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DONLIN GOLD PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING

CHUATHBALUK, ALASKA

Taken April 11, 2016
Commencing at 1:40 p.m.

Volume I - Pages 1 - 80, inclusive

Taken at
Crow Village Sam School
Chuathbaluk, Alaska

Reported by:
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

1 For U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

2 Keith Gordon
3 Project Manager

4 For U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

5 Alan Bittner
6 Anchorage Field Office Manager

7 For Alaska Department of Natural Resources:

8 Jeff Bruno
9 State of Alaska Project Coordinator

10 For AECOM:

11 Taylor Brelsford
12 Social Science Lead

13 Nancy Darigo
14 Physical Science Lead

15 Jessica Evans
16 Public Involvement Lead

17 David Every
18 Biological Science Lead

19 Donne Fleagle
20 Senior Rural Outreach Lead

21 Taken by:

22 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

23

24 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
25 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
Public within and for the State of Alaska.

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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 Army
4 Corps of Engineers Alaska District Regulatory Division.
5 We're here today to give you all some background
6 information on the status of the Donlin Gold Mine
7 Environmental Impact Statement and how you can comment on
8 that Draft Environmental Impact Statement, as well as how
9 you can comment on the project itself. The Draft
10 Environmental Impact Statement is open for your comment
11 through April 30th, so the end of this month. We will go
12 through a presentation that gives you a little bit of
13 information on that, but as far as why is the Army Corps
14 of Engineers in your community talking about a project
15 Donlin is proposing to construct?

16 The Army Corps of Engineers has a role as the federal
17 lead agency in development of the Environmental Impact
18 Statement for the proposed Donlin Gold Mine project. We
19 also have a role regarding determining whether or not we
20 would issue permits for Donlin's proposed project after
21 the Environmental Impact Statement is done, and we review
22 it and determine what the potential impacts of the project
23 might be.

24 As you can see on the screen, we have 11 cooperating
25 agencies assisting us in the development of the Draft

1 Environmental Impact Statement. They are both federal and
2 State entities. Five of the six of them are listed on the
3 screen, as well as half a dozen communities, of course,
4 including your own, who are cooperating agencies for the
5 development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

6 And with me today are a variety of folks that we will
7 introduce just before we go to the poster session that
8 gives you some additional information on the proposed
9 project.

10 But as far as our agenda today, I'll go through as
11 brief as possible a presentation on the status of the
12 draft EIS and give you some information on how you can
13 comment on it. We will then go to a poster session. You
14 see three, four posters over here that talk about what
15 Donlin is proposing today that describes their proposed
16 project, something I'll give you a little information on
17 in a few minutes. And behind me you see eight other
18 posters that talk about potential impacts of the project.

19 By way of developing the Draft Environmental Impact
20 Statement, the Army Corps of Engineers came out to the
21 Yukon-Kuskokwim River region between December of 2012 and
22 March of 2013 to conduct scoping meetings to listen to
23 folks from the communities and define the potential
24 impacts that you all felt were important that needed to be
25 addressed in the EIS, and eight of those issues are listed

1 on the wall behind me on the posters. And we will take a
2 look at these during the poster session.

3 After the poster session, we will reconvene and take
4 your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
5 regarding whether or not the Environmental Impact
6 Statement adequately discloses potential impacts of this
7 project, whether there is more work that we need to do, or
8 whether there are things in the document that are not
9 correct that need to be fixed.

10 Also today the Bureau of Land Management will conduct
11 an ANILCA 810 hearing to take your testimony regarding
12 potential subsistence impacts of the proposed Donlin
13 project on your community and the Kuskokwim River region
14 overall. With me today is Mr. Alan Bittner of the Bureau
15 of Land Management, and he will give you a little
16 introduction to what that hearing will encompass.

17 MR. ALAN BITTNER: My name is Alan
18 Bittner, I'm the Anchorage field manager for the Bureau of
19 Land Management. And because of our involvement in this
20 project as a cooperator and also because of the Alaska
21 National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 810, we
22 are required to do an analysis of potential subsistence
23 impacts based on the proposed project. So we did that
24 preliminary analysis. I just have a few copies with me
25 here today. It's also found as an appendix in the EIS.

1 But because of the potential impacts of the project
2 to subsistence activities, we will conduct a short hearing
3 at the end of the proceedings today to receive testimony
4 directly related to subsistence.

5 Thanks.

6 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you very much,
7 Alan.

8 The best way to start this is to give a little bit of
9 introduction to what Donlin is proposing. I believe you
10 all are fairly familiar with their proposed project, but
11 I'll run through it real quickly just in case anybody
12 isn't. Donlin's project overall consists of three primary
13 components: The mine site, the transportation
14 infrastructure that would move cargo and fuel to the
15 project site, as well as the pipeline which would supply
16 natural gas that would power the mine facilities and a
17 variety of the other facilities, and those facilities
18 would be constructed if the project were permitted as
19 Donlin proposes it.

20 So let's talk briefly about the first primary
21 component, the mine site. That component is also broken
22 down into three primary components.

23 You can see on the screen depicted by No. 1 is the
24 mine pit that Donlin proposes to construct. It actually
25 starts out as two pits, the ACMA and the Lewis pits.

1 Those two pits over time would become a single pit and,
2 depending on whether you are measuring the depth of that
3 pit from the low side or the high side, it measures
4 anywhere from 1,100 feet deep to 1,850 feet deep, and it
5 would encompass an area of approximately 2.2 square miles
6 in size.

7 The next primary component of the mine site is the
8 tailings storage facility. When mines process ore, the
9 rock that contains the gold, they have to crush it and
10 typically remove the gold via both a mechanical and
11 chemical process. Tailings are what's left over after the
12 gold is removed from the ore. So basically it's a crushed
13 rock slurry that is pumped from the mill facility into
14 this valley that you see depicted by No. 2.

15 That tailings storage facility, that crushed rock
16 slurry, would fill approximately a 3.5 square mile
17 footprint and be contained by a downslope dam that would
18 hold the tailings and the water entrained in them and some
19 residual chemicals basically in perpetuity.

20 The third primary component of the mine site is the
21 waste rock facility. The waste rock facility is also
22 about 3.5 square miles in size. Waste rock is the
23 overburden that has to be removed to get to the ore, or it
24 may be ore that just doesn't have enough gold in it to be
25 worth processing. So it's not the rock that would be run

1 through the mill. That rock is piled in a 3.5 square mile
2 footprint and stacked up and, again, would remain there in
3 perpetuity.

4 So in relation to this slide, in a few minutes we
5 will talk about reclamation that might take place if the
6 mine is permitted and then later closed. While you are
7 looking at this slide, keep in mind that reclamation of
8 the pit, No. 1, that pit over about 50 to 55 years would
9 fill with water.

10 No. 2, the tailings storage facility, if constructed
11 as Donlin is proposing, earthen material would be placed
12 over the top of those tailings and some degree of
13 revegetation would take place.

14 Regarding No. 3, the waste rock facility, there would
15 be some recontouring of that, as well as the tailings
16 storage facility and, again, some growth medium or earthen
17 material placed over the top to facilitate natural
18 revegetation.

19 I mentioned that the project overall had three
20 primary components. We just looked at the first
21 component. The second primary component of the project is
22 the transportation facilities. Basically Donlin needs to
23 move millions of tons of fuel and cargo to the project
24 every year to operate the project. They propose to move
25 the vast majority of cargo and fuel, diesel, up the

1 Kuskokwim River via barges we will talk about in a few
2 minutes. That requires the expansion -- actually, the
3 construction of a new port facility at Jungjuk on the
4 Kuskokwim River.

5 That port facility is connected to the mine site by a
6 30-mile long road that Donlin is proposing to construct,
7 and along this road are a variety of material sites where
8 Donlin would need to open up gravel pits to get gravel to
9 either construct and/or maintain the road. They also are
10 proposing to construct a 5,000-foot airstrip that would
11 facilitate moving workers, as well as camp facilities that
12 would be needed just for folks to have a place to live.
13 And then, of course, you see the mine facilities
14 themselves, the big pinkish blob on the screen.

15 When I talk about the diesel that would need to be
16 barged in to the project, Donlin is proposing to barge in
17 approximately 40 million gallons of diesel every year and,
18 therefore, would consume about 40 million gallons of
19 diesel every year over the life of the project.

20 The third primary component of the proposed project
21 is the natural gas pipeline. Donlin, as I mentioned, is
22 proposing to power the mill facility, the camp, and a
23 variety of other facilities either off of natural gas or
24 off of electricity generated via the consumption of
25 natural gas. A 315-mile long pipeline would start at the

1 western side of Cook Inlet, run through the Alaska Range
2 over to the mine site. It's proposed to be a 14-inch
3 diameter buried steel pipeline.

4 The project, if constructed as proposed, is expected
5 to take three to four years to construct, is expected to
6 operate for approximately 27 and a half years. It's 24/7,
7 365. It's expected to close -- closure basically happens
8 at the end of mining, when mining ceases, primarily.

9 And you see that we are talking about reclamation and
10 closure taking three to five years. Well, we have to keep
11 in mind that what Donlin is proposing is that, for
12 instance, in regard to construction, there are some
13 facilities that are only needed during construction, so
14 such a facility might be constructed, put in use, used for
15 one, two, three or four years and then because its only
16 function is a construction function, that facility is then
17 closed and potentially reclaimed before construction has
18 ceased or at the end of construction.

19 There is a variety of facilities that Donlin may need
20 only for a portion of the mining operation, so some
21 facilities that might be constructed during the mining
22 life may actually be reclaimed before the mine closes.

23 The vast majority of reclamation and closure,
24 however, takes place at the end of mining. So
25 approximately 31 years after construction starts, the vast

1 majority of reclamation would take place. And keep in
2 mind that I use the pit, the tailings storage facility and
3 the waste rock facility as examples of things that, while
4 they will be reclaimed, they will be reclaimed to the
5 degree that they can be based on the type of impact that
6 happens when you construct that sort of facility.

7 There are other facilities that -- for instance, some
8 of the dams that would go in to be used for water storage,
9 the project needs a quantity of water every day that it
10 operates over its entire life. In some cases those dams
11 would be removed. And since the vast majority of all the
12 vegetation, topsoil, et cetera, would be left in place,
13 those dams will be drained and the area will take
14 reasonably minimal level of mitigation for it to start the
15 revegetation process and reclaim itself virtually on its
16 own. The dam itself, of course, would have to be removed
17 and that material placed back where it can be used
18 somewhere else. Other facilities will be recontoured,
19 planted, et cetera.

20 So when we talk about reclamation, we are talking
21 about a whole variety of things. For instance, one of the
22 things to keep in mind is that there is proposed no road
23 that runs the entire length of that 315-mile pipeline, but
24 there are short lengths of construction roads, little
25 shoofly roads that need to be put in place for Donlin to

1 either access gravel pits for gravel, access water, or
2 simply because the topography is such that they can't
3 construct the pipeline following the proposed route
4 without making some detours around some things to be able
5 to do the construction.

