

1 SOUTHCENTRAL FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

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6
7 VOLUME III

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9
10 Crowne Plaza
11 Anchorage, Alaska
12 March 13, 2014
13 1:00 p.m.

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15
16
17 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

18
19 Ralph Lohse, Chair
20 Judith Caminer
21 Andrew McLaughlin
22 Michael Opheim (telephonic)
23 James Showalter
24 Gloria Stickwan
25
26 Regional Council Coordinator, Donald Mike

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 3/13/2014)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's 10 after 2, then I think we should start, don't you, Judy. And we're going to start with an overview of the Donlin Gold Project. I kind of thought Mary Ann would be pretty interested in that, because it's almost in her home territory, you know, and that's why I was -- I think I'm going to move my seat over to there so that I can see.

MS. CAMINER: Me, too.

MR. MIKE: And, Mr. Chair, Mr. Don Kuhle will lead the discussion.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Hello, Don.

MR. KUHLE: Do I need to talk into the mic?

CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. It would be nice to introduce yourself at least for.

MR. KUHLE: I'd like to thank you for inviting us here today. We'll be giving an overview and an update on the Donlin Gold Project environmental impact statement, which we'll be referring to as the EIS.

The Donlin Gold Project is a proposed gold mine near the Village of Crooked Creek. The gold deposit is on lands owned by the Alaska Native corporations. I'm sorry. Two Alaska Native corporations. And I think we're one ahead on the slide. Calista Corporation is a subsurface owner, and the Kuskokwim Corporation is the surface owner. The mine is proposed by Donlin Gold, which is joint venture of two international mining companies, NOVAGOLD and Barrick Gold

Before they can go ahead though, they'll have to obtain permits from the Army Corps of Engineers and from other agencies. The Corps is the

1 lead agency for development of the EIS and we'll be
2 using the EIS to help make our permitting decisions.

3

4 My name is Don Kuhle. I'm the project
5 manager for the Corps, and working on the EIS. And the
6 Corps is neither a proponent nor an opponent of the
7 mine project. Instead we are responsible to prepare an
8 independent evaluation of the proposed project through
9 the EIS.

10

11 The Corps is assisted by a large
12 technical team from URS corporation, which is an
13 engineering and environmental services company. And
14 with me today from URS, we have three members: Kim
15 Varner Wetzel over at the computer, and behind me I
16 have Donne Harris Fleagle and Jennifer Anderson.

17

18 And from January to March of 2013 the
19 Corps of Engineers visited many communities and learned
20 a great deal about the hopes and concerns of residents
21 in relation to the Donlin Gold project.

22

23 And I'm going to provide a quick
24 overview of the project area and the major project
25 components, and then I'll explain some of the
26 categories of the scoping comments we received. Some
27 of you may be familiar with the project, but what
28 should be new to all of you is our current work on the
29 project alternatives. And I'll explain how we get from
30 scoping comments to feasible alternatives, and then
31 I'll conclude with my contact information where you can
32 always call me or email me or write if you have any
33 questions.

34

35 This slide should give you an idea of
36 the timeframe involved. The first box on the left
37 refers to the 16 years of baseline studies and
38 exploration conducted by Donlin Gold before coming to
39 the Corps of Engineers with a permit application.

40

41 The middle box highlights the
42 permitting phase where the Corps and a number of
43 cooperating agencies are evaluating the Donlin Gold
44 application through the EIS, and this process will take
45 about three years. As I said, we've already done the
46 scoping, which is in the first box, and we're currently
47 preparing the draft EIS.

48

49 The right-hand box shows that if
50 permits are approved, Donlin Gold will send three to

1 four years on construction, and will then operate for
2 27 and a half years. And this will be followed by mine
3 closure, reclamation and monitoring.

4
5 This map gives an orientation to the
6 project area, which extends from Cook Inlet along a
7 proposed pipeline route to the mine site north of
8 Crooked Creek, and then down to the Lower Kuskokwim
9 River -- down the Kuskokwim River to the Yukon-
10 Kuskokwim Delta. This is a remote area with little
11 development to date and no existing roads to the region.
12 And the map shows that existing transportation and
13 infrastructure in Alaska is currently concentrated in
14 Southcentral Alaska.

15
16 The proposed mine would require all new
17 infrastructure, including roads and a pipeline. It
18 would all be subject to permitting by various agencies
19 before the project could proceed.

20
21 The project includes several major
22 components. There's the mine site itself, the
23 pipeline, and barging on the Kuskokwim River to bring
24 in fuel and supplies.

25
26 The first large component of the Donlin
27 Gold Project is a natural gas pipeline. It would start
28 at Beluga and Cook Inlet, cross the Alaska Range at
29 Rainy Pass, run west along the foothills of the Alaska
30 Range and into the Kuskokwim River Valley until it
31 reaches the mine site near Crooked Creek. The pipeline
32 would cross 56 percent State lands, 34 percent BLM
33 lands, and 10 percent Native corporation lands.

