at the end of
 13 mining. There are some facilities that would be needed
 14 only during construction, and some of those -- those
 15 facilities would likely be reclaimed as soon as they were
 16 no longer needed for construction. There are some
 17 facilities needed during operations but not for the whole
 18 operational life of the mine, so some of those facilities
 19 would be reclaimed somewhere during the operating life of
 20 the mine. The vast majority of everything would not be
 21 reclaimed until after mining ceased.
 22 So from the standpoint of what reclamation looks
 23 like, from what you saw on the screen, the pit stays a
 24 pit. The pit would take 50 to 55 years to fill with
 25 water.

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1 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** You didn't say if we
 2 could ask questions while you are talking.
 3 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes. I think we have
 4 got time today. If you would like to ask questions while
 5 we go through the presentation, that's fine.
 6 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** One of the ones I
 7 have for this one here, are you going to be -- do you know
 8 if they are going to be blasting?
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes, ma'am. Once they
 10 start mining, blasting happens for 27 and a half years,
 11 whatever time of day or night they need to do it to get
 12 the work done.
 13 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Are they doing air
 14 quality?
 15 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Yes, there is air
 16 quality monitoring throughout -- as Donlin is proposing to
 17 do it throughout the project from construction on. They
 18 have done some air quality monitoring already to establish
 19 baseline conditions out there.
 20 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** So when they are
 21 blasting, and if it's -- the wind is blowing, whatever
 22 natural minerals or anything that was dug up at the time
 23 is going to go over the area because, you know, right now
 24 it's not -- there is no mine there, so they can't see how
 25 far that dust or particles are going to float over the

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1 whole land.
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Correct. They use
 3 modeling to determine how far they think dust might
 4 disperse or anything else that gets airborne. They are
 5 doing -- they have done testing over the last, oh, I don't
 6 know how many years, to determine primary wind direction,
 7 wind speed, et cetera. Then they use their models to
 8 determine how far they think the dust might disperse just
 9 before the project comes into existence; and then once the
 10 project goes into existence, if it's permitted, they have
 11 a whole series of models to model where the dust might go,
 12 how far mercury might be transported, et cetera.
 13 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Because that mercury
 14 was one of one of the things I was very concerned about.
 15 But I don't know how accurate a model will be because once
 16 they get the mine going and the wind -- the wind current
 17 is going to be different. And you are kind of -- like
 18 here is Tyonek. We are right here [indicating]. The mine
 19 is back there which direction; up that way, down that way,
 20 or straight across from us?
 21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** The mine would be
 22 northwest of you, primarily.
 23 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Okay. So when we
 24 get -- we get north wind, that's what you have to check
 25 on, how far does that -- the dirt particles will be

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1 traveling in the air.
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** I should correct that.
 3 The mine would be anywhere from west to west northwest of
 4 Tyonek.
 5 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** So you are pretty
 6 much almost right behind us. Thank you. But I'm not
 7 finished yet. I will be back, standing back up again.
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** No, that's no problem.
 9 And I don't know the actual linear distance, but it is at
 10 least, I believe, about 180 miles from -- air miles from
 11 Tyonek to the proposed mine site. And if anybody knows a
 12 better number, please let me know.
 13 So as far as reclamation goes for the proposed
 14 project, as I was mentioning, the pit would exist forever.
 15 If the pit is opened, it's there forever. It would take
 16 approximately 50 to 55 years to fill with water. And the
 17 water to fill the pit is either natural precipitation --
 18 rain, snow melt, et cetera -- water that would infiltrate
 19 through the valves of the pit from ground sources. It
 20 would also include water coming off the tailings storage
 21 facility, the waste rock facility. And that water to be
 22 released is expected to have to meet State and federal
 23 water quality standards to be released.
 24 So one of the things this project would have to do is
 25 treat water in perpetuity forever because it's got to meet

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1 standards before it go out based on where we are currently
 2 at.
 3 As far as reclamation of the tailings storage
 4 facility and the waste rock facility, there would be
 5 recontouring of the surfaces of both to facilitate
 6 revegetation to the degree that that could be expected to
 7 occur.
 8 The Corps of Engineers is one of 100 -- is one of the
 9 entities that has to issue over 100 permits,
 10 authorizations, et cetera, before the project could be
 11 permitted. The Bureau of Land Management, who is here
 12 today, is another entity that has to issue permits. Then
 13 there is a whole variety of other consultations and
 14 coordinations that would need to take place by way of
 15 analyses of the effects of the proposed project.
 16 The State of Alaska, who is also here today, also has
 17 a very major role in whether or not the project could be
 18 permitted and go forward and has a substantial number of
 19 authorizations that would be required for the project to
 20 be permitted.
 21 Very briefly, to give you information on where we are
 22 at in relation to the NEPA process that generates this
 23 Environmental Impact Statement, scoping was done between
 24 December and March of 2013 -- I'm sorry. December of 2012
 25 and March of 2013. Scoping is a process by which we go

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1 out to potentially affected communities and ask those
 2 communities what they think the effects of a proposed
 3 project are. A very substantial chunk of the information,
 4 the comments we receive are a very substantial chunk of
 5 the information we used to define what we needed to
 6 analyze in the Environmental Impact Statement that's
 7 currently out there for you all to comment on.
 8 So that Draft Environmental Impact Statement went out
 9 on the street November 27th of 2015, and the comment
 10 period currently runs through April 30 of 2016. So
 11 basically five more weeks to comment on the document.
 12 After we get comments on the document, we will review
 13 those comments to determine if we need to do any
 14 additional work, if we need to fix any analyses, if there
 15 is additional field work that needs to be done, additional
 16 modeling, et cetera. Basically those comments would give
 17 us an idea of whether or not we got it right, wrong, or
 18 whether or not there is more that we have to do.
 19 What we will do with those comments, comments we
 20 receive on the draft will be listed in the Final
 21 Environmental Impact Statement, which is the thing we will
 22 produce after we are done responding to comments and doing
 23 any more additional work we need to do. And we will
 24 include the responses to comments people make on the Draft
 25 Environmental Impact Statement in the Final Environmental

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1 Impact Statement, after which the federal agencies who
 2 would be using the Environmental Impact Statement to make
 3 decisions regarding whether or not we could permit the
 4 project as Donlin proposes it, permit some alternative to
 5 what Donlin is proposing, or not permit it at all -- the
 6 Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management and
 7 the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration are
 8 the three federal agencies that would be using that draft,
 9 that Environmental Impact Statement to make -- to
 10 determine if we could permit the project.
 11 The next step in this process is to give you
 12 information on what's in the first half a dozen chapters
 13 of the Environmental Impact Statement briefly so that you
 14 have an idea of what you might want to comment on and
 15 where it is. One of the things I have to note is that
 16 primary purpose of Chapter 1 of the document to give you
 17 information regarding the purpose and need of the project.
 18 Obviously Donlin has their purpose for the project, but
 19 because of the Army Corps of Engineers' role, it's
 20 incumbent upon us to define the overall purpose of the
 21 project. And that overall purpose you can see on the
 22 screen.
 23 One of the things I have to note is that there was an
 24 editorial fix that did not get made before this Draft
 25 Environmental Impact Statement went out. After "Western