6 Reclamation of those, well, they are proposing to
7 leave basically the road prism, the fill that they place
8 to construct the road in place and place material on top
9 of that road to revegetate it. So some things are
10 reclaimed almost entirely. Some things there are -- there
11 is reclamation that proposes to take habitat that is now
12 of minimal or moderate value and try to move it to a
13 higher level, more valuable type of habitat, and then
14 there is other things that will be reclaimed either to the
15 degree that they can be or won't really be reclaimed. For
16 instance, the mine itself, it just becomes a big lake.

17 As was mentioned earlier, there is a very wide
18 variety of State, federal permits, authorizations,
19 licenses, leases, et cetera, required for this project not
20 only to get to construction, but to operate and then go
21 through reclamation. For instance, when we were talking
22 about reclamation, one of the things that has to be done
23 with the project, anytime water effectively leaves the
24 site, anytime Donlin discharges it, it needs to be treated
25 to comply with federal and State water quality standards.

1 So any releases that come off the project are expected to
2 meet water quality standards. But because the pit would
3 fill with water, well, they are proposing effectively to
4 treat water in perpetuity.

5 So one of the things that would go on after the
6 project ceases is water treatment effectively in
7 perpetuity. And that's one of the things that both the
8 EPA and the State of Alaska would have roles in,
9 monitoring that water quality and making sure it meets
10 both federal and State requirements.

11 There is a whole variety of State permits required
12 for the project if it's permitted. And with us today is
13 Mr. Jeff Bruno, the State of Alaska Department of Natural
14 Resources. Jeff, would you like to talk about the State's
15 role briefly?

16 MR. JEFF BRUNO: My name is Jeff Bruno. I
17 work with the State of Alaska Department of Natural
18 Resources. As Keith mentioned, there is a large amount of
19 permits on this project, which the State has a
20 responsibility for reviewing and analyzing those, whether
21 or not they will be issued for this project. So it can be
22 pretty confusing on how the federal and State permits all
23 go together. And my job is to hopefully answer any
24 questions you have about State permitting here and how
25 that works into this process and then work with Keith and

1 the other federal agencies to find some kind of flow to
2 that permit and make sure that the State and the Feds are
3 permitting on the same schedule.

4 So really, if you have any questions about the State
5 permitting process, I'm here to help answer those. And if
6 I can't answer those questions, I can find the answer for
7 you. Because I'm representing a lot of different agencies
8 here, some of them I know enough to answer and some of
9 them I have to track down your answer -- or your question.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you, Jeff.

12 All right. Very briefly, where are we at in the
13 process? I mentioned that we were out here between late
14 2012, early 2013 to take scoping comments regarding what
15 we should address in the EIS. The EIS was released
16 November 27th of last year, and the comment period is open
17 through April 30th, the end of this month. So you can see
18 the "we are here" red bubble on the screen.

19 After we get your comments on the Draft Environmental
20 Impact Statement, we will take your comments and determine
21 if we have gotten it right, if there is additional work we
22 need to do, or if there are things that we got wrong that
23 we need to fix. We will also look at whether there are
24 things we considered that we need to consider in greater
25 detail or things that we considered and dismissed that we

1 need to bring back into play based on your comments.

2 Regarding how we will respond to your comments, we
3 will respond to your comments in the Final Environmental
4 Impact Statement. So any comments you have here today, we
5 may be able to answer some questions, but primarily we
6 will be responding to your comments when the Final
7 Environmental Impact Statement comes out, after which time
8 the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management and
9 the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration,
10 the three federal agencies who will use the EIS to
11 determine if they can permit the project, will generate
12 Records of Decision that define for everybody what our
13 decision was in relation to the proposed project.

14 Very briefly, there is half a dozen chapters in the
15 document that I'll give you a little bit of background on
16 so you know what's in those chapters and if you would like
17 to comment.

18 The first chapter primarily talks about the purpose
19 and need for the project. It talks about a variety of
20 roles that the various players in the project have, but
21 based on the Army Corps of Engineers' role as the federal
22 lead and in relation to the permitting we do, it's
23 incumbent on us to define the basic and overall purpose
24 for the proposed project. That purpose is what we use to
25 define what we analyze and how we analyze it in the EIS.

1 You can see the overall purpose on the screen.

2 One of the things I have to note from a technical
3 standpoint, if you look at the overall purpose as it
4 exists in the document that we put out, there was an
5 editorial miss in that process. There is a half a
6 sentence added after "Western Alaska" in the document
7 itself that we sent out that actually wasn't supposed to
8 be there. That half a sentence says that part of our
9 purpose is to maximize the economic benefit for Donlin
10 stockholders and for Calista and TKC shareholders.

11 While we were very aware of the potential benefits
12 from a socioeconomic standpoint related to this proposed
13 project, because the Army Corps of Engineers' role as a
14 federal lead agency and in relation to our authorities is
15 to conduct middle-of-the-road unbiased analyses of
16 proposed projects, we cannot excessively weight the
17 economic benefits or economic detriment of a project too
18 much to one side or the other; otherwise, we are not going
19 down the middle of the road doing unbiased analyses.

20 Chapter 2 of the document is primarily the discussion
21 of alternatives. We look at alternatives to what someone
22 is proposing to do by way of potentially minimizing
23 impacts of proposed projects. In other words, is there a
24 way to do it faster, better, cleaner, safer in a more
25 environmentally sustainable way, et cetera. In other

1 words, just a way to minimize negative impacts to the
2 project.

3 There were over 300 options that were looked at by
4 way of potentially generating alternatives for Donlin's
5 proposed project. The seven that remain for detailed
6 analyses in the draft EIS are what you see on the screen.
7 I'll go through these very briefly in a minute. It's
8 important to note, however, that I won't talk really
9 further about Alternative No. 2 because Alternative No. 2
10 is what Donlin is proposing, and that's what we just
11 talked about on those screens that talked about the mine
12 site, the transportation infrastructure and the proposed
13 pipeline.

14 Alternative 1, the no action alternative.
15 Alternative 1 is something that we look at for two
16 reasons. One, the National Environmental Policy Act that
17 is the law that underlies what we do tells us what we need
18 to do. It tells us we need to do that because Alternative
19 1, the no action, just means that there would be no
20 project. Donlin's project would not happen. There would
21 be no change out here regarding any of the impacts Donlin
22 is proposing to make.

23 The reason we use this alternative to compare to the
24 other alternatives when we do analyses is because we are
25 trying to compare those other alternatives, what Donlin is

1 proposing and the other alternatives we drafted, to what
2 actually exists out in this area now. So the culture that
3 currently exists, the socioeconomic environment that
4 exists, the physical environment from the standpoint of
5 water quality, air quality, subsistence lifestyle,
6 et cetera. We are trying to compare Donlin's proposed
7 project and all the alternatives to that so we make sure
8 that we are adequately analyzing the potential effects of
9 the project.

10 So what we need from you all regarding comments on
11 the draft EIS is: Have we adequately defined the baseline
12 condition as it exists out here? Have we adequately
13 defined how your culture functions? Have we defined the
14 role of subsistence correctly? Do we understand the
15 economics of the environment you live in? Do we
16 understand the water quality, air quality, et cetera? We
17 need to get that right before we can do functional
18 analyses and potentially get the rest of it right. So we
19 need to know if we are right, wrong, or somewhere in the
20 middle.

21 So as far as the alternatives we looked at, the next
22 three alternatives we'll talk about talk about ways we
23 might minimize impacts in relation to the potential
24 effects of barging. Barging is one of the things we got
25 some of the most comments on during the scoping process.

1 Why is an LNG-powered haul truck alternative, which
2 is referred to as Alternative 3A, a potentially beneficial
3 alternative for this project? Well, when we talk about
4 these alternatives, keep in mind that they are designed to
5 offset some potential impacts of Donlin's project. So
6 they have some potential positive benefits, and they may
7 have some potential negative impacts.

8 So in relation to Alternative 3A, 3A means that the
9 LNG-powered haul trucks or the haul trucks that Donlin is
10 proposing to use in the mine site are proposed to be
11 powered by diesel fuel. That diesel fuel would have to be
12 barged in so those trucks can operate. If those trucks
13 were converted to operate off of LNG, liquid natural gas,
14 well, they burn cleaner because LNG burns cleaner than
15 diesel. If you are powering them with liquid natural gas,
16 you are -- you don't need to barge in the diesel that you
17 would have had to barge in so they can operate. So there
18 is less barging on the river. There is less potential for
19 spill, et cetera.

20 But by the way, that also means that you have to
21 construct a liquid natural gas plant at the mine site that
22 Donlin is not proposing to construct. So anytime you look
23 at these alternatives, there is plusses and minuses. And
24 the reason we look at them is not only to minimize the
25 potentially negative impacts, but keep in mind that it

1 also changes how we weigh and balance impacts of one
2 alternative to another as we go through the process.

3 Alternative 3B, the diesel pipeline alternative,
4 Alternative 3B means that instead of supplying natural gas
5 to the project to power the mill facilities and a variety
6 of other facilities, we would actually run diesel through
7 that line. It wouldn't be a natural gas line. It would
8 be a diesel pipeline.

9 This alternative eliminates almost all diesel barging
10 on the Kuskokwim River except for a very limited
11 percentage of it during construction; but if we are
12 eliminating diesel barging on the Kuskokwim River and
13 constructing a diesel pipeline to power the facility
14 instead of natural gas, well, where does the diesel go?
15 Instead of coming up the Kuskokwim River, it would go
16 through Cook Inlet to an expanded barge facility at
17 Tyonek, which means the pipeline would go from 315 miles
18 long as a natural gas pipeline to a 334-mile long diesel
19 pipeline.

20 And one of the other things you can see if we went
21 with that alternative, we change the potential for the
22 impacts of spill on the project. For instance, Donlin's
23 proposed natural gas pipeline, if it leaked, cracked,
24 ruptured, what happens when you have a leak of natural
25 gas? Well, the vast majority of it goes into the air and

1 dissipates. If a diesel pipeline were in, well, you are
2 going to end up, if you have a leak, a crack, a rupture in
3 that pipeline, with a terrestrial and/or waterborne spill
4 of diesel. So again, any one of these alternatives that
5 has potential negative impacts one way, it has
6 potential -- I'm sorry -- has potential positive impacts
7 one way, it has the potential to have negative impacts
8 other ways. So what we need to know from you all is:
9 Were the alternatives we looked at appropriate? Did we
10 analyze the potential effects of them correctly? You will
11 find in an appendix to the document there is 300 options
12 that we looked at but didn't carry forward for detailed
13 analysis as alternatives. Should we bring any of those
14 back? How should we combine them in different ways? Are
15 there potential alternatives that we didn't address?

16 The last alternative that we will talk about that has
17 the potential to minimize barging impacts is Alternative
18 4. This is the Birch Tree Crossing alternative. You
19 remember that we talked about that proposed new port site
20 at Jungjuk that Donlin is proposing to construct just
21 downstream of Crooked Creek? Well, that port site
22 requires a 30-mile long road so that the trucks can haul
23 diesel and cargo from the port site to the mine site.