34
35 The second major component of the
36 project is the mine site, which itself is comprised of
37 numerous facilities. And the highlighted facilities on
38 this slide are, number 1, an open pit that would
39 eventually cover 1400 acres. It would be 2.2 miles
40 long, one mile wide, and 1,850 feet deep.

41
42 Number 2 is the tailings impoundment,
43 also referred to as the waste treatment facility. It
44 would cover about 2,350 acres, or three and a half
45 square miles. And tailings refer to the fine powder
46 like material that's left after the gold has been
47 removed from the ore in the mill.

48
49 Number 3 is a waste rock facility that
50 would cover about 2300 acres. And the waste rock is

1 the rock that's removed to get at the gold-bearing
2 ore.

3

4 And these major facilities would all
5 support the mill, which would process 59,000 tons of
6 ore per day

7

8 The third component of the project is
9 the transportation infrastructure that supports mine
10 construction and operations. It includes port
11 facilities in Bethel for transferring diesel fuel and
12 cargo from ocean vessels to river barges. There's a
13 new barge landing near Jungjuk to offload the fuel and
14 the cargo. There's a 30-mile road from the Jungjuk port
15 to the mine site, a 5,000-foot airstrip near the mine
16 site, and a 40 million gallon diesel storage facility
17 at the mine site.

18

19 And as I said in my introduction, we
20 held scoping meetings and gathered public input from
21 January through March of last year, and major areas of
22 concern included barge traffic; subsistence traditions;
23 water quality, quantity and flow; mercury; fish,
24 wildlife and birds; people and communities; and health
25 impacts. And I won't go through all those for time
26 reasons, but I'll use barge traffic to give you an idea
27 of the comments that we received.

28

29 As far as the barging goes, there would
30 be 122 round trips by barges each year. This would
31 include both cargo and fuel barges. And the fuel
32 barges would transport 40 million gallons of diesel
33 fuel per year.

34

35 As far as comments, we heard concerns
36 about river bank erosions from barge wakes, including
37 erosion of cultural resource sites along the river.
38 There were also concerns about increased turbidity,
39 water temperature changes and impacts to spawning
40 grounds. There were also concerns about disturbance of
41 fish migrations, particularly for salmon runs that area
42 already under stress. Other barging concerns included
43 displacement of commercial and subsistence fisheries,
44 risk of accidents or spills, and the potential for
45 barges getting stuck during low water periods.

46

47 So that's just some of the comments we
48 received related to barging. And the comments on the
49 other highlighted were equally extensive as those for
50 the barge traffic.

1 The National Environmental Policy Act,
2 or NEPA, is the law under which we're preparing the
3 EIS. It requires that we analyze a reasonable range of
4 alternatives that might meet the purpose and need for
5 the project. And in the scoping meetings and in the
6 letters we received, people helped us identify
7 environmental issues, and they had many very good ideas
8 about the alternatives that might reduce the
9 environmental footprint of the proposed mining project.

10

11

12 The EIS process identifies various
13 alternatives and then compares the relative impacts
14 along with their technological and economic
15 feasibility. These are the types of alternatives being
16 developed and analyzed.

17

18 Under the no action alternative, the
19 required permits would not be issued, and the project
20 could not be built. The proposed alternative is the
21 project proposed by Donlin Gold with the components
22 that I described earlier.

23

24 There's several of each of the related
25 to barging, mine site, and the pipeline line.

26

27 Reduced barging alternatives would
28 reduce the number of barges traveling on the Kuskokwim
29 River or shorten the distance the barges would travel.
30 And these alternatives address concerns about barge
31 impacts.

32

33 Mine site alternatives evaluate ways to
34 dispose of the tailings, to manage contact water, and
35 the contact water is the water that would be exposed to
36 contamination during mining. These alternatives
37 address concerns that the project could degrade water
38 quality or generate acid mine drainage.

39

40 And the pipeline route alternatives
41 explore modifications to the proposed pipeline route.
42 Different pipeline routes could have different impacts
43 to various resources and these alternatives would
44 analyze the trade offs.

45

46 For one of the reduced barging
47 alternatives, this map shows a contrast in barging
48 distance between two alternative upriver port
49 locations. Relocating the upriver port to Birchtree
50 Crossing would shorten the distance of barging and

1 eliminate some of the shallow sections between
2 Birchtree Crossing and the Jungjuk port site, which is
3 -- the Jungjuk port site is a site on it that Donlin's
4 currently proposing.

5
6 Other ideas to reduce barge traffic
7 include the use of liquid natural gas -- liquified
8 natural gas or LNG to power the mining trucks. This
9 would eliminate most of the 40 million gallons of
10 diesel barging per year.