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1 Alaska" on the screen up there, there is another half a
 2 sentence included in the overall purpose that's in the
 3 document that's out there for you to comment on. That
 4 other half a sentence says that part of our overall
 5 purpose is to maximize economic benefit for Donlin's
 6 stockholders, Calista and TKC shareholders.
 7 While we are very much aware of the potential
 8 positive benefits economically of the project to the
 9 Kuskokwim and Yukon River region, as well as some of the
 10 potential negative impacts economically, we cannot, by way
 11 of doing middle-of-the-road unbiased analyses, over --
 12 excessively weight the economic benefit of a project to
 13 any one entity or group of individuals over another. So
 14 that last half a sentence that's in the document that's
 15 currently out there was intended to be removed before it
 16 went out for anybody to review.
 17 Okay. Chapter 2 of the document delves into the
 18 alternatives for the proposed project. Donlin's
 19 alternative, what Donlin wants to do, proposed action is
 20 Alternative No. 2. All the other alternatives are ways by
 21 which we might minimize or offset impacts of what Donlin
 22 is proposing to do. Therefore, we generate alternatives
 23 by way of potentially minimizing impacts of what someone
 24 is proposing to do.
 25 The first -- well, I'll flip through these in the

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1 next couple of slides and give you an idea what they are.
 2 Of the seven alternatives you see on the screen, there
 3 were over 300 options that were developed that could have
 4 potentially minimized some of the impacts of the project.
 5 Of those 300 options, the seven alternatives that you see
 6 on the screen are those that remain for detailed analyses
 7 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
 8 Alternative 1 is the no action alternative. The
 9 National Environmental Policy Act, the law that defines
 10 what we do by way of the Environmental Impact Statement,
 11 notes that we are required to analyze everything in
 12 relation to the no action alternative. The no action
 13 alternative is simply what currently exists. In other
 14 words, if the Army Corps of Engineers decided that what we
 15 could permit by way of Donlin's proposed action is the no
 16 action, well, it means we are not permitting anything.
 17 The no action means nothing happens, nothing is
 18 constructed, there is no change.
 19 The reason we compared the proposed action, what
 20 Donlin wants to do, and all the other alternatives against
 21 the no action is so that we are comparing the proposed
 22 project and its other alternatives against what currently
 23 exists; therefore, hopefully setting us up to do the
 24 required analyses and accurately look at what's out there
 25 versus what might happen if a project is constructed.

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1 Okay. So as far as the rest of the alternatives go,
 2 we will talk about how they might minimize potential
 3 impacts of what Donlin is proposing.
 4 Alternative 3A is the LNG-powered haul truck
 5 alternative. Under this alternative, if this alternative
 6 went forward, what it would mean that the 300-ton payload
 7 trucks and potentially some other mining equipment would
 8 be powered via liquid natural gas instead of diesel as
 9 Donlin is proposing to do it.
 10 So what's the benefit of this alternative? Well,
 11 what this alternative means is that less diesel is burned
 12 in the mining operation. Burning less diesel means that
 13 less diesel would have to be barged up the Kuskokwim
 14 River. This means there is less negative impacts from
 15 barging. And as you are aware, diesel doesn't burn as
 16 cleanly as natural gas, so it would also mean that there
 17 would be less negative air emissions.
 18 So what I'm trying to point out here is that every
 19 time we consider one alternative versus another, it
 20 changes the potential effects of a project, and it also
 21 changes how we weigh and balance the potential impacts to
 22 the project.
 23 One of the other possibilities with this alternative
 24 is the requirement to construct a liquid natural gas plant
 25 at the mine site, which Donlin is not proposing to do

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1 because currently they are proposing to bring in natural
 2 gas and operate their facilities off of natural gas either
 3 entirely or use some of that natural gas to generate
 4 electricity and power some of the facilities. However, if
 5 this alternative went forward, some of that natural gas
 6 would have to be turned into liquid natural gas so it
 7 could be used to power the 300-ton payload trucks.
 8 Alternative 3B is the diesel pipeline alternative.
 9 This alternative means that that 315-mile natural gas
 10 pipeline would -- there would still be a pipeline
 11 constructed in that same footprint, but that pipeline
 12 would be a diesel pipeline instead of a natural gas
 13 pipeline.
 14 So how does this alternative potentially minimize
 15 some of the impacts of the project? Well, if you are
 16 running a diesel pipeline in there, it means virtually
 17 everything runs off of diesel -- the mining equipment, the
 18 mill facilities -- versus everything runs off of diesel
 19 and/or they are burning diesel to generate electricity to
 20 operate other facilities at the mine site.
 21 Some of the other impacts of selecting this
 22 alternative: This is the alternative that primarily
 23 potentially impacts Tyonek because, if this alternative
 24 went forward, the natural gas line that would be expected
 25 to start at Beluga north of us, that diesel pipeline would

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1 come into that same general area, but then there would be
 2 another 19-mile segment that would drop down here toward
 3 and past the community of Tyonek. And this alternative
 4 would also require expansion and improvement of the North
 5 Foreland Barge Facility.
 6 Some of the ways this alternative offsets impacts,
 7 well, if you are running your diesel in via pipeline, all
 8 that diesel that would go up the Kuskokwim River on the
 9 barges doesn't need to go up the Kuskokwim River on
 10 barges. It goes through the pipeline. Well, okay. What
 11 does that mean? Well, that means it's coming through Cook
 12 Inlet in tankers coming through wherever that pipeline
 13 ends at, which is basically south of here, off-loads, goes
 14 into the pipeline, goes upstream.
 15 It also means that if you consider the potential
 16 impacts of a natural gas leak or the rupture of a natural
 17 gas pipeline in regards to a spill, well, if you leak or
 18 spill natural gas, effectively it pretty much goes
 19 airborne. If you leak or spill diesel, well, it's going
 20 on the ground and/or into the water.
 21 This slide gives you a little bit of an indication of
 22 what this alternative would mean. You can see that the
 23 pipeline actually would run up to here [indicating], about
 24 approximately where Donlin is proposing to initiate their
 25 natural gas pipeline. It runs all the way down past

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1 Tyonek and down here to the dock, North Foreland. And
 2 here [indicating] is the North Foreland facility with its
 3 expansion farther offshore, expanded facilities, tank
 4 storage farm, et cetera, that would be required for this,
 5 and a pumping station that would be required for that
 6 diesel to be pumped to the mine site.
 7 **MR. DAVID KROTO:** Where would this diesel
 8 be imported from?
 9 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Well, the -- the
 10 natural gas Donlin is proposing to buy would be purchased
 11 on the open market. So it could be locally or it could be
 12 from anywhere in the world. It's my presumption that
 13 diesel falls under that same criteria.
 14 Are you proposing to buy diesel locally or would that
 15 be from anywhere in the world? Ron? Anybody?
 16 **MR. JAMES FUEG:** If we were to buy diesel,
 17 yeah, it would be bought on the open market.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** One of the things I
 19 forgot to mention is we are -- Mary Vavrik of Midnight Sun
 20 Court Reporters is here to document the meeting so that we
 21 are sure we document your comments so that we respond to
 22 them correctly in the Draft Environmental Impact
 23 Statement. Mary, unfortunately, has caught some of the
 24 same thing that's going around that everybody else had.
 25 She's in the process of getting over it, but if you do ask

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1 a question or when you make a comment later or give
 2 testimony, please state your name. And we have
 3 microphones for folks to use later. And please speak
 4 clearly so that she can hear you.
 5 Our whole purpose for this is we need to accurately
 6 document your statement so either we can respond or we can
 7 use them in the analyses. Because Mary is getting over
 8 the thing that everybody else had, if she starts to cough,
 9 I will stop speaking because she can't cough and hear at
 10 the same time. And if you all are commenting, if she
 11 starts coughing, please give her a break because she has
 12 got to capture it as it happens. So we need to be aware
 13 of everything she's trying to do while she's doing
 14 everything else.
 15 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Excuse me. The way
 16 we are used to doing things when we are having these
 17 meetings is we get up and we ask you questions when we see
 18 something on there or when we notice something on the
 19 pictures. I was given this for a comment thing. I don't
 20 wait till everything is over. I want to know now. So I
 21 will ask questions.
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** That's fine, ma'am. We
 23 have no problem with that. We are here to give you
 24 information, to get your comment and your testimony. We
 25 can do this the way it works for you all. So if you would

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1 like to ask any questions as we go through the
 2 presentation, please let me know. If you want to make a
 3 comment about anything on the posters or ask a question as
 4 we go through, let me know. I'll ask Alan to make a
 5 determination in regards to the testimony of the hearing
 6 -- because that's a different setup -- how he would like
 7 to do that when we get there.
 8 But we came here because we need to hear from you.
 9 So all these bureaucratic rules are fine elsewhere. They
 10 don't mean a lot here. So just tell me what you need to
 11 tell me.
 12 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Because I'm writing
 13 down questions, by the time we get to comment, I'm going
 14 to have to be flipping through all these pages. So I
 15 prefer if we have a question, let us get up and ask it.
 16 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. Is there
 17 anything you have written down that you would like to ask
 18 now?
 19 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** No. I'm good for
 20 right now, but I'll get to the next one.
 21 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Wave your hand or say
 22 something because you can see I wander around. And I've
 23 done this presentation enough times that sometimes my eyes
 24 are closed. I'm not asleep, but you have to raise your
 25 hand or holler at me.