24 The Birch Tree Crossing alternative depicted by that
25 purple line on the screen is a 76-mile long road that

1 would run from Birch Tree Crossing to the mine site. So
2 instead of trucks hauling cargo and diesel for 30 miles
3 along a road, they would be hauling it for 76 miles along
4 this route. Well, what that means is there is more diesel
5 fuel being burned. There is more potential impacts of
6 truck traffic, given that it's nearly two and a half times
7 the distance.

8 But what's the advantage of this alternative? Well,
9 if this alternative goes forward, while the volume of
10 barge traffic doesn't change, the same amount of diesel or
11 the same amount of cargo effectively has to be barged
12 upriver; maybe a slight increase in diesel because there
13 is slightly more truck traffic. What it means is that
14 there is virtually no impacts from barging upstream of
15 Birch Tree Crossing after construction. And even during
16 construction, the impacts would be reduced.

17 So one of the things that people were primarily
18 concerned about in relation to barging during scoping was
19 the potential for stranding of barges on the Kuskokwim
20 River. Well, if this alternative went forward -- five of
21 the six spots that we know are shallow and narrow spots on
22 the upper Kuskokwim River where barges can typically
23 strand occur upstream of Birch Tree Crossing. So if this
24 alternative went forward, there is the possibility that we
25 eliminate five of those six narrow and shallow spots,

1 potentially reducing the possibility of barge stranding,
2 potentially reducing the possibility of a spill that could
3 result from it, et cetera.

4 Okay. Those were alternatives that, as I mentioned,
5 dealt with minimizing the potential negative impacts of
6 barge traffic. This alternative is an alternative that we
7 look at by way of modification of tailings disposal. You
8 remember that we had that 3.5 square mile partial valley
9 fill of tailings that Donlin is proposing? Well, as they
10 were proposing it, it's largely a flat area that is filled
11 in behind the dam of that tailings slurry. Well, what
12 this alternative proposes is to dry those tailings out
13 quite a bit after they come out of the mill so the water
14 is extracted from those tailings and stack those tailings
15 up higher.

16 And of course, as we mentioned, there is tradeoffs
17 anytime we change what's proposed. You can see in this
18 slide that the footprint of the tailings facility, the
19 area that tailings actually occupy, is much smaller than
20 what Donlin is proposing. But oh, by the way, they are
21 also stacked up a good bit higher and they are drier,
22 which means the potential for windborne erosion of those
23 tailings and dust deposition in the area overall goes up
24 over what Donlin is proposing.

25 You can also see that under this alternative, instead

1 of a single downslope dam that retains the tailings and
2 the water behind it, we have two smaller dams that retain
3 the tailings and we have a single hydraulic dam downslope
4 to contain the water that is removed from those tailings.
5 All that water which would actually only exist in that
6 operating pond during the operation of the mine would
7 ultimately have to be pumped over to the pit and/or
8 treated and released from the operating pond.

9 So at the end of operations, what you are left with
10 is those two dams that retain the dry stack tailings and
11 the operating pond, and presumably the dam that is
12 retaining it goes away.

13 Okay. We are almost there on alternatives. The last
14 one, Alternative 6A, this is a -- one of the alternatives
15 that was looked at by way of potential reroutes for the
16 pipeline. There were a variety of alternatives looked at
17 that might change or modify Donlin's proposed pipeline
18 route and have some potential benefits. This pipeline
19 route would actually be about two miles shorter than what
20 Donlin is proposing, but it has the potential to have more
21 impacts on the Iditarod National Historic Trail than
22 Donlin's proposed route.

23 So as you can see on the screen, Donlin's proposed
24 route is depicted in gold. The Dalzell Gorge route is
25 depicted in purple and runs through Rainy Pass, Dalzell

1 Gorge, and for a portion of it along the south fork of the
2 Kuskokwim River.

3 So in relation to the document that's out there, did
4 we adequately look at potential pipeline routes? Are
5 there others we need to consider? Do we need to consider
6 other potential impacts of the pipeline that we haven't
7 addressed?

8 Okay. Chapter 3 of the document -- we are getting
9 there -- Chapter 3 of the document, this is basically the
10 heart of the document. Chapter 3 of the document talks
11 about the baseline environmental condition, human and
12 natural environment, what's actually out here now, and
13 then talks about the potential impacts of the project.
14 And so by way of giving you an example, what we have done
15 is used barge traffic and the potential impacts it has by
16 way of defining how we did the analyses.

17 There are 26 major resource issues that have been
18 defined and included in the document. Fourteen of them
19 are potentially impacted by barging. And you can see
20 those 14 on the screen. So whether we are talking about
21 subsistence, wildlife, surface water hydrology or spill,
22 those are just four of those 14 major resource issues. So
23 please take a look at any portion of the document that you
24 are interested in and let us know if we have adequately
25 analyzed the potential impacts of the project.

1 We are going to use barge traffic as an example of
2 how to define the potential impacts of the project. So
3 what we need to first see if we are correct about is an
4 understanding of barging as it currently occurs on the
5 Kuskokwim River. Currently on the Kuskokwim River,
6 effectively what you have is light scale commercial
7 barging going on. To our knowledge, there are 68
8 barges -- and I'm referring here to riverine barging, not
9 marine barging. When we refer to riverine barging,
10 basically we're talking about the barging that takes place
11 from Bethel upstream.

12 To our knowledge, in our ice-free season in any
13 average year, there are 68 barges that leave Bethel to go
14 upstream some distance each ice-free season, each summer.
15 And typically the barge configuration is a small tug and
16 one or two barges going some distance upstream. Well, if
17 Donlin's project goes forward as proposed, what we are
18 looking at is moving from light scale commercial barging
19 to some level of industrial barging. That means larger
20 tugs and, in relation to cargo, it means a larger tug
21 pushing typically four cargo barges. When we are talking
22 fuel, it typically means a larger tug pushing one or two
23 fuel barges upstream.

24 And basically the best way I can describe it is if
25 you had been standing on the banks of the Kuskokwim River

1 somewhere upstream of Bethel last summer in a 24-hour
2 period you typically would have seen one of these smaller
3 tugs pushing one or two barges pass you once in that
4 24-hour period. If Donlin's project goes forward as
5 proposed, what you would see in that same 24-hour period
6 from that same spot on the river is a combination of three
7 tugs and barges going past you. And typically that might
8 be one of the existing smaller tugs and barges and a
9 couple of Donlin's larger tug/barge combinations or three
10 of Donlin's tug/barge combinations. And they could be
11 going any direction. But typically in a 24-hour period,
12 you would see three tugs and barges pass you versus one.

13 I think the -- given that I'm taking a long time to
14 talk through this today, I'll try to shorten this. What
15 you can see on the screen, that burnt gold color, is
16 barging as it currently exists on the Kuskokwim River. So
17 regardless of what alternative we are talking about,
18 barging -- current barging is current barging, obviously.

19 The change in barging is depicted by the light blue
20 color on the screen. And on the left side of the screen
21 you see the construction phase of the project. And we
22 have combined various alternatives here in relation to the
23 amount of barging that takes place under them. What you
24 can see on the left side of the screen is that, if
25 Donlin's project goes forward, regardless of which

1 alternative we look at, the volume of barging during
2 construction is the same for virtually any alternative.

3 But please keep in mind when you look at a document
4 like this Environmental Impact Statement, the figures,
5 tables, graphs don't always tell the whole story. You
6 remember I mentioned that Donlin's Alternative 2 means
7 that barging goes all the way upstream to just downstream
8 of Crooked Creek at that new port site at Jungjuk?

9 Well, one of the alternatives was Alternative 4, the
10 Birch Tree Crossing port site, where we basically are
11 barging material 75 miles less upstream than what Donlin
12 is proposing. So while we have Alternative 2 and
13 Alternative 4 combined under this bar graph, this bar
14 graph -- all of these represent the volume of barging. So
15 you are not necessarily going to get all the potential
16 impacts of what Donlin is proposing or what one of these
17 alternatives proposes just by looking at figures, tables,
18 graphs. It helps to go back to some of the language in
19 the document regarding the description of the potential
20 impacts.

21 So as you will see in the next couple of slides and
22 as you have seen in previous slides, when we talk about
23 some of these alternatives, particularly what we are
24 depicting in relation to barging, some of these
25 alternatives have ways to minimize barging impacts. This

1 side of the screen, the right side of the screen, talks
2 about potential barging impacts during operations. We
3 have alternatives combined in the same way. So again, we
4 have Alternative 2 and 4 combined together that they both
5 have the same volume of barge traffic impacts; but again,
6 under Alternative 4 you have got that 75-mile long stretch
7 of river that only gets barge impacts during construction.

8 And Alternative 3A, the LNG-powered haul truck
9 alternative, because we are barging less diesel upriver,
10 there is less barging, so there is less impacts.
11 Alternative 3B, because virtually all the diesel, save for
12 some during construction, goes through the pipeline
13 instead of being barged, well, what you are looking at
14 under Alternative 3B, this is effectively cargo barging.
15 That's basically all that's really represented there,
16 except for a small amount of diesel barging during
17 construction.

18 So the next two slides are put in here to give you
19 have a little idea of the draft conclusions that have been
20 reached in the document so far. Please note that AECOM,
21 the international engineering and environmental analysis
22 firm that's with us today, put together the vast majority
23 of the document for the federal and State agencies to
24 review, for yourselves to review as cooperators. So
25 therefore, what we have in the document is draft analyses

1 and draft conclusions. We need to know from you all
2 whether or not the draft analyses and the draft
3 conclusions are right, wrong, or somewhere in between.

4 What was determined by way of the potential impacts
5 of barge traffic on fish, the draft analyses and draft
6 conclusions to date indicate that Alternative 2, Donlin's
7 proposal, is expected to have a moderate impact on fish,
8 except for potentially greater impacts in shallow and
9 narrower segments of the river.

10 And as you have seen in the other slides,
11 Alternatives 3A, 3B and 4, because each of those reduces
12 the amount of barging required, each one has the potential
13 to reduce impacts to fish.

14 This is another slide that talks about the same
15 things, but here we are talking about some of the other
16 impacts these alternatives could have. For instance,
17 Alternative 3A, LNG haul trucks, we are not 100 percent --
18 we are not positive that Caterpillar will have LNG-powered
19 haul trucks available if Donlin's mine is permitted a few
20 years from now and allowed to go forward. So there is the
21 potential that that alternative might not be feasible a
22 few years from now when we are at a point where the
23 agencies would make a decision regarding whether or not
24 Donlin's project would be permitted as they propose to
25 construct it.

1 Alternative 3B, as I mentioned, could have increased
2 air emissions. And Alternative 4, not only do we have
3 more truck traffic, more noise, more diesel emissions in
4 relation to truck traffic, you have got more road that's
5 constructed out there. So again, anytime we do an
6 alternative, we change how we weigh and balance the
7 impacts and the type and extent of impacts.

