

1 COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM

2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

3 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

4
5 Taken May 24, 2018
6 Commencing at 11:36 a.m.

7 Pages 1 - 148, inclusive

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9 Taken at
10 Community Hall
11 Arctic Village, Alaska

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20 Reported by:
21 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR
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1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S

2 For United States Department of Interior, Lands and
3 Minerals Management:

4 Joe Balash
5 Assistant Secretary

6 Kate MacGregor
7 Deputy Assistant Secretary

8 Steve Wackowski
9 Senior Advisor of Alaska Affairs

10 For United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land
11 Management:

12 Karen Mouritsen
13 Acting State Director

14 Nicole Hayes
15 Project Manager

16 For United States Department of Interior, Department of
17 Fish & Wildlife Service:

18 Karen Clark
19 Regional Director

20 Steve Berendzen
21 Arctic Refuge Manager

22 Hollis Twitchell
23 Natural Resource Specialist

24 For EMPSI:

25 Chad Ricklefs
 Project Manager

 For SRBA:

 Paul Lawrence
 Senior Research Associate

 Taken by:

 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken 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.

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MS. MYRA THUMMA: We are going to open up
3 with a prayer.

4 (Invocation offered by Myra Thumma.)

5 MR. JAMES JOHN: Okay. (Speaking in
6 Gwich'in.) My name's James John. I'm first chief of
7 Arctic. I grew up around this village. Since I have been
8 a little kid, I have been hunting caribou. I have been
9 living only and I live around subsistence life. My way of
10 living is just live off the animals. And all my people
11 are the same as what I'm doing right now. And we are
12 asking for people's help with what I'm doing right now.

13 I appreciate you guys coming out here. I hope you
14 just keep in mind what we are doing right now. Thank you
15 very much for all of you and my people and for coming this
16 way and Mahsi' Choo.

17 MR. DENNIS ERICK: Hello. My name is
18 Dennis Erick. I'm the first chief of Venetie. I'd like
19 to welcome all the visitors that came to Arctic and all
20 the visitors that represent us, and all the people that
21 don't represent us, but you know you are welcome. We
22 always welcome everybody, no matter how we are. We got a
23 good heart.

24 But I'd like to say something about the caribou. The
25 caribou, when I lived in Venetie, it's kind of farther.

1 It's kind of farther to get caribou. But even then, we
2 still get caribou. We still live off the caribou. Also,
3 my brothers and my sisters, my aunties and uncles,
4 grandpa, grandma, great-great grandpa, great-great
5 grandma, they all taught us this. It's our way of life.
6 We can't just walk away from the way we live.

7 And there is not only caribou. There is also
8 migratory bird, waterfowl, fish, shorebirds, all of them,
9 they live up there in the coastal plains. And we need to
10 protect it, no matter what. We have to encourage our
11 people to do what my grandpa did, to do what their grandpa
12 did. They survived. We didn't have no sugar. We didn't
13 have coffee. Now we do because we are living in the
14 modern world, but we still depend on the caribou.

15 As a chief, and my people -- I love my people, even
16 though even if I don't look like it, I still deep in the
17 heart. And that's all I got to say. Thank you.

18 MS. KAREN MOURITSEN: Okay. Thank you.
19 Hello, everyone. I'm Karen Mouritsen. I'm the BLM's
20 Acting State Director for the State of Alaska. I really
21 want to thank the community for welcoming us here to your
22 community. We're here to talk about the leasing EIS for
23 the coastal plain with you. We really thank you for the
24 welcome. The dinner last night was wonderful. I had the
25 caribou stew and the caribou and the fish. So thank you

1 so much for that, and the dancing and the music. It was
2 just great. So thank you for that.

3 I would like to just introduce a few people and just
4 tell a little bit about the format of the meeting, and
5 then we will get started.

6 So I'd like to introduce Joe Balash. He's the
7 Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management at
8 the Department of Interior. And Steve Wackowski is the
9 Department of Interior Senior Advisor to the Secretary for
10 Alaska. Kate MacGregor is our Deputy Assistant Secretary
11 for Lands and Minerals Management. Karen Clark is our
12 Assistant Regional Director for the Fish & Wildlife
13 Service here in Alaska. Steve Berendzen -- where did
14 Steve go -- the refuge manager maybe you know. Hollis
15 Twitchell -- Hollis, thank you. Nicole Hayes is the
16 project manager who will be giving the presentation in
17 just a minute. Chad Ricklefs and Paul Lawrence are
18 helping with the sign-ins.

19 Mary Vavrik is our court reporter, and she's taking
20 down the comments from you all. It's really important for
21 us to hear your ideas about this, so she's going to take
22 down your comments, and that's why we have the microphone
23 here so she can hear and get the comments.

24 We also -- Debbie is going to translate for us if
25 anyone wants a translator. Thank you, Debbie, for

1 agreeing to do that. And then we have the videographers
2 here who -- back here who have been making the documentary
3 for a while around here. So they are going to film some
4 of the comments people make.

5 We are here for the scoping meeting for this coastal
6 plain leasing EIS. And scoping means that we are just
7 starting the process. We are trying to figure out what
8 issues we should address while we do this Environmental
9 Impact Statement. So the purpose is to hear from you all.
10 We want to hear if you have got issues you would like us
11 to address in that EIS. And so we are -- Nicole is going
12 to give you a presentation in a minute, but mostly this is
13 to hear from you all.

14 And after Nicole does the presentation, we would like
15 to have people start coming up to the microphone maybe
16 starting with the elders if we have some elders that want
17 to talk, and then Arctic Village residents, we would
18 really like to hear from you all, and then everyone else.
19 And so we really do want to hear your thoughts.

20 So Nicole, do you want to start the presentation?

21 MS. NICOLE HAYES: Thank you, Karen. And
22 I'm really bad about the mic, so if I walk away, just wave
23 your hand.

24 Like she said, thank you. Thank you for welcoming
25 us. We are really glad to be here and we really look

1 forward to hearing from you. As Tonya reminded me, people
2 want to speak and share their thoughts, so I'm going to go
3 through the presentation fairly quickly, but I want to
4 help frame what exactly we are doing here and also share
5 with you how you could best provide input to inform our
6 decisionmaking process. So that's what I'm going to focus
7 on.

8 So again, the agenda is: Why are we here? What is
9 the coastal plain EIS? What is the BLM required to do?
10 What are the agency responsibilities? What is BLM
11 responsible for? What is the Fish & Wildlife Service
12 responsible for? What is the NEPA process? You hear NEPA
13 referred to often. We will what explain the NEPA process
14 is. We will share how subsistence and ANILCA Section 810
15 fits into that NEPA process. We know that's one of the
16 major concerns and issues, so we will touch on that and
17 then provide you guys an opportunity to share information.

18 And then the most important part is how to
19 participate. So we will tell you all the ways that you
20 can participate. I'll touch on them now. There are some
21 sign-in sheets back there. There is forms. If you
22 haven't picked up a handout, pick up a handout. You can
23 submit written comments. You can submit oral comments.
24 You can go online and submit the form online. So there is
25 various ways. Again, we want to hear from you during this

1 period and get your thoughts and comments and the issues
2 we should be analyzing in the EIS.

3 I forgot to mention, Debbie was going to kind of
4 summarize what I say after each slide in Gwich'in, so I'm
5 going to let her come up here and speak for just a moment.

6 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

7 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So what I'm going to
8 cover now is the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. And you
9 will hear that commonly referred to as the Tax Act. This
10 is basically the requirements of the Secretary of the
11 Interior and the BLM. This map that's being displayed up
12 here -- and you guys have probably seen it in other
13 places -- is the map that's specifically referenced in the
14 Tax Act. It outlines the coastal plain area, which is
15 also commonly referred to as the 1002 area. You will hear
16 us call it the coastal plains for the Coastal Plain Oil
17 and Gas Leasing EIS. The coastal plain area encompasses
18 1.6 million acres of the 19.3 million acres of the Arctic
19 National Wildlife Refuge.

20 Section 20001 of the Tax Act specifically requires
21 the Secretary of the Interior to do, acting through the
22 Bureau of Land Management, is to establish a competitive
23 oil and gas leasing program, similar to what's done under
24 NPR-A, or the National Petroleum Reserve, under the Naval
25 Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. So the

1 requirements are to implement this oil and gas leasing
2 program similar to how it's done in NPR-A. So that's a
3 requirement of us.

4 Also, we are required to hold not fewer than two
5 lease sales, the first one having to occur within the next
6 four years. The second one is required to occur within
7 the next seven years. And the other requirements are that
8 not fewer than 400,000 acres of the highest potential
9 hydrocarbon areas shall be offered for lease. So those
10 are the requirements that we are operating under right
11 now.

12 And I'm going to provide some information to you all
13 about how best to help inform, how we can protect those
14 critical areas and have conditions so that it is -- we
15 follow the NEPA process and we preserve, enhance, protect
16 as best we can those areas that may be leased.

17 So the agency responsibilities for -- I'm sorry.
18 Debbie, did you want to --

19 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

20 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So the agency
21 responsibilities for the coastal plain leasing EIS fall
22 mostly with BLM because they were designated within the
23 Tax Act to implement the oil and gas leasing EIS. We are
24 the lead federal agency for the EIS, so that's why we are
25 up here speaking. And I'm the designated project manager

1 for it. We will be responsible for the leasing program
2 and to have the lease sales. The Fish & Wildlife Service,
3 we are working closely with them. They are a cooperating
4 agency. Obviously, they know the refuge well, and they
5 administer the surface of the Arctic National Wildlife
6 Refuge.

7 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

8 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this slide outlines
9 the BLM oil and gas leasing and development process. I
10 just want to highlight we are working on the leasing
11 phase. And the EIS, the Environmental Impact Statement,
12 is for leasing. Any other activities -- seismic
13 activities, post-lease exploration drilling, development,
14 production, other requirements of the Tax Act -- which the
15 Tax Act does require the Secretary to authorize up to
16 2,000 surface acres of development, but any of those
17 authorizations would require separate NEPA analysis. So
18 we are focusing on the leasing and the EIS to have those
19 lease sales. Again, if there are subsequent activities
20 that occur pre or after a lease sale occurs, there will be
21 another NEPA process. So there will be an opportunity to
22 provide input and to share information prior to decisions
23 being made about those activities.

24 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

25 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this is kind of a

1 busy, boring slide, but this is what the National
2 Environmental Policy Act is. And I'm just going to
3 quickly walk through how the process works because this is
4 really important because this is where we get the public
5 input. When there is a federal action that may have a
6 significant impact on -- on something on the environment,
7 then the federal government is required to develop an
8 Environmental Impact Statement. So that is what we are
9 doing for this leasing program. It was initiated, and the
10 requirement started with the passing of the Tax Act.

11 We have to publish a notice of intent to say that we
12 are going to do an Environmental Impact Statement, so that
13 was done on April 20th. And that kicks off the scoping
14 period. The standard scoping periods are 30 days. We
15 initiated it with a 60-day scoping period. Currently that
16 ends on June 19th. That little red flag in the far
17 right-hand corner shows where we are right now.

18 And this is the really important part of the process
19 because this is where we get input from the public that
20 tells us what we should be analyzing in the EIS so that we
21 can make informed decisions. This is where we hear
22 concerns, we learn about the issues, and we also learn
23 ways to offset some of those impacts that may occur. So
24 that's the type of input we are looking for.