Page 25

1 I'll turn to Alternative 4, the Birch Tree Crossing
 2 Alternative. What this alternative would be, instead of
 3 this industrial port facility that Donlin is proposing to
 4 construct at the port of Jungjuk downstream of Crooked
 5 Creek, there would be an industrial port facility
 6 constructed at Birch Tree Crossing, which reduces the need
 7 to barge cargo and fuel over about 75 miles of river. So
 8 not only is there less diesel burned by way of barging
 9 fuel and cargo up the river, there is the potential for
 10 less barge stranding.
 11 Those of you who are familiar with the Kuskokwim
 12 River are probably familiar with the fact that it's not
 13 uncommon occasionally for a barge to strand. Well, five
 14 of the six areas that we are aware of -- there is fairly
 15 substantial shallow spots on the Kuskokwim River, the
 16 upper Kuskokwim -- are upstream of the Birch Tree Crossing
 17 port, proposed port facility under this alternative. And
 18 therefore, we have minimized the potential for barge
 19 stranding. If we minimize the potential for stranding, we
 20 minimize the potential for spill and various other
 21 impacts. But of course, we also minimize the potential
 22 for some of those barging impacts related to potential
 23 shoreline erosion from barge wakes, prop wash, prop scour,
 24 et cetera.
 25 Now we will move into some alternatives that are --

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1 don't necessarily deal directly with barging on the river.
 2 Alternative 5A is the dry stack tailings alternative. I
 3 mentioned that the tailings that would fill that valley
 4 are basically a rock and water slurry, crushed rock and
 5 water slurry.
 6 Under this alternative, those tailings have dried out
 7 quite substantially before they go into that tailings
 8 facility. So what you are seeing if this alternative goes
 9 forward is that the drying of those tailings means that
 10 the water is removed from them. If the water is removed
 11 from them, well, the water has to go into this operating
 12 pond that you can see on the screen. Donlin's proposed
 13 tailings facility filled up about three-quarters of this,
 14 about approximately from here [indicating] on up.
 15 Well, under this alternative, the tailings are drier
 16 so they are stacked here in a smaller footprint, but they
 17 are stacked up to 150 feet higher. However, this also
 18 means that instead of a single dam to retain the tailings,
 19 now there are two dams, and there is a hydraulic dam
 20 downslope of the operating pond.
 21 The operating pond would be there for the life of the
 22 mine, meaning its operational life, those 27 and a half
 23 years that it's in operation. Once mining ceased, that
 24 water would all be pumped over to the pit and some of the
 25 water would fill that pit. And again, that water would

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1 have to be treated to water quality standards before it
 2 could be released.
 3 One of the offshoots of this alternative is if you
 4 dry out those tailings quite substantially, well, then,
 5 you potentially substantially increase the amount of
 6 erosion from wind and, therefore, dust deposition
 7 throughout the whole area.
 8 Alternative 6A refers to the Dalzell Gorge pipeline
 9 route alternative. There were a variety of potential
 10 alternatives to the pipeline routing versus what Donlin is
 11 proposing. I'll show you a slide of this alternative in a
 12 moment. One of the advantages of this alternative is that
 13 the pipeline is a couple of miles shorter. One of the
 14 disadvantages is that there is potentially more impacts to
 15 the Iditarod National Historic Trail from this alternative
 16 versus what Donlin is proposing.
 17 As you can see on the screen, the gold line is
 18 Donlin's proposed routing for the pipeline through part of
 19 the Alaska Range. The purple line is the Dalzell Gorge
 20 pipeline route which, of course, goes through Dalzell
 21 Gorge, Rainy Pass, along the south fork of the Kuskokwim
 22 for a portion of its length. Okay. That was Chapter 2
 23 alternatives.
 24 Chapter 3 is basically the heart of the Environmental
 25 Impact Statement. It talks about the baseline condition,

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1 what's currently out there, and the draft analyses and
 2 draft conclusions that the document defines. And please
 3 note that the reason the Draft Environmental Impact
 4 Statement is out for you all to comment on is because the
 5 analyses are draft. We need to know whether or not the
 6 analyses are right, wrong or otherwise. And the
 7 conclusions in it are draft. Decisions have not been
 8 made.
 9 What this slide is depicting is that by way of an
 10 example of how Chapter 3 breaks out, when we looked at the
 11 potential impacts of Donlin's proposed project in relation
 12 to barging, there is 26 major resource issues that are
 13 related to Donlin's proposed action, what they want to do.
 14 14 of these resources issues are potentially impacted by
 15 barging. So whether we are talking about water quality
 16 impacts, impacts to wildlife, impacts to subsistence,
 17 impacts to spill risk, those are some of the various
 18 resource issues that you will find discussed in the
 19 document in relation to impacts of barging. But then we
 20 also discuss the vast majority of all other impacts we
 21 feel might be substantial and therefore need to be
 22 disclosed in an Environmental Impact Statement.
 23 To continue this example of what's in the document in
 24 relation to barging, we will give you a little bit of
 25 indication of current barging on the Kuskokwim River. As

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1 we currently understand it, there are 68 riverine
 2 barges -- and by way of this example, we are talking about
 3 riverine barge traffic, which primarily occurs from Bethel
 4 upstream, versus marine barge traffic, which primarily
 5 occurs downstream of Bethel.
 6 As we currently understand it, there are 68 barge
 7 trips upstream of Bethel every year. And what that means
 8 under the current scenario is a tug pushing one or two
 9 barges leaves Bethel and goes upstream some distance and
 10 comes back down. That happens 68 times a year. What
 11 Donlin is proposing is a change from medium-duty or
 12 light-duty commercial barging to industrial scale barging,
 13 basically a 179 percent increase in barge activity on the
 14 Kuskokwim River. But they would be using, in relation to
 15 riverine barges, larger tugs, and they would typically be
 16 pushing, if we are talking cargo, four barges for every
 17 tug that goes upriver. Fuel barges might be a single
 18 barge or two barges together.
 19 So what does that really boil down to? Well, what it
 20 boils down to is that during the ice-free season on the
 21 Kuskokwim River this last summer, if you were standing on
 22 a spot on the shoreline of the Kuskokwim River this last
 23 summer, you would have seen a tug and one -- a tug and one
 24 or two barges pass you once in a 24-hour period. If
 25 Donlin's proposed project goes forward, in that same time