8 Okay. We are about to wrap up this discussion of the
9 document very shortly.

10 Cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. Cumulative impacts
11 are all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future
12 impacts. What we need to know from you all is when we
13 looked at everything that currently exists and has
14 happened out here in the past, did we get that right? Are
15 there things that need to be included that we didn't
16 include? When we talk about present activities, have we
17 gotten it right regarding what's currently going on out
18 here? And when it comes to potential future activities
19 that are reasonably probable to occur, did we get that
20 right?

21 The reason we need to know if we got all past,
22 present and reasonably foreseeable things correctly
23 defined is because we use cumulative impacts to forecast
24 the potential effects of a project. And that's -- that's
25 why cumulative impacts are so important. So if you have

1 any comments on Chapter 4, we would certainly like to see
2 them.

3 Regarding mitigation, as I mentioned earlier,
4 mitigation is a way to minimize the potential impacts of a
5 project. And so Chapter 5 talks about a wide variety of
6 mitigation, everything from regulations that may be
7 enforced to projects Donlin may propose to do on their own
8 to limit potential negative impacts of the project.

9 Okay. I mentioned the poster session. In a few
10 minutes we will again introduce everybody that came with
11 us today. Everybody was introduced primarily, but before
12 you all got here, to the kids in the school, but we will
13 go through that again so you know who to talk to during
14 the poster session.

15 The intent of the poster session, we have these four
16 posters on the wall that define what Donlin is proposing
17 to do. And if you want to look at those and ask any
18 questions, we can give you a little bit of information
19 regarding what they are proposing. And we have the
20 posters back here that talk about some of the potential
21 major impacts of the project that people were interested
22 in during scoping.

23 We have a variety of folks from AECOM who have
24 drafted the EIS as it currently exists here to talk about
25 their analyses and draft conclusions, and we have a couple

1 representatives -- one from Donlin and one from
2 NOVAGOLD -- that may be able to answer questions regarding
3 what Donlin is proposing to do by way of the project. So
4 in just a couple of minutes we will introduce those folks
5 and take a break and let you go to the poster session.

6 The primary point we are trying to make today is to
7 give you information on how you can make substantive
8 comments on the EIS. And what do I mean by a substantive
9 comment? Well, if you support the project, if you oppose
10 the project, or if you are somewhere in between, it helps
11 us to understand why you have the position you have on the
12 project or some component of it. For instance, if -- how
13 do I respond to comments when I'm responding to a comment
14 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement? We are
15 receiving comments on the draft and we take those comments
16 and we do any additional work we need to do and then we
17 respond to comments in the Final Environmental Impact
18 Statement.

19 How do I respond if 100 people say I support the
20 project? Well, the response would be "comment noted."
21 How do I respond if 100 people say I oppose the project?
22 Well, the response would be "comment noted." The reason
23 is what we need, what is most beneficial to us by way of
24 comments, is to know whether or not our analysis is right,
25 wrong or somewhere in between, whether there is additional

1 work we need to do, whether there are alternatives we
2 haven't looked at we need to look at or alternatives that
3 we set aside that we need to look at further.

4 So we very much want to know whether you support the
5 project or whether you oppose the project, but we also
6 really benefit from people telling us why they support or
7 oppose the project or somewhere in between. So any
8 information you can give us regarding the why, that's the
9 thing that will tell us whether or not we have done the
10 job right in the EIS or whether there is more work that we
11 have to do.

12 How can you comment on the draft EIS? Obviously you
13 can comment at this meeting. And this is the last meeting
14 that we currently have scheduled to take comments on the
15 draft EIS. You can email comments, mail comments or fax
16 comments. And while I'll go to another screen, we have
17 this information available for you today on the comment
18 sheets, or you can just ask and we can provide it.

19 This screen just depicts the meetings we have done to
20 date. We have a website out there at donlingoldeis.com
21 where you can look at the entire document under the EIS
22 documents tab. You can look at newsletters, other
23 project-related information, other summaries we have done.
24 You can also see my contact information on the screen.
25 And if you have matters that are specifically of a tribal

1 nature and you would like to talk to Ms. Amanda
2 Andraschko, the Alaska District Army Corps of Engineers
3 tribal liaison, her information is here on the screen.

4 Does anybody have any comments before we move to the
5 next part of this? And I'm not -- I'm not opening it up
6 for comments on the EIS point, but what we are about to go
7 to is an introduction to the BLM hearing by the Bureau of
8 Land Management.

9 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: I think you know,
10 like Aniak sometimes draw water only about three feet.
11 But if the barge gets over three feet and it gets stuck
12 and they start trying to go and stir up all that silt and
13 another one behind him, and then they get struck. I'm
14 concerned with how much draw on their water they are going
15 to have.

16 MR. KEITH GORDON: That's one of the
17 things we are looking at in the Environmental Impact
18 Statement. We are aware that -- I grew up on the
19 Mississippi River. I lived and worked on the Missouri
20 River. So I have been around barging for quite a while.
21 I understand that with the volume of barge traffic they
22 are proposing, that if you get a shallow spot where you
23 strand or you just have to stop to wait till the water
24 comes back up or you have to break your tow up and start
25 moving one barge at a time instead of four, you have a

1 traffic jam.

2 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Aniak, that's a
3 tough part. Sometimes you are going there, you got to go
4 like an S. That's always the shallowest point. Depends
5 how much rain or how much snow and how much depth you
6 have. Most of the time all the other barges, they get
7 stuck there and we get some captains that go, I got GPS.
8 You don't need GPS. We got the local people to tell you
9 -- learn how to read the river and which way to go. If
10 you try to tell them, they don't want to follow your
11 advice.

12 MR. KEITH GORDON: Right. And that's one
13 of the things that -- can you state your name?

14 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Eric Morgan, Sr.

15 MR. KEITH GORDON: I'm sorry, folks.
16 That's something I didn't mention earlier. Mary Vavrik of
17 Midnight Sun Court Reporters is documenting comments today
18 so that we can accurately address comments in the Final
19 Environmental Impact Statement. So we ask that you state
20 your name. And if you are formally representing any
21 specific entity, if you note that representation so that
22 we can make sure we adequately address it in our response
23 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

24 So what you are stating is exactly what we are
25 looking for. We are looking for any comment people have

1 to make.

2 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: There's a lot of
3 issues about -- some places you don't draw very much.

4 MR. KEITH GORDON: Right. And that's one
5 of those things that Donlin will have to define for us is
6 how they are going to manage that situation. They have
7 already stated that if they start barging up the river,
8 they will have the barge company that does the barging
9 constantly monitor the deepest part of the channel over
10 the whole route and provide that information to every
11 other tug operator out there. They have noted that they
12 may have to and expect to at times have to change how
13 barges are loaded, have to change the timing of barges,
14 may have to change the configuration of barges. So
15 instead of four cargo barges going upstream at a time, it
16 might be two.

17 One of the things Donlin is going to have to explain
18 to us is, you have this much barge window every year. You
19 have this much cargo and fuel you have to move.
20 Therefore, in a low water year, how are you going to get
21 that done. And that's the kind of thing that we need to
22 address as this analysis goes further.

23 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Like them captains,
24 if -- sometimes some local villages -- you know, I went to
25 training. I know about this, about the rivers and stuff.

1 You got to learn the river from the local people in the
2 village just to get advice to show them where to go. They
3 want to use their GPS to go. I tell them, you don't need
4 GPS. You need to know the lowest point of the water. But
5 every year the channel changes.

6 MR. KEITH GORDON: And one of the
7 discussions has been that when -- we are talking riverine
8 barges now. One of the discussions has been in relation
9 to marine barging, that there may have to be captains on
10 board those things when they come out of the bay and just
11 start up the Kuskokwim River to begin with. And then
12 there may have to be a captain around Bethel or something
13 like that because that river channel is going to change
14 every year to some degree. It's one of those things that
15 it's going to have to be adaptively managed just over the
16 life of barging.

17 And so yeah, this is the kind of thing we are --

18 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: If they get
19 stuck -- if one barge gets stuck, another one come behind
20 him gets stuck, then they try to back up and stir up, make
21 another sandbar here and there.

22 MR. KEITH GORDON: So I thank you. We
23 will get back into that in a couple of minutes after we
24 introduce the ANILCA hearing. At this point in time --

25 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Are we going

1 to get the notes? Can we get the notes after the meeting?

2 MR. KEITH GORDON: Yes. The transcripts
3 are going up on the website. Mary, what kind of time
4 frame typically are we looking at between the conclusion
5 of a meeting hearing and the transcripts going up on the
6 website. Is it two weeks?

7 COURT REPORTER: I get my transcript done
8 within ten business days. I don't know how long it takes
9 them to get it on the website when they're done.

10 MR. KEITH GORDON: Two to three weeks
11 between the time we are done here and it actually shows up
12 on the website.

13 So at this point in time, I'm going to turn this over
14 to Mr. Alan Bittner of the Bureau of Land Management, who
15 will introduce the ANILCA 810 hearing. After Alan does
16 that introduction, we will go to the comments session on
17 the draft EIS. After that we will have the ANILCA 810
18 hearing.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Are we going
20 to have a break for this?

21 MR. ALAN BITTNER: I'm going to
22 introduce -- that's coming up in just a few minutes. I'm
23 going to introduce the subsistence part of the analysis
24 that BLM had to do, and then we will go to that poster
25 session.

1 Again, my name is Alan Bittner with the Bureau of
2 Land Management. And please bear with me. I have just a
3 few pages to read here. I want to read them for
4 accuracy's sake. And about ten slides.

5 Like I said earlier, because of our involvement as a
6 cooperator on the project and a different law -- not the
7 National Environmental Policy Act which addresses the EIS
8 or the EIS is done because of that law -- under ANILCA, we
9 are responsible for doing an analysis of subsistence
10 impacts. And so we have done a preliminary analysis on
11 that, and it will be refined based on public testimony and
12 on comments received. So I want to introduce that
13 analysis, and then later we will have open testimony on
14 that.

15 So through our analysis of the subsistence impacts,
16 BLM determined that a significant restriction of
17 subsistence uses and needs may result in one of the
18 alternatives discussed in the Donlin Gold draft EIS.

19 BLM used three factors for the analysis, and those
20 are on the screen there: No. 1, a reduction in the
21 availability of subsistence resources caused by a decline
22 in population or abundance of harvestable resources, which
23 may include fish, wildlife, edible plants, house logs,
24 firewood or drinking water, for example. Factors that
25 might cause a reduction include adverse impacts on

1 habitat, direct impacts on the resources, increased
2 harvest, and increased competition from nonsubsistence
3 users.

4 The second factor, reductions in the availability of
5 resources used for subsistence purposes caused by an
6 alteration of their distribution, migration patterns or
7 location.

8 And the third factor could be limitations on access
9 to subsistence resources, including limitations from
10 increased competition for resources or physical or legal
11 barriers.

12 So I'm going to give, once again, just a real brief
13 background or overview of the project, just simple facts
14 related to it, and then our analysis on the three major
15 components, and then we will go to the posters.