11
12 Another idea is to reconfigure the
13 pipeline to transport diesel fuel, thereby eliminating
14 all of the diesel barging.

15
16 For the pipeline route alternatives, we
17 received a lot of recommendations for different route
18 segments, mostly for the purpose of reducing impacts to
19 the Iditarod National Historic Trail. And these
20 alternative route segments are still being developed.

21
22 The project seems quiet now while we're
23 between scoping, which ended on March 29th of last
24 year, and the draft EIS which will be distributed for
25 public review in 2015. And that's because the Corps,
26 URS and the cooperating agencies are finalizing the
27 alternatives and will be researching and evaluating the
28 potential impacts of the alternatives.

29
30 During this time you can find more
31 information on the project website at
32 DonlinGoldEIS.com. The website includes information on
33 the EIS process. It has background documents
34 describing the project. It has the scoping report, and
35 explains how you can be involved.

36
37 If you have any questions, you can also
38 always contact me at the -- my phone number and email
39 are on the slide, or if you'd like to catch me
40 afterwards and I'll be glad to give it to you.

41
42 For tribal matters, you can contact our
43 tribal liaison for the Corps of Engineers, Amanda
44 Shearer, and her information is also on the slide.

45
46 So thank you for inviting us again, and
47 I'll be glad to -- I guess we have some time for
48 questions.

49
50 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Does anybody on the

1 Council have questions for Don. Andy.

2

3 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
4 Chair. I'd be curious the diversity of comments you
5 received regarding subsistence, tradition, use of
6 resources, like that.

7

8 MR. KUHLE: Yeah we received quite an
9 extent. In fact I have some notes here, but, in fact,
10 we have another -- we have a workshop coming up to
11 discuss those.

12

13 There's a lot of concerns regarding the
14 salmon in the river at the mine site. Let me see if I
15 can gather my notes here. I guess my notes are rather
16 generic, but I can tell you from -- in the scoping
17 meetings we did get a lot of comments, you know, as far
18 as the potential for contaminants, you know, for
19 concerns that there could be mercury released. There's
20 mercury, you know, naturally occurring in the rock and
21 the soil there, so there's concerns that some of that
22 will be released during processing, either extraction
23 of the ore, or, you know, processing the ore in the
24 mill, or the disposal of the tailings, and that somehow
25 that could be dispersed to the, you know, fish or
26 wildlife habitat by any means, either through water or
27 the air or whatever. There's a lot of concerns about,
28 you know, mercury or cyanide or other contaminants that
29 could get in the air, you know, and land miles away, or
30 get into the water and affect the fish.

31

32 One thing I know is a concern is the
33 low returns and nobody seems to fully understand yet of
34 the king salmon into the Kuskokwim. So we got a lot of
35 questions about that.

36

37 There were concerns about how the barge
38 traffic on the river might affect the use of
39 subsistence fisheries. You know, if people have their
40 nets in the water, what's going to happen when the
41 barges come by.

42

43 You know, it was just about any aspect
44 of subsistence you can think of, you know, that it came
45 up, because it is, you know, a big project, and also
46 along with mine, I guess the pipeline and the roads and
47 everything, whether it will somehow affect access to,
48 you know, subsistence use areas, or if it could somehow
49 increase access to others outside the local area that
50 could come in and affect subsistence uses. So, yeah,

1 we got lots of a broad range. If you have any
2 regarding any specific types of impacts, I'd be glad, I
3 could probably answer if those came up.

4
5 Yes.

6
7 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Judy.

8
9 MS. CAMINER: A couple of questions,
10 please. The gas pipeline, are you -- is that dependent
11 on a North Slope gas pipeline or are you figuring
12 there's adequate gas in Cook Inlet to fuel this
13 project?

14
15 MR. KUHLE: It's solely for the mine
16 site at this point. It is going -- they're going to
17 purchase the gas on the -- you know, whatever the
18 current market is. It would be a com -- well, I guess
19 this is an aside, but it would be a common carrier type
20 pipeline. You know, Donlin would construct it for the
21 sole purpose of the mine, but if there was a local
22 organization or utility that would like to tap into it,
23 they would be able to do that, but it would be up to
24 them, not up to Donlin.

25
26 So, no, it's not dependent on any other
27 pipeline. It's, you know, solely for the purpose of
28 the mine, and that's how they evaluated the economics
29 of it.

30
31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Judy.

32
33 MS. CAMINER: And, secondly, Donlin's
34 been sort of at it for quite a while, but yet Pebble,
35 the neighbor nearby, seems to have attracted a lot more
36 attention. But from what we just saw recently where
37 EPA has begun the process of saying, this is just too
38 environmentally sensitive to do, to really simplify it.

39
40 I mean, this mine is also near a pretty
41 heavy salmon area, so have you had any feedback from
42 EPA or.....