25 After the scoping period closes, we produce a scoping

1 report, and then we start developing alternatives for the
2 proposed action. There are some specific requirements we
3 know we have to fit within. There must be at least
4 400,000 acres offered for lease, and we know it's within
5 the coastal plain area. So some of the things that would
6 really help us is -- for the alternatives development is
7 understanding maybe timing restrictions or areas to avoid,
8 leasing restrictions where we would have no surface
9 occupancy, things like that. And I'll go into that a
10 little bit more.

11 We then write the draft EIS, and the draft EIS is
12 another opportunity for the public to provide comment.
13 That gets published and we come out and do meetings again
14 to get input on the information that's in that document,
15 and then we go back and take all the comments that we
16 receive and we revise the document and develop a final
17 EIS. And then after the final EIS is completed, we
18 publish a Record of Decision, and then a lease sale may be
19 held.

20 I also just want to emphasize that there is two main
21 parts in here where there is periods for public comment,
22 but we also have other opportunities where we consult.
23 For example, government-to-government consultation is
24 ongoing throughout the entire cycle of this NEPA process.
25 So we receive input from affected tribes throughout the

1 process. So it's not just a two-time or two-opportunity
2 time to receive input, necessarily.

3 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

4 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this slide just
5 showing how the Section 810 of ANILCA process fits into
6 the NEPA process. It is separate from the NEPA analysis,
7 but it's a really critical component that we address
8 obviously here in Alaska.

9 So the initial 810 evaluation is appended to the
10 draft EIS. The draft EIS identifies the subsistence uses
11 and resources, so the information provided during scoping
12 really informs what is in that initial 810 finding. So we
13 have to use information that's put into this EIS to make a
14 determination for subsistence use impacts. So after the
15 draft EIS is completed, concurrently we do that initial
16 810 evaluation which is appended to the draft EIS.

17 And then if the initial evaluation is it may
18 significantly restrict subsistence uses, then we have
19 subsistence hearings. Those, again, are concurrent with
20 the public meetings that we hold for the draft EIS, but
21 they are in the affected communities of which there is a
22 finding that there may be a significant restriction to
23 subsistence uses. And those meetings are separate.

24 After those meetings, we take all of the information
25 that we learn. There is recommendations about how to

1 avoid or minimize impacts to those subsistence resources,
2 and then a final determination is made, and that's
3 appended to the final EIS.

4 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

5 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So the decisions that
6 are to be made are what do the alternatives look like.
7 And the alternatives really are the lease stipulations
8 that go onto these leasing tracts. So the leasing tract
9 locations and also the stipulations. Some examples are
10 timing window restrictions, when are the caribou calving,
11 like where are the areas that we should avoid entirely.
12 Those types of things are the -- is the information that
13 we are looking for from you. We know there is concerns
14 about subsistence uses and impacts, but how can we best
15 avoid them. So if you have that sort of information,
16 please share it with us because that's what we are
17 interested in hearing.

18 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

19 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So part of the NEPA
20 process is working with agencies and governments that have
21 specialized expertise or jurisdiction by law that can help
22 inform our process. Today to date we have Fish & Wildlife
23 Service as a cooperating agency, the State of Alaska, the
24 North Slope Borough. And as of yesterday we also have the
25 Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government, the Venetie

1 Village Council and the Arctic Village Council. So these
2 are cooperating agencies. Again, they have specialized
3 expertise that are going to help inform the EIS and help
4 in our decisionmaking process.

5 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

6 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this is a tentative
7 schedule that we have for development of the EIS. You
8 will note a lot of it is in seasons. We are in the
9 scoping period right now. We have had requests to extend
10 the scoping period that are being considered. We are
11 looking at alternatives development this summer.
12 Cooperating agencies, again, participate in helping us
13 draft the EIS and providing input into that EIS. So we
14 are looking at having a draft EIS this fall. We will
15 revise the draft EIS and, based off of the public
16 feedback, that takes a few months. And then we will
17 publish the final EIS and have a Record of Decision, which
18 is currently projected to be spring and summer of next
19 year. Again, that's for the leasing component and to have
20 a lease sale. And that's according to the schedule that
21 we are on right now.

22 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

23 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So currently, again, we
24 are conducting scoping. These are the locations in which
25 we are conducting scoping meetings. We rescheduled --

1 originally we were planning on being in Kaktovik this
2 week, and we had to reschedule. And we plan on going
3 there June 12th. Our next meetings will be Fairbanks,
4 Anchorage, Utqiagvik, Venetie and then Kaktovik and
5 Washington D.C. We have received requests for additional
6 scoping locations that will be considered and we will be
7 making a decision on in the near future.

8 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

9 MS. SARAH JAMES: I'm trying to explain to
10 them that some people that don't understand that -- this
11 is public land. That's how come they are having it
12 throughout different places, Washington, D.C., for
13 example, and that kind of stuff. And this has got to do
14 with public land. This has got to do with government, and
15 that's why they make sure that -- okay.

16 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

17 MS. NICOLE HAYES: Again, we have various
18 ways to provide comment. We are getting ready to open up
19 the comment. You can public comment right now. We do
20 have a court reporter, as Karen mentioned. Mary is our
21 court reporter, so we do ask that you come up to the mic
22 and clearly state your name. Speak slowly because Mary
23 will tell you if you are speaking too fast. And if you
24 need the mic brought to you, just let us know. We would
25 like elders to come up and speak first and then residents

1 of Arctic village and then everybody else.

2 There is various ways if are -- if you don't want to
3 provide public comment, you could also provide public
4 comment and submit written comment, which written comment
5 is always encouraged. The ways to provide comments are in
6 the packets in the back of the room, but also up on the
7 screen. So you can email, submit them on the form, or
8 mail them into that address. And again, the scoping
9 period currently closes June 19th. So please provide your
10 comments.

11 (Translating into Gwich'in.)

12 MS. NICOLE HAYES: Thank you, Debbie and
13 Sarah. So this is the end of my presentation. And we now
14 welcome public comment. I think Tiffany and Tonya were
15 going to help identify elders to come up and speak, or
16 they can just come up and speak.

17 MR. JAMES JOHN: (Speaking in Gwich'in.)

18 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So just reminder to
19 state your name for the record. And then if you need a
20 translator into English, because the court reporter needs
21 it in English for the record, then we need to have it
22 translated.

23 MR. JAMES JOHN: Mahsi' Choo. (Speaking
24 in Gwich'in.) So I'm thinking -- I don't know
25 [indiscernible] on the map exactly where, and right now I

1 even talking the plan. I don't know where. But seems
2 like that is where the caribou come from. And what I'd
3 like to see people to fly the young people up there and
4 where it's going to be and show them where the caribou
5 calving grounds is. And the Fish & Wildlife, you are the
6 ones, show the people how the caribou channel and where
7 the overflows, make sure the caribou [indiscernible]. I
8 don't think it will. But I want to see today, I want you
9 to show them a big map exactly where it is, and I want you
10 to tell the young people here, this generation, to fly
11 them up there and take a look at it exactly.

12 Looks to me, I'm kind of worried this morning. It
13 looks like it's going to hurt us because that's where the
14 caribou is. That's where everything is.

15 And North Slope Borough, you mentioned that, too, you
16 know. They even got the boundary lines up 20, 30 miles
17 from here up north. And I got my allotment in there now.
18 So I don't know why North Slope Borough increased their
19 line over the North Slope. But I think the North Slope
20 Borough belongs to the Slope. And every time I say that
21 people just ignore me, you know. And let's see what --
22 that's all I can say. Just show people where exactly you
23 think that all going to impose.

24 20 years ago we got all that closed down
25 [indiscernible] south by Venetie. Everybody know. You

1 know, we lost black bear. We lost ground squirrel.
2 Nothing grow back still.

3 And also when the pipeline that -- in Arctic Village
4 I remember we don't have caribou for four years. Four
5 years.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. JONATHAN JOHN: My name is Jonathan
8 John. I'm from Arctic Village. And I have been a tribal
9 leader for some years and before. And back in 1986 when
10 this whole thing started that I recall, and since then we
11 have been asking to let the caribou alone, but we still
12 have to go and talk about it. We need to come
13 cooperating. I first know that it will devastate the
14 whole caribou. It will. The only place -- the only, only
15 place is calving ground that they will calve is there.
16 They will calve around here, but it won't sustain itself
17 as much as it would as is the place up there.

18 Also, that we know we have been a hunter. We always
19 try to keep our place clean, our land clean. Even walking
20 through the bushes, for instance, the bushes come off your
21 clothes, a little lint come off your clothes. Caribou are
22 the same. They will smell you right off of the brush.
23 That's how sensitive they are.

24 We ask to have some more time and to discuss it some
25 more, but we are -- my people have asked a step at a time

1 and we only take one step and we want to be sure before we
2 take another one.

3 But on the other hand, I know that we -- it's part of
4 our livinghood. Our caribou is part of our livinghood
5 just as much as fishermen depend on the fish. They depend
6 on their livinghood on the fish, and we -- none of that
7 has a cash value, but otherwise value. And it's just a
8 count to the same.

9 So please, I ask and I request to that we be part of
10 cooperating agency. This much I ask for right now. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. GIDEON JAMES: My name is Gideon
13 James. I live in Arctic Village, and I'm one of the
14 elders. And I have long years of experience in working
15 with the tribe. So what I want to say is that when these
16 people speak for the animals, it is very -- these are very
17 intelligent animal. They travel thousands, thousands,
18 thousands of miles to the feeding ground, into the calving
19 ground. And when they travel, they got their own leaders.
20 Any caribou don't lead, but they got special group within
21 their herd that leads. I know that because I used to run
22 them down with snowshoe, and I -- it's a hard time. It's
23 hard to run it down with the group of leaders like that.
24 And you can tell by the calluses in front of their legs.
25 There is calluses right there.

1 And the reason I bring this up because we are here to
2 protect migrating animals and species. There is
3 thousands, thousands of ducks that -- that fly to that
4 area to nest. Like yesterday or day before, there is new
5 life begins up there. There is new life that begins up
6 there so everybody will stay healthy as in Gwich'in
7 country.

8 Also, a lot of people that come to see the
9 attraction, like hikers and other environmentalist group
10 that want to see it, they spent their fortune to see it.
11 And we see it down at the airport. Pretty soon there will
12 be hundreds and hundreds of people walking at the airport.
13 That's all they are going -- they want to go up to see it.
14 So we are not alone. We are not alone here.

15 And what we want to protect is the sole purpose, the
16 sole purpose of animals to survive, animals to stay
17 healthy, to have clean water, clean air, clean food.
18 That's what our main concern is. And it's -- throughout
19 the history, our people are really smart, are very
20 intelligent that they keep these animals healthy.

21 And now, now this Tax Act and Job Act they call it,
22 we don't call it. Our president is the one that call it,
23 and he never paid -- he never showed us that he pay tax.
24 He never -- he never show us that he worked for anybody
25 instead of leading you on.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. LOUIE JOHN: Good morning. My name is
3 Louie John, and I'm here from Arctic Village. I have a
4 lot of experience with caribou. I'll tell you a little
5 story about myself. When I was a kid, I was upriver.
6 That's our feeding ground. That's our garden out here. A
7 lot of times other society tell us that we are poor. No.
8 Look at me. You know, I feeding myself good because,
9 look, there is a lot of good food out there. The fish --
10 because we have been environmentalists for 10,000 years.
11 And look at it. We try to keep our land clean the way it
12 is for a thousand years. We don't try to destroy it
13 because we know it help us. In return, we take care of
14 the land. In return, it takes care of us. That's the way
15 we believe.