16 Donlin Gold, LLC submitted applications to the Bureau
17 of Land Management for a right-of-way grant in July of
18 2012 and January of 2013. Donlin Gold is proposing to
19 construct, operate, maintain and close a 315-mile long,
20 14-inch diameter buried natural gas pipeline and
21 associated fiber optic cable from the west side of Cook
22 Inlet to the mine site near Crooked Creek within the
23 Kuskokwim River watershed.

24 The proposed 315-mile long pipeline would cross about
25 97 miles of BLM land north and west of the Alaska Range in

1 the Kuskokwim River watershed. This represents about 30
2 percent of the total right-of-way, and State of Alaska
3 lands constituting 65 percent, and ANCSA corporation lands
4 -- Calista, The Kuskokwim Corporation and Cook Inlet
5 Region -- constituting about 3.7 percent.

6 The pipeline is part of the energy supply
7 infrastructure for a proposed open pit gold mine located
8 approximately ten miles north of the village of Crooked
9 Creek. In addition to the pipeline and the mine site, the
10 Donlin Gold Project will include transportation
11 infrastructure for barge transportation on the Kuskokwim
12 River.

13 Two of the six alternatives analyzed in this draft
14 EIS would affect the pipeline component. Alternative 3B
15 would substitute a diesel pipeline for the natural gas
16 pipeline within the same planned right-of-way.

17 Alternative 6A would route a portion of the pipeline
18 through Dalzell Gorge, affecting 46 miles of State land.

19 The proposed Donlin Gold Project is evaluated in
20 three components: The mine site, transportation
21 infrastructure and pipeline. Although the permit
22 applications to the BLM focus on the BLM-managed portions
23 of the pipeline right-of-way, the National Environmental
24 Policy Act, or NEPA, prohibits splitting the project into
25 smaller components in order to minimize the estimate of

1 environmental impacts. For that reason, this review of
2 impacts to subsistence will address the entire project and
3 not just the portion subject to permitting by the BLM.

4 The proposed pipeline includes a 150-foot wide
5 cleared construction right-of-way; 12 airstrips ranging
6 from 3,500 to 5,000 feet, nine of which would be newly
7 built along the pipeline right-of-way during construction;
8 nine construction camps; 65 cleared pipe storage areas; an
9 estimated 70 gravel pits ranging from one to 50 acres in
10 size. The pipeline would cross seven watersheds involving
11 396 stream crossings, 77 of which are anadromous or
12 salmon-rearing streams.

13 This photo here is of the proposed pipeline route in
14 the Windy Fork portion of the Kuskokwim watershed in Game
15 Management Unit 19C.

16 The proposed mine includes a waste rock facility that
17 would fill in 2,240 acres of American Creek, a tailings
18 storage facility that would fill in 2,351 acres of
19 Anaconda Creek. The tailings storage facility would be
20 contained behind a 464-foot high dam. The mine has two
21 pits. The ACMA pit would be approximately 1,850 feet deep
22 from the high wall, and the Lewis pit would be
23 approximately 1,653 feet from the high wall.

24 The two pits would merge at the surface into one open
25 pit about 2.2 miles by one mile wide at the end of mining

1 operations. At mine closure, runoff from the tailings
2 storage facility would be pumped into the open pit. The
3 pit is estimated to take roughly 50 years to fill, and
4 pumping would be required to prevent it from overflowing
5 into Crooked Creek and the Kuskokwim River watershed. The
6 pit water may or may not meet water quality standards and
7 would need to be treated before it could be released into
8 Crooked Creek.

9 A water treatment plant would be constructed 50 years
10 after mine closure, and water from the pit lake would have
11 to be pumped and treated in the wastewater treatment plant
12 into perpetuity to prevent untreated pit water from
13 flowing into Crooked Creek and in the Kuskokwim River.
14 And this is an overview of the mine site and the pit, the
15 waste rock facility, the tailings storage facility in Game
16 Management Unit 19A.

17 The proposed transportation facilities component
18 includes construction of an expanded port facility at the
19 Bethel cargo terminal, a new port site at Jungjuk Creek on
20 the Kuskokwim River with 2.8 million gallons of fuel
21 storage, a 30-mile long mine access road from the
22 Kuskokwim River to the mine with 45 stream crossings and
23 13 gravel pits and a 5,000-foot airstrip at the mine. And
24 this is the Kuskokwim River at Jungjuk Creek in Game
25 Management Unit 19A.

1 Barges would supply the mine with fuel and cargo and
2 involve 64 cargo barge round trips and 58 fuel barge round
3 trips for a total of 122 total round trips annually from
4 the Bethel port site to the Jungjuk port site during a
5 110-day shipping season, which is approximately June 1 to
6 October 1.

7 River barges would be transported by tug pushing a
8 four-barge configuration each trip. Each fuel barge would
9 carry 1.29 million gallons of diesel fuel. The port of
10 Jungjuk would continue to be needed into perpetuity to
11 supply fuel and cargo to the wastewater treatment plant
12 treating water from the pit lake. This is another photo
13 of Jungjuk Creek where the proposed port and fuel storage
14 facility would be located in Game Management Unit 19A.

15 The preliminary analysis of impacts to subsistence
16 based on the alternatives outlined in the draft EIS
17 includes all six alternatives and can be found in
18 Appendix N of the draft EIS on page 409 of the .pdf, which
19 is -- on the appendix or in the table it's labeled
20 Appendix M through O.

21 The testimony and input from communities where public
22 hearings are being held on the impacts to subsistence from
23 the proposed Donlin Gold Project will be analyzed and
24 included in the final ANILCA 810 subsistence impact
25 evaluation and will be included in the final EIS.

1 So for our evaluation, the following is an evaluation
2 of the effects of the proposed Donlin Gold Project on
3 subsistence uses and needs for the mine site, natural gas
4 pipeline and transportation infrastructure components of
5 the project.

6 The subsistence evaluation was done for each of the
7 project components and looked at the effects on
8 subsistence uses and needs. So for the mine site,
9 villages closest to the mine would potentially experience
10 the most effects to subsistence, including Napaimute and
11 especially Crooked Creek. Mine activities or trucks in
12 the mine, trucks on the port road, drilling, blasting,
13 power generation, port site activity would likely change
14 the distribution of wildlife species important to
15 subsistence, such as moose, caribou and fur bearers, would
16 be long-term and would cause potential impacts during
17 construction phases and during mine activities throughout
18 the life of the mine.

19 Areas important to Crooked Creek for berry picking,
20 wood cutting and hunting would be directly affected by the
21 mine, and adjacent areas would potentially be contaminated
22 with dust emissions containing various particulate
23 materials from ore processing and from trucks on haul
24 roads and access roads. This would make the berry picking
25 areas undesirable or unusable to subsistence users.

1 A water treatment plant would be built 50 years after
2 mine closure to treat water from the pit that may or may
3 not meet water quality standards for fish. Possible water
4 releases from the mine during operations, after mine
5 closure when water is being pumped into the pit, and after
6 the water treatment plant is constructed may have the
7 potential to impact fish from Crooked Creek and the
8 Kuskokwim River, which could result in significant
9 restrictions to subsistence resources.

10 Potential runoff from the tailings dam and pit lake
11 would have the potential to contaminate fish resources
12 important to subsistence in Crooked Creek and the lower
13 Kuskokwim River into perpetuity, impacting subsistence
14 fish resources important to all communities in Crooked
15 Creek to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

16 For the natural gas pipeline, the potential effects
17 to subsistence from construction and operation of the
18 natural gas pipeline would affect the villages of Tyonek,
19 Skwentna, Nicolai, McGrath, Takotna, as well as downriver
20 villages of Sleetmute, Stony River, Georgetown and Crooked
21 Creek.

22 During construction, the effects of clearing the
23 right-of-way, trenching, drilling, the presence of
24 machinery, pipeline transport, workers in construction
25 camps, and infrastructure on and along the pipeline

1 right-of-way would cause a redistribution of moose,
2 caribou and fur bearers and negatively affect access to
3 subsistence use areas and availability of subsistence
4 resources.

5 During mine operations, the airstrip that would
6 remain along the pipeline right-of-way at Farewell would
7 potentially increase access to subsistence resources by
8 nonlocal residents using aircraft and increased
9 competition for those subsistence resources along and
10 adjacent to the pipeline right-of-way. Villages
11 negatively affected by increased access to and competition
12 in the area include McGrath, Nicolai and Takotna.

13 And for the transportation infrastructure, potential
14 effects to subsistence from transportation infrastructure,
15 including barging of cargo and fuel and the construction
16 of a port at Jungjuk on the Kuskokwim River, would affect
17 all villages on the river from Crooked Creek to the mouth
18 of the Kuskokwim River.

19 Impacts from barging include displacement and
20 disruption of subsistence activities by barge traffic or
21 reduced access to subsistence fishing activities and
22 sites, such as set nets, fish wheels and processing rafts
23 along the river. Subsistence fish resources, salmon and
24 resident fish species populations, may also be negatively
25 affected by the magnitude and intensity of barge traffic

1 proposed in Alternative 2.

2 Effects to fish may increase when river water levels
3 are low as barge rafts will need to be uncoupled and
4 barges towed individually or in pairs or lighter barge
5 loads per trip would be required to navigate to the
6 Jungjuk port. This would require additional barge round
7 trips on the river and potentially increase impacts to
8 subsistence fishers on the Kuskokwim River and to all
9 subsistence fish resources.

10 So lastly, our findings. This evaluation concludes
11 that Alternative 2 may result in a significant restriction
12 to subsistence uses for the communities of Crooked Creek
13 and Napaimute in relation to the mine site; the
14 communities on the Kuskokwim River from barge traffic on
15 the river, Bethel, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Oscarville,
16 Kwethluk, Akiak, Tuluksak, Kalskag, Lower Kalskag, Aniak,
17 Chuathbaluk, Napaimute and Crooked Creek; and the
18 communities of McGrath, Nikolai and Takotna for increased
19 access and competition from nonlocal users at the Farewell
20 airstrip along the pipeline right-of-way.

21 In addition, potential spill scenarios involving
22 ocean and river barge release of diesel fuel, cyanide
23 mercury, tailings dam failure and release of untreated
24 water from the pit lake and tailings dam after mine
25 closure may also result in significant restrictions to

1 subsistence uses for the Kuskokwim River communities
2 listed above.

3 The BLM has found in this preliminary ANILCA 810
4 evaluation that Alternatives 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5A and 6 and
5 the cumulative case considered in the draft Donlin Gold
6 EIS may significantly restrict subsistence uses. These
7 findings require the BLM to conduct hearings to solicit
8 public comments from potentially affected communities and
9 subsistence users under ANILCA 810(a)(1) and (2) in
10 conjunction with the release of the draft EIS.

11 So like I said earlier, we will conduct a brief
12 hearing after the public comment hearing on the draft EIS,
13 and we welcome your testimony at that time.