43
44 MR. KUHLE: EPA, yeah.

45
46 MS. CAMINER: Are you doing anything --
47 or is the proponent suggesting something different that
48 would alleviate the kinds of concerns that EPA had for
49 Pebble let's say.

50

1 MR. KUHLE: I can tell you that EPA is
2 one of our cooperating agencies. They're, you know,
3 heavily involved in the process. They haven't
4 expressed any -- and I'm not sure why, you know.
5 People ask us why aren't we getting the attention that
6 Pebble does, you know, and I guess Pebble because of
7 being in the Bristol Bay watershed, but beyond that I
8 don't have the answer why we're not attracting as much
9 attention. But EPA has not expressed -- indicated that
10 they would take any action similar to what they're
11 doing on Pebble.

12
13 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Judy.

14
15 Any other questions. James.

16
17 MR. SHOWALTER: Yes. You indicated
18 there's two international companies doing this?

19
20 MR. KUHLE: Yes. Barrick Gold and
21 NOVAGOLD. And Donlin Gold is kind of like a subsidiary
22 of them.

23
24 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I've got a -- I
25 noticed that the Crooked Creek, or the Donlin Mine is
26 really, really close to Red Devil it looks like. So
27 the mercury content's probably fairly high. And Red
28 Devil was actually a mercury mine, wasn't it?

29
30 MR. KUHLE: It was, yes. And we've
31 heard -- we got lots of comments about that, and a lot
32 of concerns about, you know, the aftereffects of that.

33
34 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Now, would -- you
35 know, usually on a hard rock mine like that, if there's
36 other valuable minerals, they try to process them out
37 at the same time. Would they be -- you know, if all
38 they're doing is storing the natural mercury, then that
39 makes it accessible, but are they even thinking of --
40 I'll use the work harvest -- are they -- I'm sure there
41 must be other minerals combined with the gold. Silver
42 and mercury would be two that I would think of, and are
43 they planning on actually mining them at the same time.

44
45 MR. KUHLE: There has been no talk of
46 that. For the main purpose of the mine is for the
47 gold, and as far as the mercury goes, you know, they
48 would be shipping it off site, you know, in approved
49 containers for transporting it, but, you know, it's --
50 the discussion of it, it's more of byproduct I guess,

1 but I don't think they're marketing it. I think
2 they're just more or less disposing of it.

3

4 I guess to be honest, I don't know.
5 You know, if there's a value to the mercury, you know,
6 I suppose they could sell it. But, you know, as far as
7 I'm aware, the plan is -- there's no discussion
8 regarding the economics of mercury other than, you
9 know, removing it off site after they've contained it.

10

11 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: But they would --
12 they're not talking about storing it in that waste pond
13 or anything like that?

14

15 MR. KUHLE: No. It would be captured
16 and moved off site, and disposed of at an approved
17 facility.

18

19 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And I notice it's a
20 fairly decent sized dam at the bottom of that waste
21 site.

22

23 MR. KUHLE: Yes.

24

25 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And does the water
26 shed that that dam is holding back run right into the
27 Kuskokwim River or does it.....

28

29 MR. KUHLE: It drains to Crooked Creek,
30 which drains to the Kuskokwim River. And it would be
31 -- you know, it's a tailings storage facility or a
32 waste treatment facility. So, you know, it's not like
33 -- it wouldn't be like a deep reservoir. It would be
34 -- the tailings would be disposed in there, and as, you
35 know, the tailings settle out from the slurry, you
36 know, gradually throughout the 27 and a half year mine
37 life, the dam would be raised higher and higher, you
38 know. And you would have some water back there at all
39 times. Eventually after closure of the mine, it would
40 all become, you know, a dry area that would be capped.

41

42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Oh, it would become a
43 dry area then. So normally in a mine like that, you
44 use a liquid slurry that's got cyanide in it to
45 chemically separate the gold from the hard rock around
46 it. So then would that tailing pile -- you'd expect
47 the water to evaporate, not run away from it?

48

49 MR. KUHLE: There's no discharge. It's
50 a zero discharge project. There's no -- none of the

1 contact water would leave -- you know, it's at least
2 designed that none of the contact water would leave the
3 site. And ultimately the pit area would become a --
4 I'm trying to think of the proper word. It would be a
5 water -- like a lake or a pond. You know, the pit
6 area would become all but -- a lot of the -- you know,
7 I guess I've got to be careful, because I don't fully
8 understand all the chemistry and everything, but a lot
9 of the contaminated material would be -- you know,
10 ultimately after closure of the mine would be contained
11 at the bottom of that pit lake. And that.....

12

13 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: 1800 feet.