16 And when I was a kid, I didn't know about Lower 48.
17 All I know is my life here. That's all I knew until BIA
18 came around and start teaching us about Liberty Bell that
19 crack until it rain -- it rained until it crack, you know.
20 And that was our freedom. So they tell us about all these
21 histories, you know, polar bear and revolution and all
22 that stuff so they could convert us into your society.
23 And that was it.

24 But we know that you go to school so you could be
25 going to work in the future. That's how it works. I

1 understand later on. But when I was upriver and all that
2 camping and getting harvest, spring -- like right now
3 it's -- our young men is going out and getting those
4 wonderful waterfowls. They are on their way to the
5 calving grounds, calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou
6 herd. And they are going to see some stuff they are never
7 going to see. And it will change. That's because one
8 billionaire scribbled his name on a piece of paper, you
9 know, and that's all we look in our culture. To me in the
10 United States, there is a human rights issue, but the
11 other one is overlooked.

12 But the main thing that I thought that life was like
13 this, that I'll be happy. And about 50 years later I
14 didn't know I'll be fighting for my culture, my way of
15 life. And this is where I'm at now. And of course I'm
16 angry, but I'm going to try to make sense to you. Maybe
17 you might do a little bit different. Maybe you keep away
18 from the calving grounds because there is not only
19 caribou; there is moose, musk ox, ground squirrels, mice.
20 You know, wolf -- wolf goes around there, and when they
21 got nothing to eat, they eat mice. That's their life. So
22 all that will be destroyed.

23 I know it because I have been -- I -- I'm a heavy
24 equipment operator. I'm a certified operator, and I'm
25 also a carpenter. I have been fire fighting as a crew

1 boss for 25 years. And I know a lot of experience. I
2 even live in the city, and -- but I'm saying that I want
3 to experience another job, so I apply around and looking
4 for work for -- I wonder how it would be at North Slope.

5 So I went to the PGS. That's the oil company. I
6 went over there and try to get in there, and then they
7 accept me, and I went to the orientation and -- you know,
8 orientation about hazardous around the complex, right?
9 Hazardous, right? Okay. You know that. So they teach us
10 that, where not to go or where there is a sign there.
11 There is a sign so we recognize those. I got the
12 orientation.

13 Then after that they even fly here to pick me up to
14 go to the North Slope. And I have to go to Anchorage, way
15 to Anchorage, then have to fly all the way up there again,
16 you know. That's a lot of money, I guess. Oil make all
17 kinds of money.

18 But so when I was up there, they put me on that
19 viber. The viber is seismic work. So I have been
20 operating that. And there is a train of Cat, and each one
21 of them got a little trailer like, and there is like beds
22 and kitchens and all. They got different lineup. And
23 they move camp. And we, viber, we drive in behind. And
24 when we drive, I could see where all those sleds would
25 dig, and when they dig in, they tear out the tundra, a big

1 piece like this [indicating], and it's laying around
2 everywhere.

3 And sometimes out of the blue, we operate, we just
4 drive along. All of a sudden there is a burst out of fuel
5 or hydraulic fuel, and just like that. Like that it
6 could -- it could splatter out 200 gallons just like that.
7 And it will be all over the snow, tundra, and we have to
8 clean it up. But it's not 100 percent clean. It could be
9 80 percent, 90 percent. And that's not clean. That's
10 another impact.

11 Not only that, when I take a break been driving a
12 long time, maybe 12, even 36 hours sometimes, and I get
13 tired, I stretch out, and sometimes even in your -- I look
14 back, a whole train, Cat trailers and all that move
15 forward, moving camp, I look back, I could see the thick
16 black smoke behind us. I asked them, what the heck is
17 that back there? That's us, he said. The whole train
18 going. That's the exhaust fumes, exhaust black smoke.
19 And I'm sure they land on the snow. In the spring it
20 melts. And caribou, mice, ground squirrels, even ducks,
21 fish, they taste it, I bet you.

22 So I ask will you, if you got any heart in your mind,
23 I -- I feel like the Gwich'in Nation as being a United
24 States citizen. You know, remember about a little girl
25 that fell into a well? Anybody remember that? We were up

1 here. We were glued to that TV for three days, want that
2 little girl to get out. That's being a United States
3 citizen, have a heart for that family even though we don't
4 know them because we are a United States citizen. Okay?
5 When that little girl was -- they took her up to the
6 surface of earth, you know, even my brothers and my sister
7 jump up joy, they are happy. That's how United States
8 citizen we are. Even though you guys live down there, you
9 don't know about us.

10 And then another tragedy, McCullough, Christie
11 McCullough, the schoolteacher. School teacher are like
12 mothers or father. They care for you. They protect you.
13 They do a lot of things. They teach you. And that
14 happened, another tragedy. It saddened us. We were sad.

15 And then there is another one came around, 9/11. We
16 see that two towers fell down, we were angry because we
17 are United States citizens. And all that, we care for our
18 people even though they don't know us, we don't know them,
19 but still they are United States citizen.

20 So about 60 years or so later, I didn't know that the
21 United States would be against me. And that's how I feel
22 right now. I don't know what to say to you guys. Just
23 keep away from the calving grounds baby for our people,
24 for your people.

25 Bush says for everybody, but I don't believe him -- I

1 mean, not Bush. Trump. I'm sorry, but I don't believe
2 him. But you could make change. Up to you. So this is a
3 plea I make to you.

4 Thank you for listening.

5 MS. TONYA GARNETT: (Speaking in
6 Gwich'in.) My name is Tonya Garnett. I'm from Arctic
7 Village. My parents are Lillian and Jerry Garnett. My
8 grandparents were the late Ezias and Martha James. I'm
9 the great granddaughter of the late Reverend Albert E.
10 Tritt and Sarah Gho.

11 And I'm the executive director for the Native Village
12 of Venetie Tribal Government. And first of all, Gwich'in
13 people are united against any type of development in the
14 birthing grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd. No
15 compromise. I understand from your presentation the
16 information you are seeking, but we are still going to
17 tell you why we are against the oil development.

18 You are going to hear people speak today, and some of
19 them might seem like they are yelling and mad. It's the
20 passion because they are feeling threatened. There is an
21 injustice here. The injustice is that we are getting --
22 we are getting hit fast and hard with a process that's
23 foreign to us. And we are expected to tell you guys in a
24 few minutes -- what is our time limit on here, supposedly?

25 MR. JOE BALASH: None.

1 MS. TONYA GARNETT: No time limit? Well,
2 we are supposed to tell you guys in a few minutes all the
3 information we have about the Porcupine caribou herd, our
4 way of life and how we are going to be impacted, and
5 that's not possible. We have until June 19th to give you
6 guys our comments and to educate you guys. That's not
7 possible. We need more time. This is an injustice to our
8 people.

9 Our people have been living here since time
10 immemorial. We can go back generations and generations
11 and generations. This is where our people lived. We come
12 from holy people. We come from Gwich'in people. We come
13 from the land. We speak for caribou because the caribou
14 can't speak for themselves. We speak for them in a way
15 that they cannot speak. Their way of life is threatened,
16 their birthing grounds. And we have lived with them since
17 time immemorial. Any type of development in their
18 birthing grounds is going to have devastating impacts on
19 the Porcupine caribou herd, which will directly have
20 devastating impacts on Gwich'in people all over Alaska and
21 Canada. We trade with other villages. We don't get
22 salmon. And we get caribou, so we trade with them. So
23 every village, Gwich'in village, it will have a direct
24 impact on them. Negative, negative impacts.

25 When we look around this room here, what I see, I see

1 tribal leaders that give their life volunteering to lead
2 their people to protect their way of life, and we are
3 constantly having to fight our own federal government to
4 try to continue to live the way our people have lived for
5 thousands and thousands of years. That's an injustice.
6 We have that basic human right. You look around this
7 room, I see kids. I see kids.

8 Our connection to the caribou is strong. Last summer
9 we had a culture camp. This mountain up here, Dachanlee,
10 we had a culture camp at the bottom of the timberline, and
11 we had about 100 people up there on that camp. And just
12 to show our connection to the caribou, we all got up
13 there, we were all setting camp, we were starting to eat
14 dinner, and one bull caribou went to the top of the
15 mountain to invite us and bless us and show us that we are
16 doing a good thing. We have a strong connection.

17 And you look around this room, you see the kids. I
18 seen those kids. They are at the culture camp. They know
19 the importance of the caribou. This is their life. This
20 isn't something that they are they are just learning in
21 school, a class. They are not just learning Alaska
22 history in class. This is in action every day. They
23 learn how to hunt. They learn how to fish. They learn
24 the importance, the respect -- to respect the land, to
25 people, to our culture, to our language.

1 I look around this room, I see moms. I see mothers
2 that raise these kids. And I see mothers that raise their
3 children, and they are happy when they bring the caribou
4 meat home. I see hunters, many hunters in this room. And
5 what really gets me passionate about this is those hunters
6 because I see it. I see it when they talk. Some of them,
7 they are afraid to talk in the mic. They are afraid to --
8 public speaking. But -- but so they tell us and they tell
9 us the importance, and they are passionate about it.

10 And so I want everybody in here to know that when you
11 come up here, just tell them the truth. Speak. Speak
12 from your heart. This is our way of life that they are --
13 that proposal will have direct impacts on us, our
14 livelihood, our history. And when we make decisions and
15 when we talk, we bring the prayers of our ancestors; the
16 hard fight, the hard life they lived, we bring that with
17 us, and we think about the future. Not only my
18 nine-year-old son, but maybe his kids and their kids and
19 their kids, people I will never meet. That's how --
20 that's our train of thought when we are making these
21 decisions and when we speak. It's not a game to any of
22 us. None of this is a game.

23 And so when you guys come up here, just speak from
24 your heart and just tell them. Tell them about your
25 lifestyle. Tell them about when you go out there hunting.

1 We grew up hunting, going up there on the mountain and
2 waiting for the caribou, bringing it in, drying it,
3 smoking it. We learn the dances. The late grandpa
4 Reverend Isaac Tritt, Sr. taught us the dances and songs.
5 Everything revolves around caribou. We hand skin with
6 Grandma Margaret Tritt. And this is important. It's
7 every -- every aspect of our life.

8 So I just want everybody, don't be afraid. Just come
9 up here and speak to them. Tell them about your life.
10 Tell them about how you learned and why it's important to
11 protect -- protect us, protect the caribou and protect the
12 land. Mahsi'.

13 MS. BERTHA ROSS: Hello. My name is
14 Bertha Ross, and I'm from Arctic Village. And I used to
15 be a community health aide here for about 30 years. And
16 what I learned that the kids love caribou meat, and they
17 won't eat no beef meat. I'll tell you the truth. They
18 won't eat no beef meat. Even if you buy hamburger for
19 them, they won't eat the hamburger. They'll eat the
20 fries, but just set it aside. But they will eat caribou.
21 But you know, we are all healthy, really healthy. We are
22 not sick. We are all healthy because we eat caribou. And
23 I don't see anybody that's sick, seriously, all these
24 years that I work as a health aide because our iron is
25 high, protein is high and everything. And we are all

1 active.

2 Even myself, I went out and hunt. I shot caribou. I
3 went out with Albert. I went out with him and I trap with
4 him. When I see caribou, my heart just holds -- I mean, I
5 want those caribou to be around here many years more for
6 my grandchildren so they can learn, too. I don't want --
7 I don't want -- I don't want my kids to feel like Lower
8 48. They have to buy buffalo to buy Native food for
9 themselves. I don't want to buy caribou on the farm. No
10 way. I'd rather hunt for it. I'd rather teach my kids.
11 I'd rather teach my grandchildren.