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1 frame you would see the same thing three times, except
 2 they would be larger, typically. You would see three
 3 combinations of tugs and barges going past you and
 4 typically a tug pushing four barges.
 5 Okay. So what does this slide show? Well, it gives
 6 you an indication of how the various alternatives impact
 7 barge traffic. As you can see on the screen, under
 8 Alternative 1, there is no additional barging. That burnt
 9 gold color that you see on the screen is the existing
 10 barging that currently happens. The light blue color is
 11 the change in barging if Donlin's project happens or one
 12 of these alternatives happens.
 13 So for all the alternatives, during construction the
 14 impact of barging is the same in relation to the frequency
 15 or the additional quantity of barging. But if you look at
 16 the document, please note that you need to look beyond
 17 just the figures and the tables in the document because
 18 the figures and the tables don't always tell you the whole
 19 story. You remember that I mentioned that Donlin's
 20 proposed alternative is to barge fuel and cargo all the
 21 way up to the Jungjuk port just downstream of Crooked
 22 Creek versus Alternative 4, which only barges to the Birch
 23 Tree Crossing, so basically 75 river miles less barging?
 24 Well, the frequency of barging, additional barging,
 25 as depicted in this bar graph shows Alternative 2 and 4

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1 having the same effect under construction and operations.
 2 Well, in reality, there is 75 miles less riverine barging
 3 of fuel and cargo for Alternative 4 than there is for
 4 Alternative 2.
 5 So the tables and figures and graphs don't always
 6 tell the whole story. If you have something in the
 7 document you want to comment on, it helps to look back at
 8 the text, as well.
 9 That was the construction phase. When we look at the
 10 operations phase, you can see that it's the same impact
 11 scenario we talked about before. Donlin's alternative,
 12 this is this 179 percent increase in barge traffic and
 13 larger barges, et cetera.
 14 Alternative 3A, the LNG haul truck alternative,
 15 because there is less fuel barging on the river, you have
 16 less barges going upriver, so less barge traffic,
 17 specifically fuel traffic. Under Alternative 3B, the
 18 diesel pipeline alternative, because you are eliminating
 19 virtually all diesel barging, save for a small amount that
 20 would occur during construction, again, there is a
 21 substantial reduction in barging, but that reduction is
 22 all fuel barging. But of course, that also means less
 23 potential for spills of diesel on the river in relation to
 24 barging.
 25 So again, every time we change alternatives, every

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1 time we change potential impacts of the project, we change
 2 how we weigh and balance those impacts against the other.
 3 So very briefly, this slide gives you some
 4 information on the potential impacts of barging on fish
 5 along the river. By way of draft conclusions that have
 6 been reached in the document, AECOM reached a conclusion
 7 that under Alternative 2, barge traffic could have a
 8 potentially moderate impact on fish, whether it's
 9 disturbance of spawning areas, disturbance of fish while
 10 they are feeding or resting, whether it's injury or
 11 mortality of fish that get hit by props on barges, they
 12 feel that the impact of fish on the river from barging
 13 would be moderate, but with potentially greater impacts in
 14 shallow or narrow segments of the river.
 15 And again, we have the same scenario for some of the
 16 alternatives. Each of the alternatives has the potential
 17 to minimize some of those impacts on fish but, of course,
 18 every time you minimize impacts in one way, you may have
 19 impacts in another direction that Donlin's proposed
 20 alternative doesn't.
 21 This is just another slide that gives you some of
 22 that same indication of the tradeoffs of Donlin's proposed
 23 action versus the alternatives in relation to fish and
 24 barging on the river. So whether we are talking about
 25 changes in air emissions, changes in the ability to catch

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1 fish, et cetera, it potentially changes for each
 2 alternative.
 3 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** On the barging for
 4 the river, you were talking about some shallow areas. If
 5 that alternative was used, it would have to be -- would
 6 the river have to be dredged to be made deeper?
 7 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** At this time the only
 8 dredging Donlin is proposing to do is maintenance dredging
 9 at their proposed port site at Jungjuk. And if this
 10 project goes forward, the existing Bethel yard dock
 11 facility, a port facility at Bethel, would also have to be
 12 expanded. And so that facility would also need
 13 maintenance dredging. Donlin has done some studies, and
 14 they don't believe that they need -- they don't believe
 15 that they need to dredge anywhere on the Kuskokwim River
 16 to be able to do this.
 17 What they are indicating is that during times of the
 18 year or years when water flows are reduced, they would
 19 change how heavily they load the barges. But of course,
 20 please understand when we are talking about the frequency
 21 of barge traffic, if you change how heavily you load a
 22 barge, well -- and your projection is you are going to
 23 move this amount of cargo or fuel in this amount of time
 24 but you have to run barges with less cargo and fuel, that
 25 means you have to run more barges.

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1 So they have got ways they think they can manage it.
 2 But one of the things we have noted is that we are not
 3 analyzing in this Draft Environmental Impact Statement the
 4 potential impacts of dredging along the Kuskokwim River.
 5 So if the project were to be permitted without an analysis
 6 of dredging on the Kuskokwim River and then Donlin came
 7 back later and said, we need to dredge, well, if they are
 8 talking about dredging in one or two small locations and a
 9 minimal amount of dredging, that's something we could
 10 probably do under reasonably minor analyses that would
 11 happen after the project went forward.
 12 If they are talking about any kind of larger scale
 13 dredging on the Kuskokwim River, what I've indicated to
 14 them at this point in time, our scope of analyses for our
 15 decision on this project is not going to include that. So
 16 they are quite likely looking at potentially a
 17 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, which could
 18 mean if this need arises during construction, they could
 19 have a delay of one to two years of construction just for
 20 us to make a decision as to whether or not we could permit
 21 dredging on the Kuskokwim River. Same thing during
 22 operation.
 23 So they have done the analyses and they feel they can
 24 do it without dredging, and we will see where that goes.
 25 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Not only the fuel

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1 that you are talking about them hauling, they have to haul
 2 their equipment and their materials to build their camp
 3 for their mine. So regardless, they are going to be going
 4 up that river anyway by barge unless they plan on taking
 5 it through the pipeline trail.
 6 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Right. In relation to
 7 construction and operations, you are looking at 31 and a
 8 half years minimum of barging at an industrial scale on
 9 the Kuskokwim River. Toilet paper, toothpaste, a
 10 hairbrush, a 300-ton payload mining truck, the massive
 11 facilities needed for the mill operations, all those have
 12 to go up the river. And it can be done. It's amazing how
 13 much you can put on a barge, and you don't -- you don't
 14 draft very much water on that barge. But it's all got to
 15 go upriver, save for some of the stuff related to one of
 16 the pipelines that would either come in from Cook Inlet
 17 and construction goes part way that direction, or there is
 18 actually some stuff that would have to be barged upstream
 19 of the Jungjuk port site past Crooked Creek to facilitate
 20 construction of the pipeline running from the west end
 21 east.
 22 So the pipeline is actually proposed to be
 23 constructed from both directions at the same time.
 24 Basically it's -- it will meet somewhere approximately in
 25 the middle.