14 Following the public hearing, a finding may be
15 revised to "will not significantly restrict" based on
16 changes to the alternatives, new information or new
17 mitigation measures resulting from the hearings. If the
18 finding of "may significantly restrict subsistence uses"
19 is not revised, or the impacts can't be mitigated, a
20 three-part determination must be made before the action
21 can be authorized.

22 So what do these findings mean if we are still on a
23 finding of "may significantly affect" under ANILCA? A
24 Section 810(a)(3) determination section is to be prepared
25 only when there is a finding of "may significantly

1 restrict subsistence uses" of a selected alternative or
2 action. A determination will separately address each of
3 the three required items under 810(a)(3) and state why the
4 proposed action is necessary and how the action complies
5 with each requirement.

6 The three items that are required in the
7 determination are: Why such a significant restriction of
8 subsistence uses is necessary and how it is consistent
9 with sound management principles of multiple use of public
10 lands, how the proposed activity will involve the minimal
11 amount of public lands necessary to accomplish the
12 purposes of the project, and what reasonable steps will be
13 taken to minimize adverse effects upon subsistence uses
14 and resources resulting from the project. And after
15 compliance with this 810 process, a manager could proceed
16 with the action.

17 So when commenting or giving testimony related to
18 subsistence impacts, please consider what additional
19 specific information about how the proposed mine would
20 affect abundance and/or availability of subsistence
21 resources important to you and how it would affect access
22 to subsistence resources important to you. If you
23 remember, those were the three points I made earlier: The
24 abundance or availability of subsistence resources, the
25 access to them, and the types of access.

1 And in providing comments to us, you can give
2 comments during the public testimony portion later, or if
3 you are giving a comment during the draft EIS public
4 testimony time period, anything you say then related to
5 subsistence will also influence our final decision on
6 subsistence impacts which will be in the EIS.

7 So you can write us at the BLM now until April 30th.
8 Also fax, email our biologist Bruce Seppi. And this
9 comment period ends in conjunction on April 30th with
10 comments on the draft EIS. But like I said already, if
11 you comment related to subsistence either in the draft EIS
12 or directly to the BLM, all of those comments will be
13 considered in our analysis of subsistence impacts.

14 Thanks.

15 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you very much,
16 Alan. So as Alan mentioned, just to reiterate, any
17 comments on the draft EIS that relate to subsistence BLM
18 will use. Any comments, any testimony given by way of the
19 810 hearing, the Corps and other entities will use as we
20 continue the development of the EIS.

21 At this point in time, I'd like to introduce
22 everybody that's here that can give you some information
23 and is available to talk about what's on these posters as
24 we go to the poster session. Obviously Alan and I have
25 introduced ourselves. Jeff has introduced himself from

1 the State of Alaska.

2 So we will have the AECOM folks introduce themselves.
3 And please note that we have a representative of Donlin
4 Gold and NOVAGOLD here who can talk to you about what they
5 are proposing. These comment sessions take approximately
6 30 to 45 minutes. We will shorten it if you need less
7 time. We will take a little bit more time if you need
8 more time. So we expect to come back to start taking
9 comments on the draft EIS at somewhere between 3:30 and
10 3:45, approximately that time frame.

11 So if there is anybody on the phone, we will check in
12 shortly after we start taking comments to see if there is
13 anybody on the phone who would like to comment, but for
14 approximately 30 to 45 minutes we will be looking at the
15 posters in the room.

16 Taylor, would you like to introduce your folks and
17 have them talk about which posters they'll talk about?

18 MR. TAYLOR BRELSFORD: So good afternoon.
19 We are going to invite you to talk with the scientists who
20 worked on different topics at their posters. So let me
21 kind of go in order. Four posters here provide more
22 detail and some diagrams and images about the project.
23 And so Jessica Evans will be available to you for
24 questions about the project description.

25 And then just behind me are the physical science

1 posters. So water flow, air emissions and water
2 discharges, spill risk and hazardous chemicals, and that
3 will be Nancy Darigo, who is the team lead for the
4 physical science on our team.

5 Then keep going this way to barge traffic and
6 fisheries, and Dave Every will be available to talk about
7 those. He is the biological lead for the analysis team.
8 Then the two on subsistence and socioeconomic, I'll be
9 standing there. My name is Taylor, again. And I've
10 worked on these topics, along with several other people.
11 So that's the staffing for the posters, Keith.

12 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay. Thank you,
13 Taylor. Okay. So 30, 45 minutes, whatever you all need.
14 Take a look at the posters. Let us know any questions you
15 have. And then we will come back for the comments
16 session.

17 MS. TRACY SIMEON: Before you get started,
18 I was wondering if you guys received our resolution on
19 extending the comment period.

20 MR. KEITH GORDON: Yes, we have the
21 resolutions on the request to extend the comment period.
22 My management has told me that they will make the decision
23 regarding whether or not they will extend the comment
24 period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on
25 April 30th. So they are going to wait until the end of

1 the comment period to make that decision. So since April
2 30th is a Saturday, I assume they are either going to
3 announce the decision on Friday, the 29th or Monday, the
4 2nd. Okay.

5 (Off the record.)

6 MR. MARVIN DEACON: I'm glad you came here
7 for this open discussion. What we are looking at, we are
8 concerned for the Kuskokwim, all of us, that we have --
9 been especially Harry over there, my colleague, has been
10 to a lot of fish board meetings. And I was talking to one
11 of these persons about prop wash [indiscernible] and
12 erosion on the river. And I have been down in Emmonak
13 fishing and I have seen where, with the climate change,
14 where the permafrost is melting. And I've seen that Yukon
15 River change so drastically. Once the mud is exposed to
16 the elements, there is a lot of wave action, all these
17 waves. And I was just concerned about the prop washing
18 coming and going.

19 And further upriver on the Yukon, it's proven that
20 when some of these boats go by -- I don't know if it
21 happens here, but where the fry actually wash up on the
22 sandbars. Prop wash is a concern. So I'm going to say I
23 don't know if it is going to happen, but if it happens, we
24 just decided that maybe the pipeline -- the pipeline route
25 is probably the best, maybe. I know there is some risk

1 there, but -- for, like, spills, but take a look at the
2 Trans-Alaska Pipeline, which is 48 inches. There is no
3 major breaks in there. With the technology there, I think
4 that's a better route for everybody.

5 I don't want to be commented I'm for the -- you know,
6 I'm not really -- we are not really for or against the
7 mine right now. Just a comment. So I'm not going to take
8 a stand for or against it. You don't need a for or
9 against it, but I don't know -- I can't speak for the
10 tribe, you know. I'm just one of the persons that
11 happened to be at the tribal building when the plane came,
12 you know. But I don't think the tribe is taking a stand
13 now. So we will see all what comes down the pike here.
14 But I just want to make people aware of our experience on
15 the Yukon with our watershed meetings and trying to
16 protect our salmon just like you guys about how river
17 traffic plays a part on the fish coming down, you know,
18 especially the fry coming down the river and running into
19 the big props and thrusts like that.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you, sir. We
22 thank you all very much for taking the time to travel over
23 here and to comment. We very much appreciate it.

24 MS. DONNE FLEAGLE: Thank you for coming.

25 MR. KEITH GORDON: Donne, how many numbers

1 did we have out there?

2 MS. DONNE FLEAGLE: We have some numbers,
3 but they were taken out of order. So I would just ask
4 people to testify, and I can clarify their names.

5 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay. Who would like
6 to comment next on the Draft Environmental Impact
7 Statement.

8 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Me. I'm Eric
9 Morgan, Sr. Well, talking about the barges and traveling
10 up and down with so much barges going up and down and the
11 wake of the prop on the fish and, you know, stirring up
12 all the -- if you get to shallower water and stirring up
13 all that sand and silt and making things -- and if there
14 is some little small little fish going, you know, they
15 might get sucked and get stirred up, and next thing we get
16 less and less fish.

17 And with captains, you know, sometimes not knowing
18 the river and getting stuck and stirring up -- trying to
19 get unstuck where another one gets stuck and trying to get
20 out and make it -- pushing the -- then make another
21 sandbar to where you are going to lose your channel, you
22 know, going -- sometimes going too fast passing through
23 the villages and swamp your -- your boats when you are on
24 your fish pond or the way it's bouncing around and break
25 your fish wheel up. And they just need to certain places

1 take advice from people who already know where there is
2 only so many feet of water. When they pass through, to
3 check with someone so they know the narrow points and the
4 depth. When they pass villages, to slow down.

5 Mainly it's when they are coming down, that's what
6 makes a big wake and the waves because we don't know on
7 how much it will kill the little -- little minnow fish
8 when they come from the -- so much -- if the -- so much
9 barges and the sand and dust from the silt stir up in the
10 water and make it where like the fish can't breathe
11 through their gills.

12 That's a concern about, you know, maybe it will kill
13 more the little fish if more barges go, or if there is a
14 better road going through the trails they are going to
15 make and, you know, the normal -- the animals, if they rev
16 their engine up and down on the main road -- if they stay
17 at one speed -- at first the animals might go away, but
18 they will get used to that steady sound. But when you are
19 rhmm, rhmm, rhmm, the noise on the trail, animals will run
20 away and be scared. But you moderate your sound and
21 driving, the animals get used to that sound. And at first
22 they will go away, but they will come back.

23 But just try not to go too fast where -- where it
24 will hurt -- hurt the environment. Or somebody even in
25 trucks where they will crash and if they are hauling fuel

1 and have an oil spill and get on the creeks and affect the
2 eggs and stuff wherever they go up.

3 Concerned, you know -- Donlin, it's a good thing for
4 the people, for the younger ones to work and learn new
5 things and new -- new jobs, and it's a good thing, but
6 everybody needs to watch what they are -- what they are
7 doing in their studies and stuff and give an accurate
8 account to the villages so everybody won't blow up later
9 on, you say this and you say that. Work together and
10 impact with each other, and maybe everybody will work
11 together and accept it.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you very much. I
14 was asked to clarify one thing that I stated earlier, and
15 this isn't the first time we have been asked to clarify
16 it. When I'm making the comment about using the example
17 of 100 people commenting saying they are for the project
18 and 100 people saying they are against the project, that's
19 just a way of noting that the NEPA process is not
20 typically a voting process.

21 It is important to know if the majority of people
22 support the project or it's important to know if the
23 majority of people are opposed to the project, but
24 typically the only way the NEPA process gets to be a true
25 voting process is if you have something that is largely

1 very controversial or very popular. For example, if you
2 wanted to put a nuclear power plant on Los Angeles Bay,
3 there is a probability that you are going to have so many
4 people that object to it that you don't need to get into a
5 lot of detail about the financial effects it could have;
6 it's just so unpopular that it's not going to happen.

7 The same kind of thing happens for projects that are
8 very popular and people want them. The reason we are
9 asking, when people can give it to us, the why for
10 supporting or opposing projects is so we can help
11 understand if we did the analysis right. That was the
12 point that I was making earlier.