12 I sew. I sew caribou skin. I make a lot of stuff
13 with it. I make living with it. I put food on the table.
14 That's what we do, all of us. And why are they disturbing
15 our caribou? That's our life. I grew up with it. They
16 grew up with it. That's all we know. We learn. We go
17 out in the world. I came back to it. Some of us went out
18 in the world, and they came back. They'd rather stay
19 here. And one of you should try it. Try stay here one
20 year with us and maybe you will change your mind.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. JAMES JOHN: Don't be afraid to talk.
23 Stand in line if you would like to talk.

24 MS. MARIE WILLOYA: Hello. (Speaking in
25 Gwich'in.) My name is Marie John-Willoya, and I'm so

1 happy that my brother spoke out. We have been waiting for
2 this to speak out for our caribou. I'm 58 years old now,
3 and my parents are Abraham John, Sr. and Dorothy John, and
4 they -- Martha Tritt and Ezias Tritt. She's the daughter
5 of Reverend Tritt, Albert Tritt, Sr. -- Albert Tritt. And
6 my grandpa came from Birch Creek village. It's down on
7 the Yukon River. And we live here, and they taught us.
8 And I always speak my language. I never really use or
9 hardly speak English because they taught me in my language
10 in life.

11 Sometimes I think about people, how our kids is going
12 to go by. They ask us, and we have no answer for them
13 because they love the world out there. It's good life out
14 there. They like to fish. They like to hunt. They like
15 the fresh air, clean water, walk the clean ground. And
16 same thing with the caribou. They migrate. They migrate.
17 They got like a rope on their trail. They are like five
18 fingers going through. I bet you guys never seen that.
19 If you guys see that, you guys going to have tears in your
20 eyes.

21 If you have kids, they got little calves and they
22 take care of their calves to feeding ground. And when
23 they got a wolf coming after them, just like we got wolves
24 coming after us, but we take care of the wolf. They
25 migrate, too.

1 But our people been struggling for almost since --
2 what, when I heard it's 1969. Yes. You guys going to
3 have a problem with 1002. What was 1002, we said? What
4 was 1002? What you are living on. What are you doing?
5 Who are you? That's what our parents taught us in
6 language, in life, in our own language. Never use English
7 because they know we could listen. Never got hit, never
8 got spanking because we listen. And that's how we felt to
9 be proud, and we are still proud, and we are brave.

10 And if you guys going to do all this, we are asking
11 you, do the right thing. Listen to the Gwich'in people.
12 Listen to other kids. Your kids might be sitting here to
13 our grandkids years and years from now. I'll bet on it.
14 One of you, your kids going to be sitting down eating
15 caribou meat, will be happy, dancing with a good slipper,
16 having a good vest, good parka, everything you made out of
17 caribou. And all the bulls is our tools to use a caribou
18 stick. You can't use no other tools with that. Only
19 caribou can you use the tools to make a skin. Yes, use
20 your leg, use this leg, break it apart. That's our tools
21 to use to scrape a skin. I don't know if you knew that,
22 either. That's why it's so -- so -- so sacred for us to
23 keep it, to have, to take care of like they take care of
24 us.

25 What if the moose are gone; what they going to eat?

1 What we going to give them to eat? What if they don't
2 have no water to go? Yes, they are going to come into the
3 village because we got trees around us. If they don't see
4 that, if they don't have that, there will be nothing. But
5 I'm talking for my future, for kids, and they are the ones
6 that will be sitting there talking to you guys again over
7 and over, like we did. Now I'm 58. That's like 48 years
8 standing here waiting. And I'm still standing, make my
9 pole stand with me as the caribou, what my brothers and my
10 grandparents and my uncles and my aunties are fighting
11 for. There are a lot of them in Fort Yukon down the Yukon
12 River. There's a whole family of Alaskans, state of
13 Alaska. There's a whole Gwich'in Nation.

14 Like I say, we have two rivers, down Tanana River.
15 That's true. My grandma is from down that river. Yes.
16 They fight for us because you guys fought for fishing.
17 What is wrong with the caribou? I want the question
18 asked. What do you have that you don't want that
19 caribou -- caribou to be calving ground up there. Make
20 protection for them. Protect them. They broke the trail.
21 Where else they going to go? How far do we have to go out
22 to get our food? You see any roads going out down to the
23 city? No. You fly up. You see how far we come. They
24 make rafts from upriver to come down to make a house with
25 their own bare hands. And I'm telling you this. This is

1 caribou life. They travel. Thank you.

2 MS. LILLIAN JOHN: I'm Lillian John, and
3 I'm 16 years old. I never thought this would happen. I
4 mean, I thought it would happen soon, but not that soon.
5 This early spring I saw my first caribou up close, and my
6 friend [inaudible]. We didn't shoot the caribou. We just
7 stared at them, wanting to get close to them. But we
8 didn't. The adults and elders told us that someday we'll
9 be one of the council members and leaders, and I'll be
10 happy to do it and proud, mostly, because I want to fight
11 for my caribou. I want to support -- I want to do what
12 they are doing right now: Helping. I don't get why you
13 guys don't get that. Please don't drill. We don't need
14 this.

15 I love the caribou. I cook and I cut caribou meat
16 mostly during the winter. I love it so much. Today this
17 morning I was really emotional because I didn't know what
18 to say, but I always had it in my head. I wanted to speak
19 up yesterday, but I didn't. But I'm doing it right now,
20 and I'm not scared. I'm not shy. And I know I'm young,
21 but I don't need this right now. Just you guys know once
22 again, I am 16 years old. I don't need this right now.
23 We all don't need this right now. Thank you. Mahsi'.

24 MS. SARAH JAMES: When I first testified
25 in Washington, D.C. back in 1988, I laid down the example

1 of how we use caribou in a hearing place in front of all
2 the senator and representatives, whoever was there. And I
3 had to carry that over there and had to carry them back.
4 That's how much it meant to me at that time. Some of them
5 are used one, old one, new one, and I show them all
6 around. I laid them out.

7 My name is Sarah James. And I'm from Arctic Village,
8 Alaska. I grew up off the land. I don't even know how to
9 speak English when I was -- in 1950 I can remember until
10 then. And when I was 13 years old, I still don't
11 understand English. When I first went to boarding school,
12 there was a lot of waste and a lot of greed, and I still I
13 don't understand that.

14 This is a map made by the Gwich'in here. And this is
15 the area -- they didn't even show us where this is at,
16 just -- just this map, where it is in Alaska. You see
17 where the red is? That's this map there. That's the
18 calving ground. It's not -- it's -- it's (Speaking in
19 Gwich'in) sacred place where the life begin. And that's
20 the 1002, the red one. And on this map -- I'm going to
21 hand it in to them. I'm going to hand this back to them
22 so they can put that little map on it and so everybody
23 would know where the 1002 is at.

24 And then this is a map we designed. I helped design
25 this map. There is only one new thing on this map is that

1 one line where the -- where the mountain is at. There is
2 a very limited coastal plain right here. It's a very
3 small coastal plain right here. And there is a mountain
4 here [indicating]. But if you look at the Prudhoe Bay
5 where all the darkness and all the redness is at, that's
6 development. And that's a huge, huge coastal plain. And
7 Arctic Central herd used to be calving there at Prudhoe
8 Bay. They could move, and which they did. They moved
9 somewhere else to calve. And they said, oh, those caribou
10 love to rub against pipeline, which is true. They like
11 the pipeline, which is true because in the springtime when
12 they are in that area giving birth, at the same time they
13 losing their old hair. They are getting new hair, and
14 they get very itchy, so they rub against the pipeline.

15 And the pipeline, to protect the pipeline, they grow
16 grass, clear cut around the pipeline to protect the
17 pipeline. And they like that grass, nice green grass to
18 feed. So that's why.

19 And then many workers says that oil is not being
20 reported, waste spill. When there is ice road there is
21 always spill. And if there is ever oil spill in the
22 coastal plain, there is no technology in the world will
23 clean it up. And then, you know, dig under the ground, it
24 can only go five miles, so that won't do them any good.

25 So don't be convinced. Don't be fooled when you hear

1 all these good stuff from these very bright, educated
2 people.

3 Back in bow and arrow day, we have respect. This is
4 the bow and arrow day location for Gwich'in people where
5 the caribou travel, and that's where all the village was
6 colonized into village because our parents got forced to
7 build a village and put it where we can survive. Arctic
8 Village was one place that they put Arctic Village here
9 because the treeline was here [indicating]. And now the
10 treeline is all the way to Brooks Range. And that's due
11 to more climate change, which is caused by fossil fuel
12 burning. And that's been proved. But Trump is -- don't
13 believe that. Don't believe the scientists.

14 So back in bow and arrow day, we have healthy people.
15 We are strong, healthy and well-organized. People don't
16 die from disease or anything like that. Most of the time
17 people die because of old age to the point where they
18 carry them around. And that's how healthy our people was.
19 Everything was healthy. They couldn't even -- here right
20 now springtime, sun is coming back up. In those days,
21 they said it's so noisy that people have to yell at each
22 other. It's so noisy that state bird, what you call it,
23 ptarmigan, Alaska state ptarmigan was the most annoying
24 one. It was like this: (making sounds.) If you hear
25 that, over and over, it will be annoying, they said.

1 So that's how it was. That's how we were. And we
2 were very good with our neighbor. They were good with us.
3 When they going to come, they don't hide their campfire.
4 Oh, we see the campfire. Somebody is coming in. When
5 they get here from Tlingit, Koyukon, Inupiat, Cree, all of
6 them, that's how they come in, with respect. And we throw
7 a party for them. We trade and barter. But if they come
8 walking and sneaking in, hiding their smoke, then we push
9 them back. Same thing for us going over there. That's
10 how much respect we have for each other. And we should
11 keep that.

12 When we say that this is tribal land, this is our
13 meeting and, you know, announce yourself, you know. Come
14 in and let us know you are coming in because this is our
15 land. This is where we live. This is where -- where our
16 ancestors way back from bow and arrow live. Like many
17 people are saying, going to say that we -- they're going
18 to talk about birds and ducks. They're going to talk
19 about fish. They're going to talk caribou. (Speaking in
20 Gwich'in.) Sacred place where the life begin.

21 We sing a song Reverend Isaac Tritt, Sr. showed us
22 and taught us. I'd like to sing one of them before I
23 finish. Yeah. Before I finish. So I get to sing, and
24 they can't cut me off.

25 And my name -- my name is Sarah James, and a really

1 proud moment today, last two days, because I got my --
2 they gave -- my people gave me the (Gwich'in) credential.
3 It means I'm one of the spokesperson for Gwich'in Nation,
4 for Arctic Village, Venetie and the whole Indian
5 reservation. Our Native Village of Venetie Tribal
6 Government is 1.8 million acres, and there is no
7 development on it. Our caribou use it. We keep it clean.
8 We welcome people into our land and treat them very good,
9 and they leave happy.

10 So I want to sing one song about raven. Raven was
11 put on this earth to keep the earth clean. All the
12 animals got a special purpose to be here by the Creator.
13 And we respect them, and we are supposed to speak for them
14 because he did pick them -- they know their role. They
15 know what to do. And that's why -- that's how God put
16 them. If we keep everything the way that God made things,
17 things will be okay. We will have peace.

18 And so we honor Raven for keeping the earth clean.
19 And what we do is we have -- somebody shot a caribou.
20 That's a story. And he had to take it home to village or
21 to his camp or to -- back to where he -- so he had to pack
22 it. But he can't pack the whole caribou, so he left some
23 behind. And of course, who is there? Raven, eating on
24 it, because that's what they do. And when he come back,
25 they flew away because they are scared of human. Human is

1 our -- we are enemy to the human -- I mean, we are the
2 enemy to animal or life. Life, what I mean is plant,
3 water, land and life.