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1 So the last couple of chapters that we will talk
 2 about before I conclude this are Chapters 4 and 5.
 3 Chapter 4 talks about cumulative impacts. I was talking
 4 about how we do the analyses and what we need your comment
 5 on. Cumulative impacts refer to all past, present and
 6 reasonably foreseeable future activities. Cumulative
 7 impacts is a way we use to forecast the potential impacts
 8 of a project.
 9 So what we have done is looked at past activities
 10 that occurred in the Yukon-Kuskokwim River region,
 11 activities that currently exist and activities that we
 12 think will come into existence in the near term. And we
 13 combine all those together with what Donlin is proposing
 14 to do, and we use that to forecast the potential impacts
 15 of this project into the future. That's what's in
 16 Chapter 4.
 17 What we need from you all is if you are interested in
 18 commenting on that, are we right, wrong, are there things
 19 we considered that we didn't need to, things we didn't
 20 consider that we need to consider, are the conclusions
 21 correct.
 22 Mitigation. I talked about alternatives being a way
 23 to offset impacts of projects. Well, mitigation is just
 24 any mechanism you can use to potentially offset the
 25 impacts of something. Chapter 5 talks about a whole host

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1 of potential ways the impacts of this project could be
 2 mitigated. And so again, we need your information on
 3 whether or not we adequately considered that, whether
 4 there is more we need to consider, whether the conclusions
 5 are correct, et cetera.
 6 In a couple of minutes, we will go to the poster
 7 session I referred to. There is two posters here or --
 8 actually somewhere. There is three posters over here that
 9 talk about what Donlin is proposing to do, and then there
 10 is nine more posters around the room that talk about the
 11 potential impacts of the project.
 12 The purpose of the poster session, if you are
 13 interested, is to let you look at what Donlin is proposing
 14 to do, look at some of the potential impacts of these
 15 projects, and talk to some of the staff from AECOM that is
 16 here that has done some of the analyses and drawn some of
 17 the draft conclusions to give you an indication of what
 18 they think the impacts of this project are. So we will do
 19 that in just a couple of minutes.
 20 The overall point of this whole presentation today in
 21 relation to the EIS is to give you information on how you
 22 can substantively comment to us on the draft Environmental
 23 Impact Statement.
 24 What do I mean by a substantive comment? I mean a
 25 comment that we can use that tells us are you for the

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1 project, are you against the project, are you somewhere in
 2 between, and a comment that we can use to indicate whether
 3 our draft conclusions and analyses are correct. So let's
 4 take an example of how we would respond to your comments.
 5 As I mentioned earlier, any comments you make today or
 6 any time during the current period, those comments will
 7 actually be responded to in the Final Environmental Impact
 8 Statement. We will list your comment on the response.
 9 But what we need, if you support the project, if you are
 10 opposed to the project or somewhere in between, it would
 11 be beneficial if you would tell us why. The why is the
 12 thing that frequently tells us whether we have done
 13 enough, haven't done enough, or whether our draft analyses
 14 or conclusions are right or wrong.
 15 So if I get 100 people that say I support the
 16 project, how do I respond to that comment? Well, the
 17 response in the Final Environmental Impact Statement to
 18 that effect, the comment would be "comment noted." If I
 19 get 100 people that say I oppose the project, how would we
 20 respond to that comment? Well, there would be a comment
 21 listed that says I oppose the project, and the response
 22 would be "comment noted." If you tell us why you support
 23 the project, don't support the project, or somewhere in
 24 between, that's the thing that can tell us whether or not
 25 we need to do any more in relation to the analyses we have

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1 done, whether or not our baseline information is correct,
 2 whether there is more field work we need to do, whether
 3 there is more alternatives we need to analyze, et cetera.
 4 How can you comment on the Draft Environmental Impact
 5 Statement? Obviously, you can comment at this meeting.
 6 You can comment at one of the three other meetings that
 7 are coming up next week. You can send us a fax. You can
 8 send us an email. You can fill out one of the comment
 9 forms we have here. There is a variety of ways you can go
 10 through it. Obviously, you see that we are here today,
 11 and we have the three meetings next week. And so if you
 12 would like to -- you can call in to those meetings. We
 13 have got a phone line established or -- I think the phone
 14 line died because I don't see the phone anywhere. The
 15 intention is to have a call-in number at the meetings next
 16 week, so if you want to call in and comment that way as
 17 well, or use any of the other methodologies, as I
 18 mentioned.
 19 Our website is on the screen. Under the EIS
 20 documents tab on this website you can find the entire EIS.
 21 There is newsletters, background information, other
 22 presentations, other information related to the proposed
 23 project. And that should be it.
 24 So at this point in time, I mentioned earlier that
 25 I'd have the other folks in the room that are here today

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1 introduce themselves. I'll start with federal and State
 2 agency staff, and then we will ask AECOM and Donlin folks
 3 to introduce themselves. I'll start with Mr. David
 4 Hobbie.
 5 **MR. DAVID HOBBIIE:** Good afternoon,
 6 everybody. I'm David Hobbie, Chief of the Regulatory
 7 Division for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Keith
 8 works for me. He really is the smart guy. I just come
 9 for the presence. He really knows all the details and
 10 stuff. What I will say, though, is, you know, I have been
 11 to several meetings in the past several weeks over
 12 [indiscernible] in villages, whether it's Tyonek, Nuiqsut,
 13 Barrow on issues probably very similar, subsistence and
 14 the whole way of life that you all have enjoyed and how to
 15 [indiscernible] development without impact. So we take
 16 this stuff very serious. And again, we appreciate being
 17 here.
 18 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Once again, I'm Alan
 19 Bittner, the Anchorage field manager for the Bureau of
 20 Land Management.
 21 **MR. BRUCE SEPPI:** Hi, everyone. I'm Bruce
 22 Seppi. I'm a wildlife biologist and federal subsistence
 23 coordinator for BLM in Anchorage.
 24 **MR. JEFF BRUNO:** Jeff Bruno with the State
 25 of Alaska. As Keith was saying earlier, there's a lot of

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1 State and federal permitting going on at the same time, so
 2 I'm here to either answer your questions or take them down
 3 and get some answers for you any questions that you have
 4 that relate to State permitting on this project.
 5 **MR. BILL CRAIG:** I'm Bill Craig with
 6 AECOM. We are the third-party contractor helping to
 7 prepare the EIS. During the poster session that's going
 8 to start here momentarily, I'll be over in this area
 9 [indicating], and I'll be talking about barge traffic,
 10 fisheries and hazardous chemicals. Jessica Evans is in
 11 the back of the room. She's a social scientist, and she
 12 will be working in this area over here [indicating],
 13 subsistence, socioeconomics, and also talking about the
 14 mine site and the transportation infrastructure.
 15 And I think I messed that up a little bit. Amy
 16 Rosenthal will be over here in this area [indicating], as
 17 well, and Nancy Darigo will be over here [indicating] in
 18 this area talking about spill risk, air and water
 19 discharges, tailings dam and water. And Donne Fleagle is
 20 with us. She's our rural outreach coordinator.
 21 **MR. JAMES FUEG:** James Fueg with Donlin
 22 Gold. I'm the engineering manager for the project.
 23 **MR. KURT PARKAN:** Kurt Parkan with Donlin
 24 Gold, the external affairs manager.
 25 **MR. RON RIMELMAN:** Ron Rimelman with

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1 NOVAGOLD, co-owners of the Donlin Gold Project.
 2 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Donlin Gold is a
 3 corporation that was generated by both Barrick and
 4 NOVAGOLD, who are both 50 percent partners in the proposed
 5 project. So Ron is an employee of NOVA, represents NOVA.
 6 The folks from Donlin obviously are representing Donlin.
 7 They can answer your questions regarding what Donlin is
 8 proposing. The rest of the folks, AECOM or any of the
 9 State or federal folks in the room, can answer some other
 10 questions you have regarding what Donlin is proposing, the
 11 potential impacts, et cetera.
 12 So at this point in time, we usually take anywhere
 13 from 30 to 45 minutes for folks to look at the posters.
 14 As we mentioned, we will run this how you all would like
 15 to run it. We will take a break. We will have a
 16 conversation with you about the proposed project. It can
 17 take less than 30 minutes. It can take more than 45
 18 minutes. You just have to let us know.
 19 Two things. I'm tired today, so I forgot that the
 20 next thing we are actually going to go do is Mr. Alan
 21 Bittner with the Bureau of Land Management is going to do
 22 the introduction to the 810 ANILCA hearing. After that
 23 then we will go to the poster session on the Draft
 24 Environmental Impact Statement.
 25 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Once again, my name is