14

15 MR. KUHLE: 1800 feet. And then there
16 would be, you know, keep a water cover over it. It
17 would be -- the contaminated water would be heavier, as
18 I understand it, than the other water in the lake, so
19 it would -- unless there -- you know, some of the
20 comments we've heard concerns, well, if there's an
21 earthquake, could that cause that to turn over somehow.
22 So that's all being examined. And I don't -- like I
23 said, I'm not an expert in this, but, you know,
24 ultimately the pit lake would have -- the lower level
25 would be contaminated material, and it would be treated
26 into perpetuity. There would be like a -- I don't want
27 to say a bond, but, you know, there would be a
28 financial means to maintain that in perpetuity, and
29 treat any water that would be discharged from it. But
30 that would be long after it closed before it was
31 actually filled.

32

33 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: But they wouldn't be
34 transferring the tailings back into the pit.

35

36 MR. KUHLE: No, the tailings would stay
37 in the tailings pond area there, and there's a liner
38 underneath the tailings pond, the storage facility.

39

40 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Now, is the country
41 rock there, is that basalt, or is it greywacki, is it a
42 gnanase, is it a semi-porous or a pretty solid rock?

43

44 MR. KUHLE: I'm not a -- I don't have
45 the expertise to speak to that. That information is in
46 the -- I believe you could find it in the
47 documentation submitted by Donlin, which is available
48 on the website.

49

50 MS. VARNER WETZEL: If I might jump in,

1 I'm also not a chemist in any way, but the proposal is
2 a lined pit.

3

4 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: For the tailings
5 though.

6

7 MS. VARNER WETZEL: Right. So can't
8 speak to the country rock, but it is lined, so again it
9 will be.....

10

11 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: So it's impervious.
12 Yeah. I was thinking more of if eventually what comes
13 -- the real -- if this thing dries up and becomes hard,
14 basically it will turn into cement, you know. I mean,
15 if you take tailings and put them in water like that,
16 that's going to turn rock hard over time. But if
17 you're storing contamination basically in the pit
18 itself in water, then that's where I was wondering, is
19 what.....

20

21 MR. KUHLE: I think that's mostly
22 capturing drainage out of the waste rock facility, you
23 know, nothing -- the stuff that comes out of the mill
24 and discharged into the tailings facility is going to
25 stay there. It's not going to be, you know, pumped
26 back to the pit lake.

27

28 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. But any time
29 you expose that much surface to weathering and rain,
30 water, snow, whatever, you're going to leach stuff out
31 of all of that exposed rock that wasn't exposed. And
32 that's going to go down into your water pit that will
33 eventually -- the pit that will eventually be full of
34 water that you were talking about. And I was just
35 wondering whether the rock that that -- whether the
36 rock that all of that is cut out of and that lake is
37 sitting on is an impervious type of rock like basalt or
38 something like that, or if it's more of a.....

39

40 MR. KUHLE: Well, I, you know, would be
41 certain that -- I mean, that's all been analyzed, and
42 in fact I guess one thing -- you know, after our
43 scoping meetings, we had some workshops in which -- you
44 know, looking at additional information that was
45 necessary. And the hydrologist asked for some
46 additional study along Crooked Creek to -- actually the
47 purpose of those was to just determine if the pumping
48 of the ground water around the pit would, you know,
49 lower the ground table, would that somehow affect the
50 water level in Crooked Creek. So they are considering,

1 you know, all the hydrology. And, you know, I'm
2 confident that the types of rock and all that has been
3 considered, but I just don't have the expertise to
4 speak to it. I expect as I said -- if you want, I
5 could find somebody that, you know, could answer your
6 questions, have somebody get in touch with you if you'd
7 like, or, like I said, I believe you could probably
8 find that information on the website as well.

9

10 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, I'm sure that it
11 is being studied, restudies, engineered, and re-
12 engineered. I guess I was basically asking that from
13 the standpoint that I look at where it is and where
14 it's located. And those would be concerns that --
15 those would be concerns that I have which are just
16 minor compared to who's going to be looking it.

17

18 I mean, it's -- what is its scale in
19 comparison to the scale of -- what are we looking at
20 here, and this is again, probably it's all going to be
21 taken care of by somebody else, but on a scale of I'll
22 say 1 to 10, what's its scale in size compared to
23 Pebble?

24

25 MR. KUHLE: I can't give you an answer.
26 It's much smaller, it's smaller than Pebble, I know
27 that. I would just be venturing a guess if I was to
28 say, but if I was to guess, I'd say it's maybe half.
29 But that's just a wild guess.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Judy.

32

33 MS. CAMINER: What would be the
34 transportation route then of the finished product, or
35 the products.....

36

37 MR. KUHLE: It would be -- the gold
38 would come out as gold ingots, and would be flown out.
39 Or that's not the proper word, but doray (ph) bars I
40 believe they call them, and that would be flown out.
41 It's not like Red Dog where they have, you know, the --
42 I can't think of the world off hand either, but the --
43 you know, it's just a semi-process product.