4 Well, anyway, so when they all run away, the hunter
5 picked up the rest of his meat and went home, and there
6 were some scraps there, some scraps here and there. They
7 come rushing in. So that's the last part of their meal.
8 So they all rushed in trying to get a piece of whatever
9 left over, clean it up. Sometimes there is a lot of them.
10 So that's what we describe when we dance and we honor
11 raven.

12 (A song was performed.)

13 Back in 1988 -- I talked about it yesterday and they
14 already heard it, but the part I didn't put in there, I'm
15 going to put it in there. When once we educate people
16 from 1988, that's what our elders told us to do. And they
17 chose four from Canada, four from U.S. to do that because
18 each tribal chief at that time, they were very busy with
19 their own tribal members. They were. And so they said --
20 they introduced that same -- that resolution they are
21 going to renew. We renew it last -- 2016 here. We have
22 Gwich'in gathering every two years. And it's been renewed
23 every year. It's called Niintsyaa. That means --
24 Niintsyaa is teammates. And we used that long time ago
25 when we were in bow and arrow, and that's our -- for the

1 runner. Well, anyway, that related to Niintsyaa.

2 And then we -- you know. Well, anyway, we had -- so
3 we had year 2016 gathering, so my brother help -- Eddie
4 James helped build Hero Park down there. So right here we
5 have meeting, we are going to have a break. Anybody new
6 here to Arctic Village, new to Alaska? Could take a walk
7 down there. It was a meeting [indiscernible]. You could
8 hear it from there. So take a look. On this window we
9 have prayer day. We had eight bishops came up here. So
10 they build a sacred fire. We build a sacred fire when we
11 built it at year 2016 and so -- for the prayer day, and
12 there is sacred ashes down there. So if you guys want to
13 take sacred ashes home you could and start your own sacred
14 fire.

15 So 1988 was a rebirth of our nation because our
16 border kept us apart for 150 years. And we got relatives
17 over there and some of the relatives from down here, and
18 they were all crying and praying, singing and getting to
19 know their -- it was like a rebirth of the nation. And
20 they came into this community and say, we are going to do
21 the Indian way. We are going to do it before they got
22 here. And so they carve the [indiscernible] that way and
23 they gave a talking stick. And they say, only talk with
24 the talking stick because this is our way and we are going
25 to make that decision our way.

1 So they chose four from U.S., four from Canada to go
2 forever and make that resolution work because it -- the
3 chief is the one that introduced a resolution. They said
4 this is really good what's going on, but nobody knows
5 about us. And they think they are Inupiat. They think we
6 are Eskimo. They think that we are -- we don't exist.
7 There is only Eskimo and we live in igloo. And they don't
8 even know where Arctic Village is at. They don't even
9 know Gwich'in. They don't even know the caribou.

10 So they say we have to educate them. And they said
11 once we say it's pretty country, there is lots of it, they
12 are going to start pouring. That's another threat.
13 That's another threat, traffic. And then they said okay.
14 We got it. We want to do it in a good way. Educate them,
15 which we did, and we did it very well. Now they know we
16 are Gwich'in, and the caribou, 1002, even, and Arctic
17 National Wildlife Refuge. I don't like to call it ANWR
18 because it doesn't seem very important when it sounds
19 ANWR, so I say Arctic National Wild Refuge or Arctic
20 Refuge.

21 This has been introduced to the year 2016 Gwich'in
22 gathering two years ago. So this is our talking stick for
23 Gwich'in gathering. So we did well, very well. We make a
24 lot of friends because there is a lot of good people. I
25 found out there is a lot of good people out there and,

1 listen, bad people. There is many of them out there. We
2 still had to go get them. And so we got them. And we got
3 a lot of friends. And there is many of people our visitor
4 here are here because they help us get friends. But we
5 speak for ourself as a tribal, as a human rights and that
6 we live here all the time. This is where -- we didn't
7 come from nowhere. We are not going anywhere. We are
8 here to stay. And I think we did pretty well. God put us
9 here to take care of this part of the world, and we did.
10 We did well.

11 They all say, where you come from? Where you come
12 from? Over the bridge? Under the bridge? No. God put
13 us here. Creator, God put us here. So back in 1950 they
14 threat the caribou then, too.

15 My grandpa is Albert E. Tritt; my father Ezias James,
16 my mother, my sister Nina Russell, my other sister Dorothy
17 John, all the way down they -- they cook the caribou. And
18 I'm the last one in the family. So it better be kept.
19 So -- and now it's threatened big time by the Trump
20 Administration and the Republican administration. And
21 they control our government.

22 And the rushing. And our life is -- have never been
23 rushed like that. We always live here and we are
24 (Gwich'in). Humble. Humble people. And we're also
25 Gwich'in. That means peoples. I mean, people is good.

1 With an S. And many -- many birds come there. Many,
2 many -- 150 different species of bird. I'm worried about
3 that one little bird that lives there all year-round up
4 there. There is a hot spring up there, and that bird
5 lives in that hot spring. And once that oil get into that
6 tundra, it will seep into the tundra. It will get to that
7 little bird. So I'm worried about that.

8 There is one from North Pole -- I mean, South Pole.
9 They fly from South Pole, Arctic tern. And that's pretty
10 far. So we worry about all those things, and we got story
11 on them just like we had -- I'm just saying the raven
12 story.

13 And we are not alone. We educate our people. We
14 educate the world. We are not alone. Now we got to tell
15 them that we also have a government, which is Native
16 Village of Venetie Tribal Government. We take care of the
17 caribou, and there is a lot of Gwich'in government. All
18 15 villages have government. And we already have requests
19 to join from Fort Yukon and two other villages. There are
20 some -- I got a letter that said they will join. So some
21 down Lower 48, the plains Indians, they know what happened
22 to them. We don't have to tell the story of them.

23 Many things save us along the way. Boy, when the war
24 started, I thought, oh, we lost. But we didn't. There
25 was Gulf War. And then I thought -- I thought they going

1 to -- they said they are going -- going to be up to
2 defense department.

3 Another thing, I really want to finish up because
4 there is many young people that want to talk. And one --
5 one tenth of Arctic coast we are talking about. Only one
6 tenth. And this is one tenth. The only thing that's
7 protected right now is Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
8 right here in this little -- between the red and the
9 Canada border, that's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
10 And if we can protect this whole thing, we are going to
11 protect one-tenth of Arctic coast. And Prudhoe Bay is
12 already into this part of it, and they call that the
13 National Petroleum Reserve. That means it will get into
14 development.

15 So we are only -- we are saving polar bear on this
16 end because polar bear is threatened big time with the
17 climate change. Climate change is real. And that's the
18 only place the polar bear will be protected. And then we
19 got three species of bears in the refuge: Black bear,
20 grizzly bear and polar bear. Only place in the world. So
21 we need to protect.

22 I know that one-third of oil owned by U.S. Things
23 just don't add up with me. It just don't do one and one
24 is two. No. To me it's not because one -- one-third of
25 oil the United States own, they said. And even if we

1 drill everything we got, we are not going to meet our
2 energy need the way we are using it. That don't add.

3 And then we -- where we are talking about is windy
4 and breezy all the time. That's where that vegetation
5 come out. And that's the only safe place and healthy
6 place and quiet place to have their calf. And that's why
7 they go up there. And if we do gas and oil development,
8 that's going to be gone. All the predators up there in
9 the foothills raising their young. And caribou are on the
10 coastal plain and I think -- they can't go up in the
11 foothills. It's too cold and there are predators up
12 there. And if they do go up high, it's too cold and
13 there's no food. So it just don't add up. And there is
14 wind there all the time. That will take care of it. And
15 there is a wave coming in from the ocean. That will take
16 care of it. That's alternative energy. And we need to go
17 alternative. Let's go alternative. And I got to go
18 alternative.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. JEWELS GILBERT: Hello. (Speaking in
21 Gwich'in). I'm Jewels Gilbert and I'm from here in Arctic
22 Village. My parents are Cynthia Gilbert and Bruce
23 Martins. And my grandparents are Trimble and Mary
24 Gilbert. I'm Neets'aii Gwich'in from Vashraii K'oo. We
25 are the caribou people since the beginning of time. Our

1 main diet is caribou. Without the caribou I don't think
2 we will survive. Not just us, other animals and birds,
3 too. The 1002 area is sacred because of the calvings.

4 I think this is a real sensitive issue. The oil
5 companies, when they drill, they will destroy land, water
6 air, and animals. Everything they are saying that they
7 will not do to damage our 1002 area is not true. We know
8 because they have done the drilling all over the world.
9 This is the last frontier. It's just going to be a
10 disaster waiting to happen. We don't want to live off of
11 oil companies and their money. We want to continue living
12 off of what we have. We will continue to thrive on what
13 we have, which is our traditions, our lands, our ways of
14 life.

15 Ever since I was a little girl, my grandparents, they
16 always cook our traditional foods and they fed me well,
17 telling stories. That's most precious memories I'm very
18 blessed to have. I want to continue that in the future.
19 That's the blessing and joy I want to have for my children
20 and my grandchildren.

21 Caribou meat has been our daily food, and all I have
22 been hearing is nothing but bad things about oil companies
23 trying to take our land and culture. From the bottom of
24 my heart, I don't think it's right. I cry about it and I
25 go to my room and pray about it. This is who we are, the

1 lands, animals and everything around us. It's like our
2 other halves. It's like you are destroying part of us.
3 That's what makes us feel drained when we hear about the
4 issue of the 1002 area.

5 For the past couple of months before school ended, I
6 worked with the little one, our next generation. I
7 explained to them about -- I explained to them of who we
8 are, where we came from and why we are still here. They
9 shed tears of joy, not wanting to throw that away. They
10 are proud of who we are. We are proud of who we are.
11 They were scared to think that this oil company is more
12 important than our way of life.

13 If you want proof to know how long we have been here
14 and to know how long we have lived off the caribou, there
15 are caribou fences surrounding our villages and throughout
16 our Gwich'in Nation. In Old Crow, Yukon, Canada
17 researchers found arrowheads and caribou bone tools made
18 by our people over 25,000 years ago. That's our proof
19 that we lived on the caribou for thousands of years.

20 Thank you for your time. Thank you.

21 MR. CHRISTOPHER STRICKLAND: Hello. I'm
22 Christopher Strickland. I'm from Arctic and Venetie. I
23 just wanted to say if you open up the 1002 of ANWR, there
24 is a high chance that you are going to kill off the
25 animals or change the route of the caribou and the birds.

1 And us hunters like Jerrald and David and all the others,
2 we all live off the animals and we don't need to change
3 their route. I don't speak for just me, but the youth of
4 Arctic and Venetie. Thank you.

5 MR. ISIAH WIEHL: Hi. I'm Isiah, and I'm
6 15. I didn't write any speeches, but I guess I'll make
7 one up right now. But like all the other people say, we
8 do live off our -- off our land, but we don't get our food
9 from the store. That's just extra. We get food from the
10 land, from the caribous.

11 And I don't know what else to say. But the thing
12 that's happening right now, I don't like it. I'm thinking
13 that it's going to ruin our culture, our life. And we
14 need to pass it on to the kids. Even me, pass it on to
15 the next generation of life, but -- yeah. Thank you.

16 MR. ISIAH BOYLE: Hi. I'm Isiah Boyle.
17 I'm from Circle and Venetie. And I wanted to say oil and
18 gas drilling and accompanying air, water and noise
19 pollution will turn the existence of water, life and
20 harmless indigenous people that rely on ecosystems and our
21 subsistence way of life.

