

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Elaine M Aloysius-Vatter

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 1 of 9 - Submitted 09/29/2016 at 03:47 PM:

Thank you for the privilege in which the shareholders have a voice. I am originally from Piamute, Holy Cross. My family relocated to Kalskag in 1956. I have resided in Kalskag until 1970 at which time I went to Wrangell, Institute. I furthered my Education at Mt. Edgecumbe, then I attended Sheldon Jackson College and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I have a degree in Human Service Technology/Social Work. As a young child I have witnessed these barges taking the gravel at our sandbar, which was approximately 500 yards from the Village. It was disturbing to see as I knew it would cause erosion of the river banks and the people would have hardship. I was young and my voice was heard, as I told my mother to tell my Dad. Her words were: they need it. It was ten-15 years later that the Village began to see the cause & effect. There were erosions of the river banks and from what I gather the Village graveyard is caving in and so is much of the river bank. I am guessing from what I remember to how it is now approximately 10 yards have already eroded and it might be even more from 2000. (I have written short stories about this on Facebook: "you know you are from Kalskag..."). You are welcome to read my stories. I am totally against this Mine. I feel in the long run this devastation will eventually disturb the Kuskokwim River, the health of my people and the animals. I wish to reserve the land, the ecosystem and the people. Money means nothing when it comes to my people and their way of life.

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Donlin Gold Project

Maver Carey
President/CEO
Kuskokwim Corporation

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 2 of 9 - Submitted 10/12/2016 at 12:00 AM:

October 12, 2016

DNR SCRO Donlin Southcentral Region Office 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 900C Anchorage, AK 99501

The Kuskokwim Corporation would like to comment on application received by SCRO on the proposed Donlin Gold Mine. The Kuskokwim Corporation owns much of the surface lands at the proposed mine site, and has a Surface Use Agreement with the mine operator, Donlin Gold, for development at the site.

The construction of the Donlin Gold mine, as well as corresponding infrastructures such as the pipeline, will bring significant job opportunities to the Kuskokwim region, one of the poorest areas in the State of Alaska. During operation, the mine could offer up to 3,000 jobs, and between 600 to 1,200 high-paying, full-time jobs during the mine's estimated 27-plus years of operation. With some of our villages lacking running water, an economic stimulus that provides a new and sustainable source of revenue is worthy of consideration.

Revenue benefits are not solely limited to those living in the TKC region. Calista Corporation shareholders, who own subsurface rights where the project is located, will also benefit greatly from increased revenue opportunities. Additionally, through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act's (ANCSA) 7(i) and 7(j) revenue sharing provisions, a portion of revenue from mine operations would be shared between Alaska Native corporations. To further benefit those in the region, Donlin Gold is contractually obligated to offer a local hire preference, and has demonstrated their commitment to this through their 90 percent Native hire rate during exploration.

While job and revenue opportunities are of high importance, they are weighted equally with the protection of our land and our way of life. Many are concerned over the possible environmental impacts a new mine could bring after experiencing carelessness from other mines such as Red Devil. Donlin Gold has made sustainability, as well as environmental responsibility during construction, operations and closure, key priorities. Donlin Gold has stated that when operations cease, environmental monitoring and protection will not. The mine has a stringent reclamation plan and proposes onsite monitoring of the water far beyond operations. Additionally, Donlin Gold will be required by you, the State of Alaska, to have financial assurances in place to fund reclamation, re-vegetation and protection of the land.

We have worked closely with Donlin and Calista to develop a public easement plan that will provide equal access to the public across our lands with mine development. We are in full support of the transportation and power infrastructure planned to crucial access and energy to the mine site.

Our shareholders have already seen great benefits by working with Donlin Gold through job training during exploration, through funding of scholarships and numerous community efforts. Agreements between TKC and Donlin Gold provide TKC's 10 villages with a strong financial future, viable opportunities of employment, and opportunities for ongoing input.

We feel that not only will our shareholders benefit from the safe development of the mine, but the entire State of Alaska. As a mine that focuses on environmental responsibility, meaningful dialogue with communities, job opportunities and economic stimulus for one of the poorest regions in the entire state, Donlin Gold has TKC's full support.