44

45 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Concentrate.

46

47 MR. KUHLE: Concentrate, yeah.

48

49 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And then the mercury
50 would probably go back out on the barges.

1 MR. KUHLE: I believe so, probably.
2 I'm not.....
3
4 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Because there's no
5 road transportation other than to a barge site.
6
7 MR. KUHLE: Yeah, everything has to be
8 flown out or go out by water, and I recall hearing, you
9 know, there are specific types of containers for
10 transporting mercury and they would be using those.
11
12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, I can see why it
13 wouldn't cause as much of a political impact as Pebble,
14 but I can see where it actually could have as big or
15 bigger an impact on subsistence users. You know, the
16 thing about Pebble is it also has a potential impact on
17 a world class food resource, that the Kuskokwim/Yukon
18 right at the moment is not a world class food resource
19 except for the subsistence users that live there, you
20 know.
21
22 MR. KUHLE: Yeah.
23
24 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I mean, it's just --
25 I'll shut up.
26
27 Anybody else have any questions,
28 comments.
29
30 Donald.
31
32 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33
34 Earlier in the month I got an email
35 from URS requesting a representative from this Council
36 to attend a TEK workshop, and I consulted you on that.
37 And I believe Ms. Fleagle's ready to speak on that on a
38 brief note.
39
40 Thank you.
41
42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Don.
43
44 MR. KUHLE: Thank you.
45
46 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And I wasn't trying to
47 put you on the spot or anything.
48
49 MR. KUHLE: No, that's fine. Like I
50 said, I don't claim to be an expert in all these.....

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's just that those
2 are some questions that come to mind when you start
3 thinking mines.
4
5 Gloria, did you have something.
6
7 MS. STICKWAN: Yeah, I was just
8 wondering, do they have an estimation of how much gold
9 they're going to get out of there.
10
11 MR. KUHLE: They have 30 million ounces
12 of reserves that they would be mining over 27 and a
13 half years.
14
15 MS. STICKWAN: So how much is that in
16 dollars?
17
18 (Laughter)
19
20 MR. KUHLE: I guess it probably varies
21 day to day.
22
23 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That would be about a
24 million ounces a year then.
25
26 MR. KUHLE: Yes, a million ounces a
27 year. A little over.
28
29 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That's only currently
30 \$1,300,000,000, something like that.
31
32 Carl.
33
34 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair. I just wanted
35 for the information to know there's three of us at OSM
36 that are part of the Fish and Wildlife Service team
37 that's providing comment on this process as a
38 cooperating agency. And so we're focusing specifically
39 on providing subsistence commentary. So we're
40 available to provide a conduit of information to this
41 process as well as whatever the Council may do on its
42 own.
43
44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45
46 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you.
47
48 MS. VARNER WETZEL: Thank you, Chair.
49
50 I just wanted to add on the screen shot

1 of the website, that if folks have interest in
2 understanding the proponent's plan, all these specific
3 questions we couldn't answer accurately, just go up to
4 background documents, and you get the original permit
5 from Donlin Gold. And if you wanted to find the
6 detailed, every comment that we heard during scoping is
7 also in there under EIS documents. And, of course,
8 contact us if we can give you these also.

9

10 Thanks.

11

12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, again, like I
13 said, it's out of our district, and it's probably so
14 big that individual comments on our parts won't have
15 much of an impact, but I am basically concerned for the
16 people that live up in the area there.

17

18 MS. FLEAGLE: Good afternoon. I'm
19 Donne Fleagle with URS.

20

21 I worked with the very nice guy, Donald
22 Mike, earlier this month when we were looking at the
23 RACs, and we were looking at Southcentral, because of
24 the pipeline originating out of the Cook Inlet. And he
25 spoke with the Chairman, yourself, and we have James
26 Showalter down as being the representative.

27

28 And we would like to thank you, thank
29 your Staff.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Donald.

32

33 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since
34 URS requested a representative from Southcentral RAC, I
35 think it would be a good idea to support Mr. James
36 Showalter to attend this TEK workshop.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. And,
41 James, that's just the problem with being the closest
42 one to it.

43

44 MR. SHOWALTER: Yeah.

45

46 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Do you have anything
47 you want to share with us.

48

49 MR. SHOWALTER: Not even gold.

50

1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. I don't
4 think we have anything more that we were expecting from
5 you at this point in time, and I do appreciate -- I
6 really appreciate the information you gave us. And
7 like I said before, it's pretty hard for us to be, you
8 know, extremely concerned, except something like this
9 could happen in our area, too. At one time, that's one
10 of the questions I asked the other person from the BLM,
11 was the one that at one time was considered up between
12 Paxson and Tangle Lakes. And as more and more of these
13 hard rock, low value ore mines are developed, I think
14 we're going to see more potential for impact. We have
15 a lot of minerals in the State of Alaska, and it's not
16 all in nice big nuggets.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 Okay. Donald, at this point in time we
21 were supposed to have a Fish and Wildlife Service
22 comment on our Fisheries Resource Management Plan
23 actions that were taken. And then we will have a
24 little discussion period on customary and traditional
25 use determination. And then that should pretty well
26 wrap up our meeting, unless somebody has something else
27 they want to bring up. Donald.