22 MR. JOE BALASH: Five-minute break.

23 (A break was taken.)

24 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Is there any way we
25 can get the transcript so we can read it and give you guys

1 edits or corrections?

2 MR. JOE BALASH: We will answer you when
3 Nicole comes back.

4 MS. KAREN MOURITSEN: She knows.

5 MS. FAITH GEMMILL-FREDSON: I just want to
6 say welcome to our visitors and even the newcomers today.
7 Welcome to our community. My name is Faith
8 Gemmill-Fredson. I'm Neets'aii Gwich'in, Pit River and
9 Wintoo [ph]. I was raised here in Vashraii K'oo. This is
10 my community. My mother is Fannie Gemmill. Her father is
11 Abel Tritt. And her mom, my grandmother, was Helen
12 Cochran, and my great grandfather is Albert Tritt and
13 great grandmother, Sarah Tritt. I'm just going to say my
14 mom's side of my lineage since I was raised here as
15 Neets'aii Gwich'in. And I was raised knowing our
16 Neets'aii Gwich'in culture, values and way of life.

17 When I was growing up in this community, even from
18 the time we were very young, every fall the caribou
19 migrates back here to this mountain over here called
20 Dachanlee. And we wait for them to come back from the
21 calving grounds. Our people are waiting and watching.
22 Over there we can watch and see when they start coming.
23 And when they come, we have protocol, cultural protocol.
24 The leaders have to come and pass. Once they pass, then
25 it's our time to go up to the mountain.

1 We all go up to the mountain, and there is campsites
2 all over that mountain that are set up. And families are
3 on the mountain and ready to start hunting caribou to
4 support ourselves for the winter. It's a very sacred
5 time, and it's a very important time for our people. It's
6 one of the most important times of our community.

7 The Porcupine caribou herd is vital to our cultural
8 way of life. We use every part of the animal to meet our
9 needs. In the past, even our homes were made from caribou
10 hides. But now we still use bones to make cultural tools,
11 and we still use the hides for many articles of clothing,
12 cultural clothing. Hunting in itself is a cultural
13 practice. At the time when the herd is in our territory,
14 we practice many of our own spiritual beliefs that have
15 been taught to us and handed down generation to generation
16 from our ancestors; thereby, we are spiritually bound to
17 the caribou, too.

18 We have a creation story. In our creation story it's
19 said that there was once a time when there was just
20 animals. And in our story, the animals had human
21 characteristics. They were like human beings. And then
22 there was a split between the animal nation and us where
23 we -- where human beings were created. In our story it's
24 said that we came from the caribou. Gwich'in came from
25 the caribou. And at that time when that split happened,

1 the caribou and the Gwich'in made an agreement that from
2 that time on, the caribou would always retain a part of
3 the Gwich'in heart, and the Gwich'in would always retain a
4 part of the caribou heart. So we are one and the same in
5 a spiritual way with the caribou.

6 And this is no different than the plains tribes and
7 the buffalo. And you know what happened when the buffalo
8 were wiped out. That's the same relationship our people
9 have with the caribou.

10 The herd also represents an important facet of the
11 social fabric of our community. That time when we are on
12 the mountain to hunt, that's the time when many teachings
13 are taught to our young people. And there are certain
14 roles for people. Men have their roles. Women, we have
15 our roles. Men, they are the providers of the community.
16 They are our hunters. And some of them are taught from
17 the time they are just small. They can't even hold a gun
18 yet, but they are taught. They are taught how to
19 respectfully take the animal, how to give proper respect
20 for what they take, to only take what we need to feed our
21 communities and to do it in a way that's respectful to the
22 land and giving proper thanks. And we have all other --
23 many other teachings, but that's part of it.

24 For the women, we take care of our homes, our
25 families. We are the backbone of our families, the women.

1 And at that time we are in the camp and when they bring
2 the meat, we take care of it. We cut it up. We put aside
3 the parts that are only for elders to eat. There are some
4 parts that young women are not supposed to eat. We teach
5 our young women that. And once we put aside those parts,
6 there is meat that's sent down to the community for
7 families that need it. And then whatever is left in the
8 camp, we cut it and we have drying racks and we dry and
9 smoke our meat. And that's going to feed our family all
10 winter. And at that time, a lot of teachings are being
11 taught from the mothers and the grandmothers to the young
12 women.

13 So the caribou is not just our food. It's not just
14 our culture. It's a part -- it's a vital component of the
15 social fabric of our community. All these teachings are
16 taught when we are out on the land.

17 And then one of our young men spoke yesterday talking
18 about how we can't afford to live without the caribou.
19 You go to our store, look at the prices. You can't feed
20 your family on that all year, unless you are a
21 millionaire. And I don't see no millionaires in here.
22 The caribou is essential to the economic well-being of our
23 people. We have to have the caribou as our subsistence to
24 feed our families because we can't afford what's sent up
25 here from outside. We won't survive without it. In our

1 little communities, we don't have large grocery stores.

2 And it's not just caribou. It's all the other
3 animals. We have to live our subsistence way of life to
4 survive here. The prices that are added on just because
5 of the cost of freight is too high for us to depend on
6 anything else. So a critical part of our food security is
7 at threat. How are you guys going to replace that? You
8 can't replace that.

9 And then -- and there are others that are going to
10 speak to that more, but I just wanted to paint a picture
11 of how our community, our people, the Gwich'in Nation --
12 and we are a nation. There is 15 Gwich'in communities,
13 northeast Alaska, northwest Canada. And all our
14 communities are strategically located to accommodate the
15 Porcupine caribou herd. Half of our communities are going
16 to be ignored in this process because they are in Canada.
17 That's not right. We are one people, one nation. And
18 then the other half are being ignored now in this process.
19 They are Gwich'in. They are all impacted just like us.
20 And they need to be part of scoping. And they need to be
21 part of the process. You can't shut out half of us; more
22 than half, actually.

23 So the Porcupine caribou herd is critical to our
24 physical, cultural, spiritual, social and economic needs.
25 And growing up in this community, our elders, they have

1 always uplifted our way of life and taught our people to
2 have respect for the land and value the land. Money is
3 short-term. It's not going to last, nor will it provide
4 for us forever. A job is short-term, but a way of life is
5 forever. Our land is forever. That's what our elders
6 taught us.

7 I remember sitting in the meetings and the elders
8 talking about this. They said, money is not for us. Our
9 land will always be here for us. And they always stress
10 for us to have respect, respect for the land because it's
11 how we live.

12 We are only sovereign if we are able to live and be
13 who we are. We are only sovereign if we govern ourselves
14 based upon our own values and teachings of our people. We
15 are only sovereign if the land that provides for us and
16 that we are entirely dependent upon is intact and
17 protected. We have a reciprocal relationship with the
18 land since forever. The Creator gave us this place and
19 this herd, which is why we're here today speaking to you.
20 We follow Creator's laws. It's in our blood, natural law.

21 The western value and system, the values and system
22 of the western ways have forgotten the original laws of
23 Creator. And now we see the threats to humankind itself.
24 Talk to any indigenous community anywhere around the
25 world. We have prophecies about this time when humankind

1 starts taking and taking and taking too much from the
2 earth and not allowing the earth to replenish itself.

3 And that's what we are doing with fossil fuels. And
4 now what's the result? Climate change. Catastrophic
5 climate change. And I know there is a lot of deniers
6 about climate change and the cause of climate change
7 within the Trump Administration, but most scientists --
8 all the top scientists around the world have stated that
9 the major human cause of emissions that are resulting in
10 global warming is fossil fuels, the burning of fossil
11 fuels. It's a human cause. We are the ones creating this
12 situation. And I want to go on record saying that, to
13 challenge the climate deniers because you can't deny it
14 anymore.

15 Look at all the hurricanes. Look at all of these
16 massive storms that are happening all around the world
17 right now. That's because of climate change. So human
18 beings have caused this because we have taken and taken
19 and taken from the earth too fast and too much without
20 giving the earth time to heal. And what is it for?
21 Profit.

22 And as I look at this process and I think about this
23 issue, you guys are asking my people to sacrifice who we
24 are for profit. And that ain't right.

25 But I want to go back to climate change. Here in

1 Alaska alone, some of the effects of climate change, we
2 see altered weather patterns. We can't predict the
3 weather anymore. More severe storms, erosion of coastal
4 areas, greater precipitation, thawing permafrost. The
5 ground is literally melting beneath us. Melting sea ice,
6 receding glaciers, increased spruce bark beetle, increased
7 and severe forest fires. The land is literally burning up
8 in the summertime where communities have to be emergency
9 evacuated because of these fires. Declining fish
10 populations, migratory habitat, destructions of key
11 subsistence resources like the caribou, destruction of all
12 natural cycles of life. This is happening. This is real.

13 And it's happening in Alaska. We see it because we
14 live close to the land. Any changes to the land, we are
15 the first ones that see it. And we have been telling
16 Congress for over 40 years about climate change and why
17 they shouldn't drill in the Arctic National Wildlife
18 Refuge. We warned Congress about it.

19 But these impacts of climate change are leading to
20 loss of subsistence resources and our rights as indigenous
21 peoples. Relocation of some communities -- some
22 communities are actually on a waiting list right now
23 that -- these are coastal communities, and they are going
24 to be forced to relocate because of climate change where
25 they are literally caving off into the ocean and no one

1 wants to foot the bill. The State won't foot the bill.
2 The Feds won't foot the bill. The oil companies aren't
3 going to pay for it. That's what's happening. And it
4 ain't right where indigenous peoples are going to be
5 climate refugees in their own homeland. This is their
6 homeland, our homeland. This is our land.

7 So governments around the world are talking about
8 global climate change, and the U.S. is not agreeing to
9 stop what we are doing. We are not playing fair with
10 global governments by continuing our policy, business as
11 usual, drill it all. So around the world there is
12 actually going to be climate refugees that are going to
13 start coming to countries. And are we going to open the
14 doors to them?

15 So climate change, to me, is one of the biggest
16 issues why it's not wise to drill the last five percent of
17 Alaska's only Arctic coast that's still protected. That's
18 what the Arctic refuge is. It's the last five percent
19 that's still protected. 95 percent is open to oil and gas
20 development. That doesn't make sense. That's not wise to
21 just take everything.

22 There is a reason why people like my people are in
23 this situation in Alaska. And I want to talk about it
24 because some people don't understand about what happened
25 up here. There were laws that were put into place that

1 impact the rights of indigenous people, and to this day we
2 are still dealing with them. And the one law that I
3 really want to talk about which creates this situation we
4 are in -- and it's one of our greatest challenges as
5 indigenous peoples -- and it's the Alaska Native Claims
6 Settlement Act.

7 The United States Congress unilaterally passed the
8 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971, and the
9 reason was to legitimize U.S. ownership and governance
10 over indigenous peoples, our lands, and to access our
11 resources. Under ANCSA, for-profit Native corporations
12 were established, along with village corporations. And
13 those corporations are the ones that partner with these
14 companies when it comes to resource extraction in our
15 territories.

16 The sole purpose of a corporation is profit at all
17 cost. A corporation does not look out for the health and
18 well-being of the people; whereas, a tribe, a tribe's
19 purpose is to look out for the health and well-being of
20 the people.

21 That act basically took the land from the rightful
22 owners, the tribes, and transferred it over to
23 corporations that they created under the act. And so up
24 there in the refuge, there is a corporation that's all for
25 development because that's their bottom line. They are a

1 business. Their purpose is profit. They have no other
2 purpose. So you are not going to hear about health. You
3 are not going to hear about the well-being of the people
4 from them because that's not part of their mandate. They
5 are just a business.