Sincerely, Maver Carey, President/CEO THE KUSKOKWIM CORPORATION

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Leif Erik Lindh

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 3 of 9 - Submitted 10/18/2016 at 10:08 AM:

Attn: DNR SCRO Donlin Southcentral Region Office 550 West 7th. Ave., Suite 900C Anchorage, Ak 99501

Dear Alaskans,

Please do not allow Donlin to develop an open pit gold mine. It would create a disaster for the Alaska fish- and wildlife. You do not measure the Great Alaskan untouched wilderness and the wildlife in \$\$\$\$. They have been there for generations untouched and needs to be for generations and generations to come. I do not think Donlin has told and provided a real plan for waste rock and especially waste water. The day the gold mine is done they will leave and the whole mess will be there for the Alaskans to clean up, which is going to be impossible. It is hard for me to believe that the mining company would spend, invest and leave the gold \$\$\$ in Alaska. The \$\$ will end up in shearholders pockets that live somewhere else. Alaska is the Great Clean Last Northern Frontier, lets keep it that way. Best regards, Leif Lindh

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

June Mcatee
Vice President
Land & Shareholder Services
Calista Corporation

Topic: **Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project**

Comment 4 of 9 - Submitted 10/12/2016 at 12:00 AM:

October 12, 2016

Attn: DNR SCRO Donlin Southcentral Region Office 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 900C
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

RE: Public Scoping for Donlin Gold, LLC

Calista Corporation supports the applications received from Donlin Gold, LLC for construction of facilities and structures on state lands to support the Donlin Gold project. The proposed project would construct and operate an open pit gold mine on land owned by Calista Corporation and The Kuskokwim Corporation. Development of the resources on our lands will provide benefits to our shareholders and to Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act corporations and shareholders throughout Alaska because resource revenues derived from the mine would be shared with other ANCSA regional and village corporations across the state.

The port and airstrip, access road, fiber optic telecommunications cable and ancillary construction camps, material sites and temporary access routes are needed to move supplies, equipment and fuel to the project site and support mining activity throughout the mine's 27-year production life. Postproduction, the access infrastructure will continue to provide access for reclamation and on-going site and water quality monitoring.

Calista is in agreement that public easements that cross our lands at the Donlin Gold project area should be temporarily closed or rerouted for public safety during the life of the mine.

Calista has worked with Donlin Gold as the project design evolved and we believe the proposed infrastructure and restriction of public easements across our lands at Donlin Creek are necessary components of the project.

Sincerely, June McAtee Vice President, Land & Shareholder Services

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Tom P Payton

Topic: **Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project**

Comment 5 of 9 - Submitted 10/12/2016 at 12:00 AM:

The pipeline is the major concern for myself and my fellow Skwentna residents. It is not needed, and it may seriously scar our pristine areas involved, and disrupt fish and wildlife habitat. The pipeline is not a benefit to Alaskans even if Donlin claims it will. Further more, has the studies revealed if Cook Inlet natural gas has this supply available for the life of the mine? Has there been hearings on the available gas, or is it glossed over for expediency by all involved, including DNR employees.

I think that this has not been thought out very well.

Lastly for now; No, that is a NO State of Alaska funds should be spent on this Donlin project from the mine roads, trails, pads ext. and definitely none to the pipeline itself.

Tom Payton

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Sarah Saunders
Earthjustice Alaska Office
Litigation Assistant

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 6 of 9 - Submitted 10/18/2016 at 12:00 AM:
October 17, 2016
VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION FORM AND EMAIL

Ben Hagedorn SCRO Donlin Project Coordinator Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Southcentral Regional Office 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 900 C Anchorage, AK 99501 E:
Dnr.scro.donlin@alaska.gov

RE: SCRO Applications for Donlin Gold Project

Dear Mr. Hagedorn:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit preliminary comments on the land-use authorizations Donlin Gold has requested to facilitate development of its proposed open-pit gold mine. We appreciate the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) efforts to notify the public of these requests; however, the information ADNR has provided to date does not permit a full assessment of potential issues. There is no reason why ADNR could not have made Donlin Gold's applications available to the public or described the requested authorizations in greater detail during the scoping period. Nevertheless, to the extent possible, we identify below several issues that may be relevant to the present requests.

A number of the requested authorizations could interfere with subsistence activities in the region. Although the extent of the restrictions is unclear, Donlin Gold has asked ADNR to eliminate public easements within the proposed mine area. Donlin Gold has also requested that the state provide material sites along the proposed mine-access road and lease land to the company for an airstrip and port facility. Closing off the area around the mine would exclude local residents from important hunting, trapping, and berry-picking grounds and deprive them of a supply of wood during the winter. Trucks, airplanes, and barges, meanwhile, could scare animals away and prevent fishing on the Kuskokwim River. Residents of several of the surrounding villages depend on the area for their livelihoods, and ADNR must consider the far-reaching consequences of its approvals on traditional ways of life.

Aside from direct effects on subsistence, Donlin Gold's development could open up the region to competition from hunters from outside the region. Specifically, the company has requested a private easement for a road connecting the proposed port, airstrip, mine, and related facilities, as well as land-use permits for temporary-access roads. Although the easement for the access road, if granted, would be exclusive and off-limits to the public, legitimate questions remain about the company's ability to enforce that limitation during operations and post-closure, when the road would be maintained indefinitely.⁽¹⁾ The temporary access roads would only further encourage outside hunters to travel to the area to exploit newly opened areas. ADNR must take into account the possibility of increased

competition and its effects on local communities - when adjudicating Donlin Gold's applications.