13 So if the comment you have is I support the project
14 or I oppose the project, that's fine if that's -- if
15 that's all the farther you want to go with your comment.
16 If you would like to give us more, then that can help us
17 understand if we actually know what we are talking about
18 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

19 Is there anybody else who would like to comment?

20 MR. JAMES SMITH: Yes. My name is James
21 Smith. And I have a question on the barge going from
22 Birch Tree up. Okay. From Birch Tree up, if a barge goes
23 up, you got, say, 75 miles of water to travel. When you
24 get to Crooked, you have got 30 miles of roadway to go.
25 If you go from Birch Tree to the mine, you would only have

1 75 total. So to me, it would be feasible to go through
2 Birch Tree going up for, say, using a 90-foot barge
3 pushing up the Kuskokwim. And the environmental, to me,
4 would be greater than it would be if you put a road in
5 behind the mountain where very few access people use to
6 that point. I mean, we do this side of the mountain for
7 hunting and berry picking, but it's very seldom anybody
8 ever goes to the far side of the mountain.

9 I am -- you know, as far as being for Donlin, I would
10 love to see it go because the impact that it would have
11 for the community, for the people -- there is a lot of
12 pros and cons on it, but I think it would outweigh the
13 possibility of maybe, maybe having a spill or, you know --
14 but I do think that if the environmental part would be --
15 the biggest part would be the pushing of the barge up the
16 river as far as what you plan on trying to push it.

17 Another thing I had answered was when they built the
18 dam for the tailings, how it was built and what was the
19 procedure as far as being able to make sure that that did
20 not break loose -- because I worked construction and dam
21 work for 44 years before I moved up here. And they were
22 saying that they would be digging down and locking it into
23 the mountain on bedrock, which that's one of the ways that
24 you could do it to keep the dam from sliding out of the
25 given area that it's going into.

1 So I thank you.

2 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay. Thank you very
3 much. Yeah. One of the things we are were looking for is
4 comments on alternatives. So what you are referring to by
5 a road on the other side of the mountain, at this point in
6 time all the alternatives that were looked that had roads
7 coming from the Yukon down have been eliminated for
8 various reasons, and those reasons are contained in the
9 document. So if there is -- if there are those
10 alternatives that we should look at again, we will take
11 your comment and look back at them, but if folks have
12 other comments on that same issue or other alternative
13 issues, yeah, just let us know.

14 Is there anybody else who would like to comment on
15 the draft EIS?

16 MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS: Can I read mine?
17 It's pretty long.

18 MR. KEITH GORDON: That's fine. Go ahead.

19 MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS: Annie Fredericks,
20 Chuathbaluk. You know, I've never really understood mines
21 and how they operated, and what I've always heard was
22 negative impacts on the mines and hearing about the
23 negative impacts, things that happen because of manmade
24 accidents because they do occur, and our mine would be --
25 the mine in our area would be no different. And if

1 manmade accidents occur -- you know, we are a subsistence
2 community.

3 As stated in page 3.21, subsistence, 100 percent of
4 Chuathbaluk households reported using a subsistence
5 resource in 2009. Most villages, most wide resource is
6 fish. In chapter -- page 3.22-166, also page 3.21-159,
7 barging could potentially -- you know, that's the word
8 "potentially" -- affect subsistence fishing by generating
9 propeller wash and wakes that would interfere with fish
10 wheels and processing rafts or erode river banks so that
11 people either have to abandon or move fish camps.

12 As a fish-netter and a set-netter, with this barge
13 traffic there is no way I would abandon or move my fish
14 camp. My grandchildren and children in Chuathbaluk, they
15 swim in the river in Chuathbaluk. I know in other
16 villages in our area, the kids swim in the river. That's
17 the only place they can swim. And this barge traffic, you
18 know, I don't think I'd want my kids or grandkids to be in
19 that water when there is barges going up and down the
20 river.

21 We go upriver to hunt and gather at certain times
22 when we are allowed to fish and hunt. With time limits to
23 hunt and gather and barge traffic interfering, we may not
24 get our catch to pull us through the winter with already
25 limited fishing and hunting. Although there is estimated

1 eight-hour intervals and smaller barges already on the
2 river, we may not get our chance. The rivers are our only
3 source of travel from one village to the next. I've lived
4 here all my life. You know, the river is getting shallow,
5 and smaller barges do get stuck.

6 As a long distance traveler -- my husband is a
7 priest -- to get to other villages to get to our parishes,
8 we go by boat in the summertime. He has to serve in
9 Crooked Creek, Sleetmute, Stony River. And it's -- it's
10 going to be even more difficult with barges blocking the
11 river waiting to travel when barges get stuck, even our
12 little skiff and us knowing the channels, we still run
13 into sandbars.

14 I'm thinking, you know, barges will certainly bunch
15 up sometimes as they cross shallow areas and need to be
16 uncoupled so barges can get through. So it isn't like we
17 can count on them to go on by exactly every eight hours.
18 Sometimes they will come closer together and might not
19 know when that will be.

20 There was a time where, you know, it was really
21 shallow and the barges one year couldn't get up to the
22 upriver villages, and so they didn't get their fuel. And
23 a lot of the villages upriver had to fly their fuel in
24 from Anchorage, and that was a lot of -- cost a lot of
25 money. And, you know, the barges, you know, they possibly

1 jam up that river. Those fuel barges, they carry our fuel
2 in and construction stuff. They might not be able to go
3 up there, you know. I remember hearing that McGrath was
4 like \$9 a gallon because they didn't get the barge up
5 there.

6 So these are a lot of things I was, you know,
7 thinking about.

8 And we have long-established areas where we put our
9 set nets and where we drift by fish camps and they can't
10 be easily moved with moderate cost and effort. Page 3.21,
11 159.

12 I have a lot more, but I think I'll send it in
13 through the comment thing and send them in to you.

14 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay. That's fine.
15 You can do it either way. And you can do this either way.
16 You can rewrite it on that comment form or you can simply
17 take what you have there and just staple it to the comment
18 form so you don't have to rewrite everything unless you do
19 want to rewrite something. But you can just attach what
20 you have to the comment form and provide that to us.

21 MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS: And I hope more
22 people that are against the mine will speak up, or for the
23 mine.

24 MR. KEITH GORDON: Yes. As we mentioned,
25 the comment period is currently open until April 30th.

1 And I'm sorry. That was another thing I was asked to
2 clarify is that you can -- you can comment that you would
3 like the comment period to be extended. I was
4 specifically asked to address that. So that's certainly a
5 valid comment.

6 Go ahead.

7 MS. SOPHIE SAKAR: My name is Sophie
8 Sakar. I'm originally from Aniak. I moved up here in
9 '67. The comments that I have is no matter what comments
10 we make, we never seem to be -- you know, we make
11 comments, but nothing never works even though we make
12 comments. You hear our comments, but you will still go on
13 no matter who you are and where you come from.

14 You know, my concern is my younger generation. I
15 have subsistence way of life all my life. I have been
16 growing up with cutting fish from the river, catching fish
17 from the river. All the subsistence food that we have is
18 from the land.

19 And, you know, that mining at Red Devil, it was open.
20 My late husband was one of the miners that was working up
21 there. You know, to this day, nobody, hardly any of us,
22 talk about that mine up there. What it caused later on
23 after how many years it was closed, now it's -- you know,
24 we hear about mercury and some other stuff that's going
25 into the river.

1 And if this mine opens at Donlin Gold, if -- how many
2 years that they are working up there, when it's closed
3 down, are you going to clean up the area when you are done
4 working? And also, with -- I think he said there was 68
5 barges that was going to be used to go up and down the
6 river.

7 You know, there is a lot of people that comment on
8 the river and our subsistence way of life. I've heard a
9 few of Bethel's testimony over the radio, but I didn't
10 catch a lot of them. You know, my -- my concern is my
11 younger generation. Even though they don't subsistence as
12 much as we do as Elders, I know that is going to affect
13 the subsistence on the river and on the land if it's not
14 taken care of.

15 You see, when you read the paper about the mining up
16 there, that mercury, a lot of, you know, a lot of people
17 that don't understand and read, they don't know what's
18 going on. And yes, Donlin Gold may be a good project for
19 our younger generation, but I hope that when it ever
20 opens, like we have been promised -- our kids have been
21 promised that they will have a job to look forward to, but
22 I wonder. My wondering is how many of my people will be
23 working on that mine.

24 After all -- after all the talking that anybody comes
25 around to say something, it always turn out not very many

1 local people are hired, but a lot of them are hired from
2 out states. You know, it's really -- I mean, you know, I
3 get so frustrated when I see that.

4 I know that you got some rules and regulations that
5 you have to follow, but my question is: If you go up and
6 down this river, this little narrow river with 68 barges
7 that's going to be up and down, I haven't heard anybody
8 say nothing about cyanide. Will there be any cyanide
9 loaded in those barges? And what effects does cyanide
10 have? Have you or anyone mentioned any cyanide on this
11 Donlin Gold barge transportation? If my kids, my younger
12 generation don't understand what cyanide is, I think they
13 should be, you know -- you know, talk to them about what
14 it is and what effects it has.

15 And also if you are going to be hauling fuel and oil
16 and if there is an oil spill -- you see that Prince
17 William Sound, the spill it had, how many of our
18 subsistence have gone from that Prince William oil spill?
19 What's going to happen if the oil spill happens near this
20 narrow river we have?

21 I know that a lot of them are going for the Donlin
22 Gold, but as an Elder, I hope my younger generation know
23 what they are -- what their dreams are about this Donlin
24 Gold. My subsistence food is more important to me than
25 the gold.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you very much for
3 your comments. Regarding the barge traffic and the 68
4 barges, the 68 barges are the number of barges that
5 currently leave Bethel now without Donlin's project. If
6 Donlin's project goes forward, that number almost triples
7 as far as the number of barges that go upstream out of
8 Bethel every summer.

9 Regarding the fact that we are out asking folks for
10 their opinions and whether they want the project to go
11 forward or not or whether they would like it to go forward
12 in some other form, I fully understand your aggravation
13 that you put all this time and effort into commenting, and
14 frequently it doesn't seem like anybody listened to you.
15 I can't speak for the other federal and State agencies,
16 but the Army Corps of Engineers' role is to make decisions
17 that encompass everyone's opinion, so from a local level,
18 a regional level and the national level; for instance,
19 when we are determining if we can issue permits for
20 impacts to wetlands, lakes, streams, rivers, we are
21 looking at the impact not only from a local level, but
22 from a national level, as well.

23 So a lot of times that seems to dilute the opinions
24 and the knowledge folks in the local area have because we
25 are taking a variety of different perspectives into

1 consideration when we are making those decisions. We are
2 required to by law. We have to come at it from the
3 direction we are coming.

4 So I'm not saying your opinions aren't important.
5 I'm not, by any means, saying that you don't know it
6 better than we do, but we have the perspectives that we
7 are given to go through this process. And that's what we
8 have to follow.