6 And I want to state that clearly because a lot of
7 times in these processes when there is
8 government-to-government meetings, the government entities
9 try to meet with the corporation and say the corporation
10 is the voice of the people. The corporation is not the
11 voice of the people. The corporation is just a business.
12 The tribes are the people. That's the true voice of the
13 people, and that's the only ones that government officials
14 should be having government-to-government meetings with is
15 only the tribes. Nothing else. I've seen it, and I want
16 to make sure that that doesn't happen in this process.

17 I want to talk a little bit about ANCSA a little bit
18 more. It was also put into place to assimilate Native
19 people away from our own values and put us in to run these
20 corporations. So here we are, people that live on the
21 land, that value the land, that love the land, that take
22 care of the land. All of a sudden this act was passed and
23 now that person has to run a business and succeed or they
24 could have been bought out or sold to another corporation.
25 So those corporations had no choice because the land all

1 of a sudden became their assets and they were forced into
2 a position of partnering with companies to develop their
3 assets.

4 But not our tribes. Our tribes, especially here, we
5 own everything. We opted out. Arctic Village and Venetie
6 opted out of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
7 because we value the land.

8 And another thing with ANCSA was -- it was put forth
9 to eliminate aboriginal title to our ancestral
10 territories, to access and exploit our resources,
11 assimilate Alaska Natives, incorporate us into a western
12 value system, but ultimately it was put into place to
13 divide and conquer Alaska Native people because throughout
14 this entire state, this fight is happening everywhere, all
15 over the state of Alaska. You have tribes that are
16 standing up to defend these places because they are
17 worried about the health and well-being of their people,
18 and you have Native corporations wanting to drill the same
19 place. And that is a divisive tactic that was put into
20 place through ANCSA to divide and conquer Alaska Native
21 peoples.

22 So when you hear there is division between Gwich'in
23 and Inupiat, that's the division. There is division
24 between tribes and corporations, but I have a lot of
25 Inupiat friends that are from there, and they don't want

1 it developed. But their corporation has overpowered their
2 voice and is the one that's recognized and speaking out.
3 And I've heard that there is nearly half of the community
4 up there that has gone on record in a petition saying they
5 don't want to drill that place. So I hope they speak up
6 tomorrow when you all go up there because they are just
7 like us. They are worried about their own subsistence
8 resources, too.

9 The reason I wanted to talk about ANCSA is because I
10 wanted to make sure you understood why Alaska Natives are
11 in this situation and that it's not by choice. We didn't
12 choose that, and we were not allowed to vote on it or have
13 a say at that time. And it's something that our people,
14 indigenous peoples in Alaska, are going to have to deal
15 with in the future to try to correct a wrong that was done
16 to us. It was an injustice that was done to Alaska Native
17 peoples because we should not even have to go through what
18 we are going through today. And that's why we are in this
19 situation.

20 And so what's happening throughout the state, there
21 is Native corporations, the State, these companies, they
22 target indigenous homelands and see our lands as a way to
23 create profit for themselves without thinking about our
24 people and what we are going to lose. That's what's
25 happening all over the state. There is Inupiat that are

1 fighting for the ocean to protect their way of life.
2 There are Athabascans in southern Alaska fighting mines to
3 protect their way of life. Even in our own -- in our own
4 territory we had to fight to keep oil companies out of the
5 southern refuge, and we are fighting up here to protect
6 the calving grounds.

7 So there is all these fights happening all over the
8 state, just like how my people are standing up and
9 fighting. Tribes are standing up and fighting to protect
10 their lands from development because development is going
11 to harm and violate our human rights. It's going to
12 violate our lands and territories, our health and
13 well-being at a time when we are in climate crisis. It
14 doesn't make sense to me that our people even have to
15 fight while globally everyone is in climate crisis.

16 On this issue there has been no free prior and
17 informed consent, I'm sure, in this case. The United
18 States is a signatory to the declaration on the rights of
19 indigenous peoples. And this declaration gives indigenous
20 communities the rights to say no to any development that
21 threatens their people. And the U.S. signed that.

22 So right now, as you move forward with this, you hear
23 our people. We are saying no. You guys are in violation
24 as signatories to that, and you are violating the human
25 rights of the Gwich'in people. The U.S. government is

1 also a signatory to the international treaty and agreement
2 on the conservation of the Porcupine caribou herd, calving
3 and post-calving grounds. So as the Trump Administration
4 moves forward, the U.S. is in violation of that
5 international treaty.

6 When I think about these issues and I think about the
7 indigenous peoples in the state and how we are just
8 fighting so hard to protect our subsistence resources and
9 rights, and when I talk to elders and people throughout
10 the state, what's the solution? There is a solution.
11 There is an alternative. And it's totally applicable in
12 our communities and throughout the state of Alaska and
13 applicable in the United States. We have the technology
14 for good energy, clean energy that would protect the
15 health and well-being of the people. We don't even need
16 places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. There is
17 other energy resources that would protect the rights of
18 communities that could be put in place instead. That's
19 what should be done, not take the last five percent that's
20 still there.

21 I would recommend a moratorium on all new exploration
22 for oil, gas and coal as a first step towards the full
23 phaseout of fossil fuels with a just transition to
24 sustainable jobs, energy and environment. And I want that
25 on record. Stop drilling places that are protected now.

1 Put a moratorium in place. That would protect our
2 communities from climate change and the impacts that we
3 are already seeing. That would protect our people and
4 allow us to continue to be who we are as Gwich'in and live
5 our way of life as we always have.

6 In discussion of the time line yesterday, the
7 department officials requested our people to tell you all
8 when it would not be harmful to drill in calving grounds.
9 There is no time it's not going to harm the caribou. You
10 can't drill there at all. The tundra, if there is one
11 spill that's going to seep into the tundra and get locked
12 in, then when the snow melts, that's what the caribou is
13 going to eat, and their young. There is no time that's
14 ever safe to drill in that calving grounds.

15 The U.S. Congress passed this tax bill on this issue
16 that's been debated for over 40 years. It is one of the
17 most contentious issues in Congress. And this tax bill
18 didn't allow any debate or merit on the issue itself. And
19 with that happening, that shut out the American public and
20 railroaded this through, and now you guys are trying to
21 rush this process on us. That's not leadership.

22 If the U.S. Congress wants to drill in the Arctic
23 National Wildlife Refuge, put the issue back on the table
24 and let Congress debate the merits of it because every
25 time they have debated the merits of the issue, it's

1 always been voted down. What they have done is just rush
2 this process and pushed it on us. And in this hastiness,
3 mistakes are going to be made, and that's going to cause
4 harm. You need to slow down and you need to treat our
5 people right. You have the opportunity to do it right.

6 And I believe that there is a sleeping giant in the
7 United States, and they are going to rise up. People are
8 starting to awaken. And more people are going to start
9 standing up behind our nation again. 70 percent of the
10 American public did not want drilling there.

11 So those are the things I have been thinking about,
12 listening in the meetings. In my comments today I just
13 want to strongly support the requests of our tribal
14 governments, too, everything that they said yesterday.
15 They requested the scoping comment period be extended for
16 62 days. I support that. We want more scoping hearings
17 to be held in all the Gwich'in villages that will be
18 impacted. That's the only proper way to go forward. We
19 request translation services, not just oral, but written.
20 English is a second language to our people.

21 And we had questions about the 810 review. We want
22 to make sure that you undertake the most intensive and
23 comprehensive ANILCA Section 810 review ever conducted,
24 including evaluation notice hearings. You must also
25 include critical subsistence migrating species besides

1 caribou, such as waterfowl and other species. And at a
2 minimum, hearings should be held in all of our communities
3 for the 810 review, too. And then we also request that
4 when you initiate the process on Section 106 of the NHPA,
5 we want -- in addition to our governments, we request you
6 invite all Gwich'in governments, too, and communities for
7 that process. Those were most of the requests of our
8 communities yesterday.

9 And I thank you for allowing the three that requested
10 to become cooperating agencies to be today. So I thank
11 you for that.

12 And finally, I just want to go on record and register
13 my objection to drilling or leasing the coastal plain of
14 the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge because I'm a mother
15 and I'm a grandmother, and I want my kids to live the way
16 of life that we have always had. They have a right to
17 that. They have a right to clean air, clean water and
18 this land that provides for them. That's why I object to
19 what's happening. Thank you.

20 MS. MYRA THUMMA: My name is Myra Thumma.
21 I should say (Speaking in Gwich'in.) My name is Myra
22 Thumma. My grandparents are Donnie Roberts and Nina
23 Roberts from Venetie on my mother's side, and my dad is
24 Noah Peter. He's from here.

25 And I was thinking about my grandma. Grandma was a

1 beautiful woman, a hard-working woman. She just don't sit
2 around. She's always cooking, providing, walking out in
3 the -- in the willows, setting rabbit snares. She is
4 really a hard-working -- I mean, she sews, beads, provides
5 for the whole families. My mom, my auntie, they all got,
6 like, eight, nine kids, but she's always there. And this
7 is who I have for my role model.

8 I also, myself, is a hunter. I love to go out. I
9 probably shot, like, three moose because, you know, in
10 Venetie, you know, we had to go out into the mountain to
11 get caribou, but every time we hear there is a caribou in
12 Arctic Village, people back home are happy because we know
13 that we are going to get meat from our relatives here.
14 And that's how we take care of each other. This is who we
15 are. And this is the only life I know because I was born
16 here, I was raised here, and I'm still here. And that
17 will not be taken away from me, with my kids and my
18 grandkids.

19 And I also serve on the Native Village of Venetie,
20 and I not only speak for myself, but I speak for my
21 people, too. Because we got oil and gas development
22 impact, there will be a harmful impact to the land, the
23 air, our subsistence way of life, also on our social and
24 cultural resource, especially for Alaska Natives,
25 including the Gwich'in.

1 The other thing I want to talk about is the community
2 and public health. I used to work up north for, like,
3 four years working in the clinic. As itinerary travel
4 from village to village, I see a lot of health issues, the
5 health issues that we don't even have in our community. I
6 see patients with respiration problem. I see people with
7 mental health problem that we don't have.

8 I asked that question to one of the elders up there.
9 She said before the oil company came, we had a healthy
10 life, but now look around. As far as you could see, it's
11 just all you could see is oil rigs everywhere. And she
12 said, this is what happened. My husband died of cancer.
13 And my kids, my grandkids have mental health problems.
14 And she said, all these are created when the oil company
15 came.

16 And the other thing I was thinking about is that up
17 at that 1002 area where our -- the birthing -- where the
18 caribou migrate to and where they give birth, you know,
19 there is probably a special food that's there that they go
20 to that attract them. And what kind of plant is that
21 that's doing that? Is that the area where the drilling
22 will be at? If that happens -- I mean, these plants has
23 to be studied. If that happens, the caribou will
24 migrate -- they will just be separate.

25 I mean, this is a place that it's just sacred, a

1 place our caribou go to stay around giving birth. I mean,
2 that's a really -- I mean, I'm just thinking about it and
3 I said, wow, I mean, we know as the Gwich'in we are not
4 even supposed to go up there. We are not even supposed to
5 disturb that area. And that's how we were brought up.
6 And that's how we know it. I mean, I just -- I just
7 know -- I mean, it just gives me the -- my heart just
8 breaks, you know, think about all these -- I mean, for --
9 for our life it's really important, that I'm just thankful
10 that we as the Gwich'in, we speak one voice. We stand
11 with each other.