Relatedly, many residents in the region have expressed concerns about the social impacts of the mine and related infrastructure. Although the mine-access road would not connect any communities with larger population centers, workers who reside elsewhere could bring commonly abused substances with them, despite Donlin Gold's policy prohibiting drug and alcohol use at the project site. (2) Moreover, sudden increases in income from mining jobs could lead to more spending on drugs, alcohol, and gambling. (3) These problems have devastated many of the communities in the region, and the state should carefully consider how its approvals might worsen the situation.

While ADNR must attend to these and other concerns as part of a reasoned decision-making process, we remind the agency of its legal obligations to determine whether the authorizations are in the best interests of the state and conform to land-use plans or land classifications. These obligations include the following:

- ADNR must determine whether a decision to vacate, modify, or relocate a public easement is in the best interests of the state, taking into account public comments regarding the alternate access required by regulation. (4) Donlin Gold's applications should demonstrate that equal or better access, or at least a reasonable alternative means of access, to subsistence areas near the mine is available. (5)
- ADNR must integrate its decision whether to grant a private easement into land-use planning and classification. (6) Further, the agency generally may only dispose of classified lands, e.g., in the form of leases, easements, or permits. (7) The access road would pass through, and the material sites would be located in, unclassified state lands, some of which lie outside the boundaries of any area plan. (8) Therefore, ADNR will need to develop a regional or site-specific land-use plan and classify or reclassify lands before authorizing the requested uses. (9) The new classifications must be consistent with underlying land-use plans. (10)
- ADNR must make a finding that the requested authorizations are in the best interests of the state. (11,12) The agency should not limit its review to the impacts of the immediate uses of the land, but instead should consider the consequences of the entire project. (13)

We expect that ADNR will address these requirements during the course of adjudicating Donlin Gold's applications and provide complete explanations as to why the requested authorizations are in the best interests of the state, particularly in light of the concerns raised above.

Thank you for your careful attention to these important issues. We look forward to participating in the formal review process in the coming months.

Footnotes: 1 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Donlin Gold Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement at 2-58 (2015) (DEIS). 2 Donlin Gold, Planning for Your Future: Jobs with Donlin Gold at 4 (undated),

http://www.donlingold.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Donlin_Jobs_Book.pdf.

3 See DEIS at 3.18-47. 4 11 AAC 51.065(e). 5 See id. § 51.065(f); id. § 51.065(g)(2)(A); id. § 51.065(h)(2). 6 AS 38.04.065(f); see also 11 AAC 55.040(i)(6). 7 11 AAC 55.020(d); id. § 55.040(i)(6) (allowing ADNR to grant a right-of-way only for minor access on unclassified lands); see also *N. Alaska Env'tl. Ctr. v. ADNR*, 2 P.3d 629, 637 (Alaska 2000) (holding that the issuance of a right-of-way permit is a disposal of an interest in land for some statutory purposes). 8 Compare ADNR, Donlin Mine Project Detail (Requested by Applicant) (2016) <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/mining/largemine/donlin/pdf/DonlinMapMineSite.pdf>, with ADNR, Area Plans (2016), http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/2014_areaplans_MH.pdf. 9 AS § 38.04.065; 11 AAC § 55.020(a); see also id. § 55.030 (governing land-use planning and classification). 10 See AS 38.04.065(h); 11 AAC 55.020(a); id. § 55.040(c). 11 AS

38.05.035(e); see also N. Alaska Env'tl. Ctr., 2 P.3d at 637-39 (holding that the issuance of a right-of-way permit is a disposal of an interest in land for purposes of the statute requiring a best interest finding). Although some of the authorizations Donlin Gold has requested may be nominally revocable, given the scale of the project, they are not functionally revocable and thus are not exempt from the best interest finding. Cf. id. at 639 (holding that a right-of-way permit was not functionally revocable under AS 38.05.035(e)(6) because of "the potential long-term environmental damage [and] the sheer magnitude of the project and concomitant investment of resources"). 12 The restrictions on public easements must undergo a separate best-interest review, as noted above. 13 See AS 38.05.035(e)(1)(C).