28

29 MR. MIKE: Yeah. I think we discussed
30 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan yesterday, so
31 we're done with that.

32

33 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Oh, I thought we were
34 going to get a report on what their actions were on the
35 proposals that we had. It must be myself.

36

37 Karen.

38

39 MS. CAMINER: Karen did say yesterday
40 all three of our projects.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: You did. You did say
43 all three of our projects that we supported were
44 approved.

45

46 MS. HYER: Right.

47

48 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Right. Okay.

49

50 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. That Board

1 meeting was just for the FRMP. So that's pretty much
2 what happened at that meeting.

3

4 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Thank you much
5 then. I'm sorry I missed that, and was going from
6 there. Okay.

7

8 At this point in time then what we have
9 in front of us, all the Council members, we have a
10 paper that summarizes what the Southeastern did on
11 customary and traditional. And I don't know if all of
12 you have had time to review it. We could take a 10-
13 minute break and give everybody time to review it, and
14 then we can decide whether we want to take some action,
15 or leave this for our fall meeting, or support our
16 brothers and sisters in Southeastern.

17

18 Mr. Johnson. It's not on our action
19 items.

20

21 MR. JOHNSON: Right. But
22 unfortunately, Mr. Chair, even with your Council member
23 on the phone, you don't have a quorum to take any
24 action.

25

26 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Mr.
27 Johnson. Then what we could do is we could ask
28 everybody to study this and be prepared to take some
29 action, put it on our agenda for our fall meeting.
30 That would be legitimate, wouldn't it.

31

32 MR. JOHNSON: And also to clarify,
33 there's different ways the Councils can express itself.
34 One is often through the process of Robert's Rules,
35 having a motion, taking action to approve or authorize
36 something. But the other thing, through the
37 correspondence policy, is that as long as a council
38 discusses something on the record, and its intent is
39 expressed on the record, the letter can be drafted and
40 signed by the Chair in between the meeting cycle, and
41 still be issued consistent with the correspondence
42 policy.

43

44 I know in the past sometimes there's
45 been a perception that you had to have a draft letter
46 and approve the draft letter on the record and through
47 a motion in order for it to be fully authorized. Under
48 the correspondence policy, as long as you have
49 discussion on the record, and the Council's intent is
50 expressed as to what it would like in the letter, then

1 a letter can still be issued.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Is that true even if
4 there's not a quorum.

5

6 MR. JOHNSON: The quorum would be for
7 if you were taking action that required a motion, such
8 as a proposal, submitting a proposal, or approving a
9 proposal, or expressing disapproval of a proposal. But
10 again the correspondence policy relates to whether or
11 not the subject is discussed on the record and a
12 Council has authorized -- or, yeah, has discussed what
13 it wants in a letter.

14

15 So we've dealt with this recently with
16 the Western Interior Council needing to issue letters,
17 but not having a quorum, but the correspondence policy,
18 and I checked on this, just requires a discussion on
19 the record.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Judy,

22

23 MS. CAMINER: And maybe, Carl or Karen,
24 you could help us with timing. At next month's meeting
25 will the Federal Board be discussing this draft policy,
26 or is that going to be discussed this summer or do you
27 know? That might help us with our timing, too.

28

29 MS. HYER: Council members. I do not
30 know when C&T is going to be up. I know that we're
31 going to be dealing with rural/non-rural at the next
32 meeting along with the wildlife. So I would have to
33 get back to you on that.

34

35 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Carl.

36

37 MR. JOHNSON: Well, there is no --
38 unlike the rural, there is no timeline on the C&T. And
39 essentially if the Southeast does submit a formal
40 regulatory proposal, that proposal like any other would
41 have to the process that gets input from the Regional
42 Advisory Councils. And since this meeting cycle is
43 almost concluded, it would not be able to be addressed
44 by the Councils until the fall cycle, and then the
45 Board would not take action until after it had received
46 input from the Councils. So even if the Southeast
47 Council were to submit today a proposal, it would not
48 be addressed at the next Board meeting, because it
49 would have to have Regional Advisory Council input
50 first.

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: So if I understand
2 you correct, even if they submitted a proposal today,
3 we would have opportunity at our fall meeting to
4 comment on it, support it, not support it, and
5 everything else, but this would then give us an idea of
6 the direction they're going.

7
8 MR. JOHNSON: That is correct, Mr.
9 Chair.

10
11 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: In that case I think
12 we should.....