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1 Alan Bittner. I'm the Anchorage field manager of the
 2 Bureau of Land Management. And as I said earlier, because
 3 of our involvement in this project and the potential
 4 impacts to subsistence resources, we drafted a preliminary
 5 finding on subsistence resources. And I'm going to give
 6 you a brief overview of that. There are copies of it.
 7 It's also an appendix in the draft EIS.
 8 So forgive me today. I want to be able to speak
 9 accurately. I've got some text that I'm going to read
 10 from that gives you a brief overview of the project, a
 11 little simpler overview than what Keith described in his
 12 presentation, and then our findings in three categories
 13 related to subsistence.
 14 And one other thing I'll say is that the NEPA
 15 analysis is a little different than the ANILCA 810
 16 analysis in that NEPA looks at the overall project and its
 17 impacts and discloses that to the public. So that's what
 18 the EIS process is.
 19 The ANILCA 810 analysis, the threshold is a little
 20 different. In this preliminary finding, it was simply
 21 there may be a significant impact or there may not be a
 22 significant impact to subsistence resources. And so we
 23 will get to that finding here in just a minute. And
 24 remember that's a preliminary finding. It's part of
 25 the -- that's an addendum to the EIS process, as well, and

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1 we will be coming out with a final determination on
 2 subsistence resources under ANILCA through this process,
 3 as well.
 4 Through the ANILCA 810 analysis, BLM determined if a
 5 significant restriction of subsistence uses and needs may
 6 result from any one of the alternatives discussed in the
 7 Donlin draft EIS, including their cumulative effects, we
 8 used three factors to determine that.
 9 No. 1, the reduction in availability of subsistence
 10 resources caused by a decline in population or abundance
 11 of harvestable resources. This may include fish,
 12 wildlife, edible plants, house logs, firewood or drinking
 13 water, for example. Factors that might cause a reduction
 14 include adverse impacts on habitat, direct impacts on the
 15 resource, increased harvest, and increased competition
 16 from nonsubsistence users.
 17 No. 2, reductions in the availability of resources
 18 used for subsistence purposes caused by an alteration of
 19 their distribution, migration patterns or location.
 20 And thirdly, limitations on access to subsistence
 21 resources, including limitations from increased
 22 competition for resources or physical or legal barriers.
 23 Donlin Gold, LLC submitted applications to the Bureau
 24 of Land Management for a right-of-way grant in July of
 25 2012 and also in January of 2013 for a fiber optic cable.

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1 Donlin Gold is proposing to construct, operate, maintain
 2 and close a 315-mile long, 14-inch diameter buried natural
 3 gas pipeline and associated fiber optic cable from the
 4 west side of Cook Inlet to the mine site near Crooked
 5 Creek in the Kuskokwim watershed.
 6 The proposed 315-mile long pipeline right-of-way
 7 would cross 97 miles of BLM land north and west of the
 8 Alaska Range in the Kuskokwim watershed. This represents
 9 about 30.7 percent of the total right-of-way on BLM land.
 10 The State of Alaska lands constitute 65 and a half
 11 percent. ANCSA corporation lands, such as Calista, The
 12 Kuskokwim Corporation and Cook Inlet Region, Inc.,
 13 constitute 3.7 percent.
 14 The pipeline is part of an energy supply
 15 infrastructure for a proposed open pit gold mine located
 16 10 miles north of the village of Crooked Creek.
 17 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** Can I ask you a
 18 question on the natural gas pipeline? The pipeline, it's
 19 going to be up in that area somewhere. And how are you
 20 going to get your supplies? Is it going to be barges
 21 going back and forth here, or is there going to be a road
 22 that comes from that direction for your supplies for the
 23 pipes and whatever else?
 24 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** The supplies to build
 25 the pipeline? They are going to come from a number of

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1 sources. And I don't know if you want to answer that or
 2 not, but some will be flown in to airstrips along the
 3 corridor. Some will come in on barges on either end. You
 4 heard Keith mention barges up the Kuskokwim to reach that
 5 west end of the pipeline. There is also temporary
 6 airstrips along the corridor.
 7 You want to add anything to that?
 8 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Donlin is not proposing
 9 any road that would run the entire length of the pipeline
 10 route. What they are proposing is a substantial quantity
 11 of materials is barged via marine barge into Cook Inlet to
 12 the barge landing that's just north of you all here to
 13 come off of those marine barges, go up the road to the
 14 Beluga area. And we are talking about the natural gas
 15 pipeline here, not the diesel pipeline. And they start
 16 construction on this side and start going west.
 17 And as Alan mentioned, in some cases they need to put
 18 in temporary airstrips or expand existing airstrips to fly
 19 materials in. They would also at the same time be barging
 20 pipe and other materials for construction of a pipeline up
 21 the Kuskokwim River and to get to -- I'm drawing a blank
 22 on the name of the -- Devil's Bend, Devil's Elbow --
 23 upstream of Crooked Creek where they start construction
 24 going east and west toward the mine site. And it would be
 25 the same scenario. The vast majority of things come in

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1 via barge and/or some stuff would be flown in.
 2 It's important to note that while there is no
 3 proposed road that runs the entire length of that 315-mile
 4 pipeline, they would need in some areas what they refer to
 5 as a shoofly road. That's a temporary construction road.
 6 And those roads are used either to access materials sites
 7 where they might get gravel to facilitate construction of
 8 the pipeline, they might need to get water to facilitate
 9 construction, or they just need that road to access
 10 different points on the pipeline construction route.
 11 When I mentioned reclamation earlier, one of the
 12 things to consider is that reclamation doesn't always mean
 13 everything goes back to the way it was before. Obviously
 14 the pit, the tailings storage facility, the waste rock
 15 facility, those are going to be permanent features if the
 16 project is permitted that are reclaimed to a degree.
 17 Well, those shoofly roads fall under the same
 18 category. They are not proposing to remove them after
 19 construction. They are not public access roads during
 20 construction. They are industrial private access roads.
 21 After construction they would be -- they would put some
 22 material on them. They would try to do things to help
 23 them revegetate, but they would remain effectively in
 24 perpetuity as they are proposing to construct the project.
 25 So there could be some impacts related to people accessing

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1 those roads.
 2 One thing that I don't think I mentioned earlier, the
 3 Army Corps of Engineers is neither a proponent for this
 4 project nor an opponent of this project. We are going
 5 down the middle of the road. Until it gets to a
 6 permitting decision point after this EIS is done, we are
 7 not for or against this project. The Bureau of Land
 8 Management is neither for or against the project. They
 9 have a public interest role to go through. They have a
 10 permitting role to go through.
 11 So we are discussing what Donlin is proposing to do
 12 and some of the alternatives that have been developed. If
 13 there is questions we can't answer, we have some folks
 14 from Donlin in the room.
 15 **MS. HARRIET KAUFMAN:** So you are taking
 16 our concerns. And if you would have been here two days
 17 ago, you would have got every one of mine. And I don't
 18 know if anyone recorded it, wherever those guys are. But
 19 one of the things that I -- the concerns I had with the
 20 beginning of the -- where the pipeline would turn west is
 21 when you make your right-of-ways for your pipeline, my big
 22 concern was there are some pike in some of those lakes up
 23 there that is invasive species in Alaska -- well, some
 24 parts, this part especially.
 25 And I was wondering, are you going to, not by knowing