Sincerely, Tracy Simeon, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Patricia Yaska, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Annie Fredericks, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Anna Michael, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Teresa Simeon-Hunter, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Josephine Phillips, Chuathbaluk, Alaska; Stephanie Butte, Bethel, Alaska; Seth Ragsdale, Bethel, Alaska; Alison Zaukar, Crooked Creek, Alaska; Raymond Parent, Crooked Creek, Alaska; Timothy Zaukar, Crooked Creek, Alaska; Dave Diehl, Aniak, Alaska; Esther Donhauser, Aniak, Alaska; Douglas K. Carney, Sleetmute, Alaska; Rainy Diehl, Anchorage, Alaska; Thomas S. Waldo, Staff Attorney, Earthjustice; Peter Heisler, Associate Attorney, Earthjustice; Pamela Miller, Co-Chair, IPEN, Executive Director, Alaska Community Action on Toxics; Elisabeth Dabney, Executive Director, Northern Alaska Environmental Center; Julia Mickley, Clean Water & Mining Coordinator, Northern Alaska Environmental Center

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Keja Whiteman
ANVCA
Executive Director

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 7 of 9 - Submitted 10/17/2016 at 12:00 AM:

October 17, 2016 State of Alaska Attn: DNR SCRO Donlin Clark Cox, Southcentral Regional Manager Southcentral Region Office 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 900C Anchorage, AK 99501
Dear Mr. Cox,

On behalf the Alaska Native Village Corporation Association (ANVCA), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of the Donlin Gold Mine project and related applications. ANVCA is a member based nonprofit organization composed of Village Corporations from across the State of Alaska. The mission of our organization is to promote Village Corporation success and protection of our Native lands. Additionally, ANVCA was purposely formed: To provide an officially recognized voice for the interests of Alaska Native Village Corporations; To promote responsible resource management;

ANVCA supports individual Village and Regional Corporations actions to responsibly manage, conserve or develop their lands and resources for the benefit of their shareholders and corporation. In this case, the location near Crooked Creek in the proposed project area, this land and resources are owned by ANCSA Corporations. Allowing the project to proceed will bring anticipated long term economic contributions to the area, which currently has no other commercial prospects.

After reviewing public materials, ANVCA supports the Donlin Gold Mine project and applications. Furthermore, in the opinion of our organization, there has been great effort to recognize the importance of subsistence resources, minimizing environmental risks, working to benefit the local economy and significance of self-determination among Alaska Native Corporations. Finally the most notable benefit may be the anticipated allocations of shared revenue with Alaska Natives across the state, outlined through Sec. 7(i) and 7(j) of ANCSA.

Thank you again for the receiving comments, if you have further questions feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely, Keja Whiteman Executive Director ANVCA Articles of Incorporation, Article III.
Purposes of Corporation

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Kathryn Young
State Land Sales
Land Sales Section Manager

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 8 of 9 - Submitted 10/13/2016 at 03:56 PM:

The ADL s associated with Donlin s application fall within the following 3 townships:

1. T20N, R50W, SM: Classified - 1st is minerals & Wildlife Habitat with 2nd Public recreation; Prohibited - Land Disposal
2. T21N, R50W, SM: Unclassified
3. T22N, R50W, SM: Unclassified

The first 2 townships are in the Kuskokwim Area Plan, Unit 10, George River. The third township is mostly not part of any area plan.

The proposed access road, ADL 232346, connects Donlin s Mine project and proposed airstrip through all of the above referenced townships to Kuskokwim River. However the Kuskokwim River frontage is native owned and won t provide public access to State owned lands. The State also doesn t own Sections 1-12, T21N, R50W; Sections 1,12,13, 34-36, T22N, R50W, SM; which will cause a disconnect along the proposed access road between State Lands. We recommend the State receives, in exchange to the ADL easements, public access easements across non State owned lands for future connectivity.

ADL 232346 is for a private exclusive easement connecting the proposed port, airstrip, mine and other related facilities. ADL 236624 requests to restrict public easements within the proposed mine area. We agree public access should be restricted in the immediate mine development area, however we disagree on the necessity of exclusive easement or restricting public easements for the entirety of the townships crossed by the proposed access road. The land classification above indicates public recreation and harvest as appropriate use. Granting a public easement opens this use on these lands for the general public. The Alaska State residents should be allowed continued use of State lands in accordance with the Kuskokwim Area Plan and the access thereof.

Recommendations are:

- Receive reciprocal public access easements across non State owned lands to maintain future connectivity when Donlin Mine operations has subsided.
- Issue a public easement from the river to the airport across state lands - Do not issue a private exclusive easement across State lands or restrict public easements.

Kathryn Young, Section Manager, Land Sales Section, Division of Mining Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources, State of Alaska

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Donlin Gold Project

Kendra Zamzow
Csp2
Staff Scientist

Topic: Public Scoping Comments for the Donlin Gold Project

Comment 9 of 9 - Submitted 10/16/2016 at 02:11 PM:

In locations where the upper layer of soil and vegetation are removed to be replaced when work is done, efforts should be made to prevent dessication of tundra mats and maintain soil fertility to increase the chances that revegetation with natural materials will be successful. Where new soil or seeds are brought in to establish vegetation, they should be free of non-native grasses such as squirrel grass and Kentucky Bluegrass.