9 Regarding cyanide, yes, one of the major concerns
10 that we have and that's been analyzed in the document is
11 the potential impact of cyanide. Will there be cyanide on
12 those barges? The cyanide containers are 22-ton
13 isotainers of cyanide. So up to 22 tons of cyanide per
14 container, and there could be multiple containers on a
15 single -- with a single tug pushing four barges, there
16 could be multiple containers of those.

17 The cyanide is used in the milling process and
18 virtually all of it is neutralized before the process
19 ends. And they have a variety of ways to monitor for it
20 and test for it. But yes, there is the potential for a
21 spill, and that's one of the things we have to analyze.
22 The same thing with mercury, the same thing with the other
23 chemicals they propose to use. It all needs to be
24 analyzed to the appropriate level and then if the project
25 goes forward, the appropriate safeguards put in place.

1 But we all have to recognize that there is a
2 potential for accidents. We can do everything right and a
3 bolt of lightning can still hit a barge. I mean, that's
4 just reality. So that's the purpose for doing these
5 analyses. And yes, we are considering that.

6 So if you have any more comments on that, please let
7 us know.

8 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: The impact on --
9 they say 68 barges coming up. You know, last year we had
10 maybe only eight barges come up. What the difference
11 would stir up on the water would be with that many barges
12 going up every day.

13 MR. KEITH GORDON: Well, the 68 barges is
14 riverine barging that leaves Bethel. So it could go one
15 mile upstream and go back and be counted as one of those
16 68, or it could go as far upstream as it can possibly go
17 and come back.

18 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Because last year
19 we had only, like, eight. It just depends how much
20 traffic it will be when they really start going.

21 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay.

22 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: Like I say, what is
23 in the barge and what they are hauling, you know, if they
24 happen to get careless and bump something and something
25 fall off or tip over or knock it off the barges by driving

1 equipment -- trying to move something. That's a main
2 concern.

3 MR. KEITH GORDON: Right. And that's one
4 of the things we are looking at in relation to spill
5 analysis is what is the probability that something can
6 come off the barge, whether it's on the river or out in
7 the ocean or something operational, as you say, when they
8 are trying to on-load or off-load something in the port.

9 MR. ERIC MORGAN, SR.: On the barge are
10 they going to have those safety walls with
11 [indiscernible].

12 MR. KEITH GORDON: I don't know. It's
13 something we have to look back at. Is there anybody else
14 who would like to comment on the draft EIS?

15 MS. MARGARET PAHJOLA: Thank you. I
16 prepared a letter that I wrote, so -- and I have the same
17 concerns that Sophie and Annie did about effects on
18 subsistence. Let me go ahead and read what I have.

19 I'm originally from Chuathbaluk. I currently live in
20 Anchorage and I chair the Calista Corporation. Thank you
21 for giving me the opportunity to comment on the Donlin
22 Gold Project and for the support of Alternative 2 of the
23 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Like I told you,
24 I'm from Chuathbaluk. I grew up here. I grew up in a
25 subsistence household where, you know, in summertime we go

1 fishing and fall time we go berry picking. And of course,
2 the guys do the hunting when we go berry picking.

3 And I believe Donlin has a plan in place to respond
4 to any spills that help relieve concerns for protecting
5 our subsistence way of life. The project is also far
6 enough away from Chuathbaluk that it will have no effect
7 on the berry picking.

8 I already told you that I serve as the chair of
9 Calista Corporation and that the shareholders of Calista
10 Corporation expect responsible development that will
11 provide job opportunities in the region. In addition, the
12 infrastructure associated with the project has the
13 potential to help reduce the high cost of living in our
14 region. Right now the cost of fuel is very expensive, and
15 so is the cost of electricity. Even the Internet is
16 ridiculously expensive out here. And hopefully with the
17 fiber optic that they are trying to build along with the
18 gas pipeline, it can help reduce the cost to our region.

19 I believe Donlin has taken the necessary steps to
20 ensure responsible resource development in the region and
21 will bring opportunity and benefits to the people in the
22 region. And I hope the project will move forward. There
23 is going to be a lot of economic benefits, as well. And
24 7(i) will kick in where we share financial benefits to the
25 regional corporations and the village corporations which

1 help our Calista Corporation.

2 When I first got on as a board member back in
3 the '80s, we were -- a lot of the regional corporations
4 were just getting started and we were losing a lot of
5 money. So the 7(i) came in and helped us throughout all
6 those losses that we were going through. And back then,
7 the fishing industry was booming. There was a lot of
8 commercial fishing. And now with the crash of the
9 fisheries, the prices that the fishermen don't get
10 anymore -- back then a lot of the shareholders were not in
11 favor of development of our resources.

12 So it's been a long -- a long time since then that,
13 you know, we always do surveys of what are our potential
14 developments that we can do within our region to benefit
15 our shareholders. And you know, it's an opportunity for
16 our shareholders and our young kids.

17 So thank you.

18 MR. KEITH GORDON: All right. Thank you.

19 MR. NICK SAKAR: Hi. I'm Nick Sakar from
20 here in Chuathbaluk. And with myself, my concern, I hear
21 about the mining and subsistence. We go on with our life
22 with both, but what scares me about this Donlin is what --
23 you know, I don't hear 100 percent what's -- what really
24 is going to be done if a disaster happens not only in the
25 mine, but in this river. If you get an oil spill or you

1 get cyanide or you get whatever you got on that barge
2 having a disaster, as we know, barges do sink. They don't
3 always float. They don't always float.

4 Where is all of this -- all of the people going to
5 end up getting their fish if a disaster does happen out
6 there? Are we going to have to order it? Are we going to
7 have to end up getting our beef from the stores when we
8 can't go out there and get our subsistence life -- you
9 know, what all our Elders with -- how they grew up.

10 Today you end up seeing most of the younger
11 generations go to the store, but there is a lot of concern
12 and worry about people who are going to be eating the fish
13 and the moose and berries, the caribou, yes. And that's
14 what I end up having that concern.

15 I can say, yeah, I am against Donlin, but if it goes
16 through, I suppose, yeah, I would not want to see all the
17 big money makers coming from somewhere down states and
18 being qualified to end up saying I am the boss. You are
19 going to do what I want you to do. And if we are going to
20 end up having -- you know, there is so much saying
21 Yukon-Kuskokwim that's going to end up coming and having
22 all kinds of jobs in this mine. Who is going to end up
23 getting all these big-paying jobs? There is nobody in
24 these villages that's going to be making the real
25 decision.

1 MR. KEITH GORDON: I'm sorry, sir. We
2 have somebody who we need to take care of. Please
3 continue.

4 MR. NICK SAKAR: As nervous as I feel, I'm
5 speaking up. I'm happy to say it, yeah. I'm not for it.
6 I'd rather have seen where I can end up being out there
7 and floating down the river and seeing all the fish that
8 I'm catching in my net instead of worrying about what is
9 coming, not what is there. Nobody is thinking about it.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. KEITH GORDON: Thank you, sir.
12 That -- we are aware of those concerns. We do have some
13 analyses in the document of the potential impacts of
14 spill, et cetera. But we thank you very much for your
15 comments. And we need to know if we have analyzed it
16 correctly, if we have analyzed it enough in the document
17 and are the conclusions that have been -- the draft
18 conclusions that have been drawn correct regarding what
19 could impact the folks that live out here regarding your
20 lifestyle if something does happen on the project.

21 Is there anybody else who would like to comment?

22 MS. EVELYN SAKAR: I have a comment. My
23 name is a Evelyn Sakar, born in Crooked Creek, moved
24 here in '67 with my family. What concerns me is, you
25 know, it seems like everything is in consideration because

1 all the posters up here, all the concerns for the people
2 here in our region and surrounding.

3 So I think there is a lot of consideration, though I
4 feel like I'm not for the project just because 30 years, I
5 know for a fact that my grandchildren's children will be
6 impacted. They won't have no -- they won't have the
7 lifestyle we have, even though there is a lot of climate
8 changes, all kinds of changes happening fast with this
9 world. And if the project goes through, I really don't
10 see them having a subsistence lifestyle, you know. It
11 says on the EIS about how -- you know, with BLM and how
12 the animals will be impacted and the berry picking. And
13 then with the river, I really don't see the subsistence --
14 I don't think -- we wouldn't have any more subsistence
15 anymore with that, if, you know, the project did go
16 through.

17 So my concern is, you know, for the future. I have
18 my grandchildren here. And I just don't see them being
19 able to harvest like we have been through before.

20 You know, the emissions that -- when does the
21 blasting start? You know, if it does get underway, you
22 know, the air quality -- I don't even know how far that
23 goes. I was trying to read through that -- there is a
24 couple of things that -- I left my reading glasses in the
25 room, but -- for example, when they start -- once they

1 start blasting up there and the air quality, you know, you
2 never know where that goes with the wind direction. You
3 know, the weather starts moving the wind, but then it
4 affects the berries, the ground, the animals.

5 So I'm just not for the project. Thank you.

6 MR. KEITH GORDON: Okay. Thank you very
7 much. Do we have anybody else who would like to comment
8 on the draft EIS?

9 MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS: Can I make another
10 comment?

11 MR. KEITH GORDON: Yes, go ahead.

12 MS. ANNIE FREDERICKS: I wanted to see if
13 we could get more time, you know, for commenting because
14 Chuathbaluk Traditional Council, we just received the book
15 forms because -- you know, I know they offered CD and
16 Internet, and, a lot of the small villages, we don't have
17 Internet in our homes and we don't have computers,
18 up-to-date computers in our homes. Our tribal office, for
19 example, tried to use their public computer to look at the
20 disk, and it was very slow and very hard to go through
21 with that computer. And, you know, since we got the
22 books, I have just been able to read a few things I wanted
23 to know. I read the subsistence part so far, but I'd like
24 to read more on it, and I don't think I'll have -- I or
25 anybody else wants to read more about this will have

1 enough time.

2 I don't know about other villages. I'm sure other
3 villages in our region have the same problem. They don't
4 have Internet access or computer access. And if they
5 don't get the books -- I mean, the -- all those books. So
6 I ask that you extend it. I don't know how much longer we
7 need. We will probably need another month or two to read
8 the whole thing, maybe more. There is so much to read and
9 understand and go through.

10 MR. KEITH GORDON: All right. Thank you
11 very much. Is there anybody else who would like to
12 comment on the draft EIS? Is there anybody on the phone
13 who would like to comment on the draft EIS?

14 Okay. At this point in time we will take about two
15 minutes for Mary to close out her file on the comments on
16 the draft EIS, and then Mr. Alan Bittner of the Bureau of
17 Land Management will initiate the 810 ANILCA hearing and
18 take your testimony on subsistence impacts.

19 Thank you.

20 (Proceedings adjourned at 4:31 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, MARY A. VAVRIK, RMR, Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska do hereby certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein set forth; that the proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later transcribed under my direction by computer transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of the proceedings taken at that time; and that I am not a party to nor have I any interest in the outcome of the action herein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my hand and affixed my seal this 22nd day of April 2016.

MARY A. VAVRIK,
Registered Merit Reporter
Notary Public for Alaska

My Commission Expires: November 5, 2016

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