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1 it, but open up some little thing that's going to let them
 2 travel farther down and invade the rest of our lakes?
 3 I got to go to the plane right now, but that was my
 4 concern, and I would like an answer to it from somebody.
 5 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay. There are no
 6 guarantees, but based on the way Donlin is proposing to
 7 construct, there would either be -- in relation to the
 8 pipeline, there would either be trenching through rivers
 9 and streams to lay the pipeline in or they might be
 10 horizontally directional drilling under it. This corridor
 11 they would have to open up on either side of the pipeline
 12 if it was constructed is a corridor generated by clearing
 13 vegetation. I'm not aware that what Donlin is proposing
 14 by any of their construction methodology would change fish
 15 access, referring to pike, in relation to their ability to
 16 either move upstream or downstream.
 17 It is, of course, notable that in relation to the
 18 mine site itself, there is -- I don't remember how many
 19 miles of stream just ceases to exist because it either
 20 becomes a pit or waste rock facility or tailings storage
 21 facility. So I'm not aware that that should affect the
 22 dispersement of pike as a result of the permit.
 23 **MR. ALAN BITTNER:** Back on BLM's ANILCA
 24 subsistence analysis. In addition to the pipeline and the
 25 mine site, the Donlin Gold Project will include

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1 transportation infrastructure for barge transportation on
 2 the Kuskokwim River. Two of the six alternatives analyzed
 3 in the draft EIS would affect the pipeline component.
 4 Alternative 3B would substitute a diesel pipeline for
 5 the natural gas pipeline within the same planned
 6 right-of-way. Alternative 6A would route a portion of the
 7 pipe through the Dalzell Gorge, affecting 46 miles of
 8 State land.
 9 The proposed Donlin Gold Project is evaluated in
 10 three components: The mine site, transportation
 11 infrastructure and pipeline. Although the permit
 12 applications of the BLM focuses on the BLM-managed
 13 portions of the pipeline right-of-way, the National
 14 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, prohibits splitting the
 15 project into smaller components in order to minimize the
 16 estimate of environmental impacts. For that reason, this
 17 review of subsistence impacts will address the entire
 18 project, not just the portion permitted by the BLM.
 19 So right now I'm going to go through a brief overview
 20 of each of the components. Even though Keith already gave
 21 that presentation, I just want to give you a brief
 22 overview for the subsistence analysis, and then we will
 23 look at each of those three components real briefly as far
 24 as our analysis is concerned.
 25 And this is a representative photo here along the

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1 Windy Fork portion of the Kuskokwim watershed in Game
 2 Management Unit 19C. The proposed pipeline includes a
 3 150-foot wide cleared construction right-of-way; 12
 4 airstrips ranging from 3,500 to 5,000 feet, nine of which
 5 would be newly built along the pipeline right-of-way
 6 during construction; nine construction camps, 65 cleared
 7 pipe storage areas, an estimated 70 gravel pits ranging
 8 from one to 50 acres in size. The pipeline would cross
 9 seven watersheds involving 396 stream crossings, 77 of
 10 which are anadromous, or salmon-rearing, streams.
 11 The proposed mine includes a waste rock facility that
 12 would fill 2,240 acres of American Creek, a tailings
 13 storage facility that would fill 2,351 acres of Anaconda
 14 Creek. The tailings storage facility would be contained
 15 behind a 464-foot high dam. The mine has two pits. The
 16 ACMA pit would be approximately 1,850 feet deep from its
 17 high wall, and the Lewis pit would be approximately 1,653
 18 feet deep from its high wall. The two pits would merge at
 19 the surface into one open pit about 2.2 miles long and one
 20 mile wide near the end of mining operations.
 21 At mine closure, runoff from the tailings storage
 22 facility would be pumped into the open pit. The pit is
 23 estimated to take roughly 50 years to fill, and pumping
 24 would be required to prevent it from overflowing into
 25 Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim watershed. The pit water

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1 may not meet water quality standards and would need to be
 2 treated before it could be released into Crooked Creek.
 3 A water treatment plant would be constructed 50 years
 4 after mine closure. Water from the pit lake would have to
 5 be pumped and treated in the wastewater treatment plant
 6 into perpetuity to prevent untreated pit water from
 7 flowing into Crooked Creek and in the Kuskokwim River
 8 watershed.
 9 And this photo right here is an overview of the mine
 10 sight, the waste rock facility, the tailings storage
 11 facility. And those are in Game Management Unit 19A.
 12 Proposed transportation facilities include
 13 construction of an expanded port facility at the Bethel
 14 cargo terminal, a new port at Jungjuk Creek on the
 15 Kuskokwim River with 2.8 million gallons of fuel storage,
 16 a 30-mile long access road from the Kuskokwim River to the
 17 mine, with 45 stream crossings and 13 gravel pits and a
 18 5,000-foot airstrip at the mine. This is a photo that's
 19 representative of the Jungjuk Creek where the proposed
 20 port is located. And that's also in Game Management Unit
 21 19A.
 22 Barges would supply the mine with fuel and cargo and
 23 involve 64 cargo barge round trips and 58 fuel barge round
 24 trips annually from the Bethel port site to the Jungjuk
 25 port site during the 110-day shipping season, which is

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1 June 1 to October 1. River barges would be transported by
 2 tug pushing a four-barge configuration each trip. Each
 3 fuel barge would carry 1.29 million gallons of diesel
 4 fuel. The port at Jungjuk would continue to be needed to
 5 supply fuel and cargo to the wastewater treatment plant,
 6 treating water from the pit lake into perpetuity. And
 7 this is another representative photo of Jungjuk Creek.
 8 The preliminary analysis of impacts to subsistence
 9 based on the alternatives outlined in the draft EIS
 10 includes all six alternatives. It can be found at
 11 Appendix N of the draft EIS of on page 409 of the .pdf.
 12 And in those sections it's Appendix M through O section.
 13 So you will find N in there, but you will need to look for
 14 that page. And we've also provided some copies back here
 15 if you want to look at that analysis. I believe it's
 16 about 24 pages in length.
 17 The testimony and input from 11 communities where
 18 public hearings will be held on the impacts to subsistence
 19 from the Donlin Gold Project will be analyzed and included
 20 in the final ANILCA 810 subsistence impact evaluation and
 21 will be included in the final EIS.
 22 So now I'll go into our evaluation real briefly
 23 before I conclude. The following is an evaluation of
 24 effects of the Donlin Gold Project proposal on subsistence
 25 uses and needs for the mine site, the natural gas pipeline

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1 and the transportation infrastructure components of the
 2 project.
 3 The subsistence evaluation was done for each project
 4 component and looked at the effect on subsistence uses and
 5 needs. For the mine site, villages closest to the mine
 6 would potentially experience the most effects to
 7 subsistence, including Napaimute and especially Crooked
 8 Creek. Mine activities such as ore trucks in the mine,
 9 trucks on the port road, drilling, blasting, power
 10 generation, port site activity would likely change the
 11 distribution of wildlife species important to subsistence,
 12 such as moose, caribou and fur bearers, would be
 13 long-term, and would cause potential impacts during the
 14 construction phase and during mining activities and
 15 throughout the life of the mine.
 16 Areas important to Crooked Creek for berry picking,
 17 wood cutting and hunting would be directly affected by the
 18 mine, and adjacent areas would potentially be contaminated
 19 with dust emissions containing various particulate
 20 materials from ore processing and from trucks on haul
 21 roads and access roads. This would make berry picking
 22 areas undesirable or unusable to subsistence users.
 23 A water treatment plant would be built 50 years after
 24 mine closure to treat water from the pit that may or may
 25 not meet water quality standards for fish. Possible water

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1 releases from the mine during operations, after mine
 2 closure when water is being pumped into the pit, and after
 3 the water treatment plant is constructed may have the
 4 potential to impact fish in Crooked Creek and the
 5 Kuskokwim River which could result in significant
 6 restrictions to subsistence resources.
 7 Potential runoff from the tailings dam and pit lake
 8 would have the potential to contaminate fish resources
 9 important to subsistence in Crooked Creek and the lower
 10 Kuskokwim River into perpetuity, impacting subsistence
 11 fish resources important to all communities from Crooked
 12 Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.
 13 Now for the natural gas pipeline. The potential
 14 effects to subsistence from construction and operation of
 15 the natural gas pipeline would affect the villages of
 16 Tyonek, Skwentna, Nikolai, McGrath, Takotna, as well as
 17 the downriver villages of Sleetmute, Stony River,
 18 Georgetown and Crooked Creek. During construction the
 19 effects of clearing the right-of-way, trenching, drilling,
 20 the presence of machinery, pipeline transport, workers in
 21 construction camps and infrastructure on and along the
 22 pipeline right-of-way would cause a redistribution of
 23 moose, caribou and fur bearers and negatively affect
 24 access to subsistence use areas and availability of
 25 subsistence resources.