13
14 MS. CAMINER: Think it over.

15
16 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: In that case I think
17 if it's in agreement with the rest of the Council
18 that's here, I think this would be a good piece of
19 homework to take home, look at what they have, and see
20 if they submit a proposal for this fall. But even if
21 they don't submit a proposal for this fall, we can put
22 this on our fall agenda, Donald, and then we can
23 discuss it at that point in time, right?

24
25 Am I right on that, Mr. Johnson.

26
27 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Is that in agreement
30 with the rest of the Council that's here.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I would feel a little
35 bit uncomfortable making a discussion on this with as
36 many Council members missing as we have missing right
37 here, especially if we were going to submit any kind of
38 written comments on it.

39
40 Mr. Johnson.

41
42 MR. JOHNSON: And just as a
43 reiteration, too, of what's been discussed so far at
44 this joint meeting is that Federal subsistence
45 management is a bottom-up process. And the Federal
46 Subsistence Board has a public process involvement in
47 adopting any regulations. So once a regulation is
48 proposed, it has to go through that public process
49 before the Federal Subsistence Board can hear it. So
50 certainly if the Federal Subsistence Board were to

1 acknowledge that such a proposal has been submitted, it
2 would have to follow that public process before taking
3 any action on it itself.

4

5 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Does anybody on
6 the Council have any other thing that they would like
7 to put on the table. Judy.

8

9 MS. CAMINER: I don't want to stretch
10 this out too long.

11

12 Our annual report. After we heard the
13 report this morning from the Fish and Game about the
14 subsistence studies that they're doing, I mean, they,
15 too, probably need money and partners. And so we had
16 talked about, in our annual report, saying something
17 along the line of, of course, encouraging our Federal
18 managers to seek more funds for the wildlife resource,
19 for a wildlife resource monitoring program. Would
20 there be any objection to also adding a sentence along
21 the lines of, we encourage you to partner as much as
22 possible with the Department of Fish and Game, because
23 these subsistence studies that they do are very vital
24 and important to our subsistence communities.

25

26 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Comments.

27

28 MS. STICKWAN: I think that's a good
29 idea.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Andy, what do you
32 think.

33

34 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I would say so.
35 I mean, if it helps enroll.

36

37 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That would be one way
38 to stretch whatever money's available.

39

40 Gloria.

41

42 MS. STICKWAN: This morning Mary talked
43 about recommendation. We should add that to our letter
44 about the food source -- I mean, food security.

45

46 MS. CAMINER: We would recommend
47 perhaps that the Board have a briefing or look into the
48 matter, something along those lines?

49

50 MS. STICKWAN: I don't recall what her

1 recommendation was, but she recommended something.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: She recommended that
4 they read that letter.

5

6 MS. CAMINER: Yes, exactly.

7

8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And that we all read
9 that. And to take that into consideration when they
10 make decisions on subsistence. And I think that that's
11 legitimate.

12

13 MS. CAMINER: And, Mr. Chair, I have
14 one more thought. When we were listening to the North
15 Pacific Fisheries Management Council reps, they also
16 said that the Governor makes appointments, and so
17 perhaps another action we could ask the Board to do,
18 would be to write to the Governor stating the
19 importance and value of having a subsistence member,
20 subsistence user as a member on that Council.

21

22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Donald.

23

24 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
25 just want to remind the Council that if we're going to
26 send a letter to the Governor, it would have to go
27 through the Federal Subsistence Board to get that
28 letter transmitted to the Governor's Office.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That's what Judy was
33 suggesting, that we suggest to the Federal Subsistence
34 Board that they ask the Governor, not that we would
35 write to the Governor, because then we would be
36 lobbying. And I think that that's a legitimate
37 concern, the fact that there is no subsistence user on
38 the National Marine Fishery. Especially in light of
39 the food -- what is it called?

40

41 MS. CAMINER: Security.

42

43 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Food security, you
44 know. And, see, that's where I'm glad to see that they
45 are involving the local people on this mine thing,
46 because to me it has -- the biggest impact I could see
47 out of that mine would be its impact on the food
48 resources of the people that live in the area there.

49

50 Okay. Anything else. Gloria.

1 MS. STICKWAN: On this Denali report,
2 do you think we could ask NPS to give us, to email it
3 to us so we could.....
4
5 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: We have it right here
6 in paper.
7
8 MS. STICKWAN: I know, but in the
9 future could they email it to you or to Donald Mike, so
10 we could get copies.
11
12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. Okay. If we
13 have nothing further, a motion to adjourn is in order.
14
15 MR. SHOWALTER: So move.
16
17 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, James. Do
18 I hear a second. Do I need a second.
19
20 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Second.
21
22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Andy, thanks for
23 seconding it. The meeting is adjourned.
24
25 (Off record)
26
27 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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)ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

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