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1 During mining operations, the airstrip that would
 2 remain along the pipeline right-of-way at Farewell would
 3 potentially increase access to subsistence resources by
 4 nonlocal residents using aircraft and increased
 5 competition for those subsistence resources along and
 6 adjacent to the pipeline right-of-way. Villages
 7 negatively affected by increased access to and competition
 8 in the area include Nikolai, McGrath and Takotna.
 9 And for the transportation infrastructure, the
 10 potential effects to subsistence from the transportation
 11 infrastructure include barging of cargo and fuel at the
 12 construction port at Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim River which
 13 would affect all villages on the river from Crooked Creek
 14 to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River. Impacts from barging
 15 include displacement and disruption of subsistence
 16 activities by barge traffic or reduced access to
 17 subsistence fishing activities and sites, such as set
 18 nets, fish wheels and processing rafts along the river.
 19 Subsistence fish resources, salmon and resident fish
 20 species populations may also be negatively affected by the
 21 magnitude and intensity of barge traffic proposed in
 22 Alternative 2. Effects to fish may increase when river
 23 water levels are low as barge rafts would need to be
 24 uncoupled and barges towed individually or in pairs or
 25 lighter barge loads per trip would be required to navigate

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1 to the Jungjuk port. This would require additional barge
 2 round trips on the river and potentially increase impacts
 3 to subsistence fishers on the Kuskokwim River and to
 4 subsistence fish resources.
 5 This evaluation concludes that Alternative 2 may
 6 result in a significant restriction to subsistence uses
 7 for the communities of Crooked Creek and Napaimute in
 8 relation to the mine site; the communities on the
 9 Kuskokwim River from barge traffic on the river, which
 10 include Bethel, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Oscarville, Kwethluk,
 11 Akiachak, Akiak, Tuluksak, Kalskag and Lower Kalskag,
 12 Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Napaimute, and Crooked Creek; and the
 13 communities of McGrath, Nicolai and Takotna for increased
 14 access and competition from nonlocal users at the Farewell
 15 airstrip along the pipeline right-of-way.
 16 In addition, potential spill scenarios involving
 17 ocean and river barge release of diesel fuel, cyanide,
 18 mercury, tailings dam failure and release of untreated
 19 water from the pit lake and tailings dam after mine
 20 closure may also result in significant restriction to
 21 subsistence uses for the Kuskokwim River communities
 22 listed above.
 23 The BLM has found in this preliminary ANILCA 810
 24 evaluation that Alternatives 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5A, 6, and the
 25 cumulative case considered in the draft Donlin Gold EIS

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1 may significantly restrict subsistence uses. These
 2 findings require BLM to conduct hearings to solicit public
 3 comments from potentially affected communities and
 4 subsistence users under ANILCA 810(a)(1) and (2) in
 5 conjunction with the release of the draft EIS. We will
 6 conduct an 810 hearing and gather testimony after the
 7 draft EIS comment session, and we welcome your testimony.
 8 Following the public hearing, a finding may be
 9 revised to "will not significantly restrict" based on
 10 changes in alternatives, new information or new mitigation
 11 measures resulting from the hearings. If a finding of
 12 "may significantly restrict subsistence uses" is not
 13 revised or the impacts cannot be mitigated, a three-part
 14 determination must be made before the action can be
 15 authorized.
 16 So what do these findings mean and what happens next
 17 under ANILCA? An 810(a)(3) determination section is used
 18 to prepare only when there is a finding of "may
 19 significantly restrict subsistence uses" for the selected
 20 alternative. The determination will separately address
 21 each of the three required items under 810(a)(3) and state
 22 why the proposed action is necessary and how the action
 23 complies with each requirement.
 24 Three items that are required are: Why such a
 25 significant restriction of subsistence uses is necessary

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1 and how it is consistent with sound management principles
 2 for multiple use of public lands, how the proposed
 3 activity will involve the minimal amount of public lands
 4 necessary to accomplish the purposes of the project and,
 5 third, what reasonable steps will be taken to minimize
 6 adverse effects upon subsistence uses resulting from the
 7 project. After compliance with this 810 process, a
 8 manager may proceed with the action.
 9 So when commenting on subsistence impacts, please
 10 consider what additional specific information about how
 11 the proposed mine would affect abundance or availability
 12 of subsistence resources important to you and how it would
 13 affect access to subsistence resources important to you.
 14 Again, remember, that's abundance or availability of those
 15 resources, your access to it, and what types of access
 16 will be affected.
 17 And then as far as commenting, as Keith said earlier,
 18 any comments you make to -- directly to the draft EIS
 19 during the public comment period that is open till April
 20 30 and at this meeting today -- or you can make comments
 21 on subsistence directly to the BLM if you choose to -- but
 22 either way, any comments related to subsistence could
 23 affect our analysis of subsistence resources that we will
 24 finalize and include in the final EIS.
 25 And also today, since this is a community that

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1 potentially is affected with regard to subsistence, after
 2 comments on the draft EIS, we will open and close a brief
 3 hearing to receive official testimony. So if you want to
 4 give testimony specific to subsistence during that
 5 hearing, you are welcome to do so. And if you feel like
 6 your subsistence comments are sufficient to the draft EIS
 7 and comment period that Keith is going to conduct, like I
 8 said already, those comments are available to us as well
 9 and can influence this analysis.
 10 So with that, I'll turn it back over to Keith, and we
 11 will proceed on with the poster session and comment
 12 period.
 13 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you very much,
 14 Alan. So okay. For the next 30 to 45 minutes, I'll put
 15 the microphone down and you all can talk to the folks
 16 around the room. Take a look at these posters. As I
 17 said, if it needs to take more than 45 minutes or less
 18 than 30 minutes, you all let us know and we will go from
 19 there.
 20 Thank you.
 21 (Off the record.)
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Okay, folks. At this
 23 point in time, we will start taking your comments on the
 24 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. And as I mentioned
 25 earlier, Mary will record everything, provide us a

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1 transcript so that we can address your comments in the
 2 Environmental Impact Statement. Let's see.
 3 Mr. David Kroto, would you like to comment?
 4 **MR. DAVID KROTO:** Hi. I'm David Kroto
 5 with Tyonek Native Corporation. TNC is in support of any
 6 project that is environmentally responsible and does
 7 everything -- does everything correctly and also respects
 8 our community's traditional values, subsistence needs and
 9 such and such. Now, TNC has expressed a concern with
 10 bringing a diesel pipeline through -- around the Native
 11 communities because, of course, diesel is a large impact
 12 on -- have a large impact on natural resources if it were
 13 to occur, unlike natural gas. Besides, the town area
 14 itself is a natural gas field.
 15 Other than that, like I said, we are in support of a
 16 project that is done correctly, respects the community.
 17 Thank you.
 18 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Thank you, sir. Norma,
 19 would you educate me regarding how to correctly pronounce
 20 your last name?
 21 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** Chickalusion.
 22 **MR. KEITH GORDON:** Would you like to
 23 comment?
 24 **MS. NORMA CHICKALUSION:** No. You answered
 25 my question earlier.