12 And this is -- you know, no other -- I mean, if you
13 live in the city, there is nowhere that you could just go
14 into somebody's house and they offer you food and stuff.
15 Here we all live together. We all know each other. If
16 I'm hungry, I'll go down to Alan, and I just go in and
17 help myself. We can't do that in the city. So this is a
18 bond that we have as Gwich'in. And that's what we are
19 fighting for.

20 And what will happen to the water and air that will
21 impact? And even when they build the roads and it will be
22 access to anybody that will come in and go hunting, and
23 that will happen. And people will start coming in more
24 and more. And I mean, all this stuff that you guys need
25 to think about because here in our community we live

1 peacefully. I mean, it's quiet.

2 You guys are -- some of you are probably wondering,
3 man, these people are poor. No, we are not. We have our
4 land. We have our identity. We have our way of life.
5 And we are happy. We are happy people. We are. We are
6 pushing our children to get educated. I have two
7 granddaughters, and I really show them, I mean, to have
8 respect, and they are -- I mean, my granddaughter, she
9 said, Grandma -- she went back to Anchorage with her mom.
10 She said, Grandma, who is going to cook Native food for
11 me? And I said, well, I can cook like something every
12 week and send it down there. She said okay.

13 There are so many -- our tribal members are saying
14 that we have a lot of species, we have a lot of wolves,
15 you know, waterfowl and all that. All those needs to be
16 studied. How are they going to be impacted? And -- and I
17 just want to say that when we do -- when you guys do the
18 EIS, you know, you really got to look at the health
19 impact, how it will impact, affect our -- the people and
20 also the plants and animals. Those are very important.

21 Well, thank you for your time.

22 MR. DANIEL TRITT: My name is Daniel Tritt
23 from Arctic Village, and welcome to Vashraii K'oo. The
24 caribou means a lot to all of us, as everybody has been
25 saying. And as you guys been saying, my two little

1 daughters that are walking around, just recently I
2 cooked -- I cooked a caribou leg. They came up to me,
3 Daddy, Daddy, candy? I think if I bring them down to the
4 store and I put that caribou head, or say I make fry meat,
5 they will probably pick that other than the candy. Yeah.
6 They always like it. We don't even give them juice or --
7 just drink straight water. We put juice in front of them.
8 They will probably take the water.

9 But ever since that first gathering in 1988, I was --
10 my youngest daughter right there, I was her age running
11 around like what she's been doing. And she's only four.
12 Right now I'm 33. And since I was nine years old, I
13 became a provider for many people. My grandfather, Alan
14 Tritt, he's the one that bringing me out since my youngest
15 one there, she was two.

16 Ever since then I have been -- people have been
17 calling me up from even down states asking me for some dry
18 meat. They try to pay me money, but the money that they
19 will give me, it won't -- it won't -- I don't take it
20 because to provide -- it's out there. It's free. We just
21 got to go, have patience and get it. And for one box of
22 shells, it's like 28, 30 bucks. And you try and buy a
23 steak from the store down here or from anywhere else, that
24 steak probably cost us as much as that box, box of shells.
25 It's only 20 rounds, but if you think about it, and 20

1 rounds, you could probably get at least ten caribou. Or a
2 box of shotgun shells for waterfowl, ducks, geese, you can
3 get, like, five, ten times more than that one little
4 steak. And that steak is probably only made for one
5 person. And besides me, I got a family of six. So that
6 steak won't last too long.

7 One little box of macaroni and cheese or bag of rice
8 costs an arm and a leg. But we try and make it stretch
9 and do what we can do. And it is very sacred. It's a
10 sacred place up there. It means a lot probably to
11 everybody, not only here, but everywhere else. There is a
12 lot of people standing up speaking up for us. And it
13 means a lot.

14 And like I was saying, there is people like my
15 grandfather, Abraham, Jimmy John, all of them, Darryl,
16 he's cooking outside, they all taught me since I was their
17 age. And now it's up to me to do -- teach the younger
18 ones as they were teaching me, like their grandfathers
19 taught them.

20 I don't only shoot caribou for the village. I shoot
21 caribou for people in Venetie or Fort Yukon and Fairbanks.
22 They try to pay me, but no, I'd rather get and send it,
23 pay the freight and everything. Sometimes it's tough.
24 Sometimes it's easy. But look, we are still here. We are
25 still getting the caribou. We are still fighting standing

1 up. It's like that song Sarah sang earlier. I became a
2 leader for traditional dancers since I was probably ten
3 years old. And ever since then, I just -- when she sang
4 it, it just make me proud and think it made me proud of
5 who I am, where I come from.

6 Because if you look around, there is no other place
7 that's going to look like Arctic Village. We call it,
8 like, paradise. You go out in the wilderness, you go up
9 on the mountain, I don't know if you want to come back.
10 You will probably say I don't want to come back. I just
11 want to stay, come back in a couple days.

12 And just a couple months ago, I took my family out.
13 You know what my daughter said whenever she seen it?
14 Look, Mommy, caribou. And my other daughter, Jenny, look,
15 candy, mmm.

16 First time I took her out, it was not too long ago,
17 and there was caribou up here on the lakes up toward the
18 mountain, and that caribou was standing there. And my
19 girlfriend was, like, be quiet. Don't move. Daddy is
20 going to shoot. I shot. Mommy, caribou fall like candy?
21 Then there is more coming. Mommy, look, all that candy.
22 Just -- they are the ones that I provide for and for
23 whoever else. If I had the dry meat right now, I give it
24 to my daughters and they will give it to you and they will
25 say here, candy. Eat num-num. Yeah.

1 I have been doing hunting since I was two. And yeah,
2 I do it all since -- I got two boys, too, that one of them
3 just shot their first one last year. Look, Dad, I shot
4 him. He's over there. Where? Right there. Yeah, every
5 time I bring them out or I -- somebody else shoot caribou
6 and I bring it by, who shot it, oh, Uncle Gerald or Bobba
7 Charlie or Grandpa Allo. Oh, Dad, I just want you to
8 shoot it.

9 But another one is the ducks. Go out every year.
10 Every spring we wait all year, all winter. And when they
11 come, they come, and then they go with -- we have fun. So
12 right now there is probably a couple guys out there. They
13 stay out there sometimes a couple weeks, at least, or
14 more. But I have been going out hunting pretty much all
15 my life. We used to go up -- go upriver, stay up there.
16 We go up there as soon as the ice go out. We stay up
17 there. We get what -- if we get caribou -- if we see
18 caribou we get them. Mainly go for fish and ducks.

19 And we stay up there all summer. It seems like one
20 or two guys come back, get supplies. We will stay up
21 there. Come back probably a little bit before school
22 starts in August, first week of August. But we don't want
23 to go to -- say Mom, Mom, Dad, can you excuse us? We want
24 to go up to the mountain. We will go straight up there.
25 Change our clothes, get new socks and everything. We will

1 camp out up there until freeze-up, which is the first
2 week, second week of September. We come out and get the
3 ground squirrel, shoot some caribou. We do what we can
4 while we can.

5 Even in the middle of winter, get 40, 50 below, if
6 the freezers are empty, nothing in the fridge, get
7 caribou, and that will supply us for at least a couple
8 weeks. And whoever else needs meat, tell them come up,
9 get a little piece, or I cook soup, make fry meat and
10 rice. Oh, boy, they are all up then.

11 But yeah, I'm pretty -- pretty nervous. Welcome to
12 Arctic Village. And you guys are always welcome. Come
13 back. I could go out and show you how it's -- how to do
14 it or how we -- how I have been taught. A couple weeks,
15 like last month I finally took out a -- these two people.
16 One of them was from -- I think it was Whitehorse, and the
17 other one was -- she was a woman from Florida that takes
18 pictures for National Geographic. I took them out.
19 Really sure to see my pictures on National Geographic.

20 But thank you for coming and come again whenever you
21 need to. All right. Thank you.

22 MS. DEBBIE TRITT-KENDI: (Speaking in
23 Gwich'in.) In my language I said I will start off with a
24 caribou song. As many as you guys heard, you guys heard
25 my grandfather's name, Reverend Albert Tritt. And his --

1 and his kids. There is Martha James. Martha Tritt,
2 maiden name. Isaac Tritt, Sr., my father. He's my
3 father, my late father. And there is three other ones.
4 There is Abel Tritt, Paul Tritt, George Tritt. We all
5 came from our ancestors, our grandparents. And I
6 purposely wore this shirt that says Maggie Gilbert and
7 James Gilbert, and they also are my family, my
8 grandparents.

9 And as you see, my people here, my family, they are
10 all my brothers and sisters. We all came from the same
11 generation. And we all live on caribou. We live on
12 whitefish. We live on trouts. We live off our land. We
13 don't go to the store. You buy steak, that's 15 bucks.
14 One time a hunter came up to me and he said, I don't want
15 to buy \$15 steak. I want to buy \$30 gun shells. I'll get
16 more caribou with that.

17 So here we are standing peacefully, respectfully. We
18 are all Gwich'ins and we are proud to be Gwich'ins. And
19 we speak from our heart because we respect our elders.

20 So I will start off, and you guys can follow. And
21 this song, my dad taught Sarah. And we started in
22 1975, '4, as I remember. Half of the Gwich'in dancers are
23 laying down there sleeping. They are very strong like we
24 are as we are standing here now. So I will start off with
25 the caribou song.

1 (A song was performed.)

2 MS. DEBBIE TRITT-KENDI: (Speaking in
3 Gwich'in.) In my language I said my name is Debbie
4 Tritt-Kendi, and I was born and raised in Arctic Village.
5 And my Indian name is Treenahtsyaa. Happens to be with
6 the tears. And my dad's name is Reverend Isaac Tritt.
7 You guys heard his name. You guys heard Albert Tritt's
8 name. My mom's name, Naomi Tritt. Maiden name, Naomi
9 Peter.

10 And she died last year on May 23 with heart broken
11 because my son did a wrongful thing, committed suicide.
12 That really hurt us. Every one of us got hurt. But as
13 you see, us here, we are happy for living off the land
14 like this. We go down to buy gas, it's \$10 a gallon. We
15 go to store to buy steak, it's 30 to \$15.

16 And I'm married almost a year now to a Canadian.
17 He's from Fort McPherson, and he's also Gwich'in. So my
18 point to this is, as Gwich'in Nation, we are all one. We
19 are all in one. We go across the border, we have family
20 over there. They come over here, we are their family.

21 And as for these youth here, look at them, beautiful
22 youth. Their next step is our side. They are going to be
23 beside us. They will be standing up there. They will be
24 fighting for what we are fighting for. And earlier I was
25 sitting outside, a smoke hit me, and I thought to myself,

1 gee, you know what? I'd rather smell campfire smoke
2 instead of an oil burning smoke that will kill me.
3 Campfire smoke will feed me because we are cooking animals
4 off the land; rabbits, ground squirrels, caribou mainly.
5 As you heard of our caribou, we use caribou a lot. We
6 share it. They send us dry fish. We send them dry meat.
7 They send us whole salmon, we send them a whole caribou.

8 And as for these elders, I love them. I love every
9 one of those elders because you know why? Because they
10 got wisdom. They tell the truth. They talk to us
11 sensibly. I'm 54 years old now. And all this time -- I
12 go visit Gideon once in a while. He talks to me. He
13 stops by me. He talks about this and that. And I stop by
14 Allo's once in a while to have tea, because they share.
15 They love to share their words. They love to feed people.

16 One thing that really hurts my heart is why do you
17 guys do this to us? We are tribes that live off
18 subsistencely. We don't have no running water. We got to
19 buy \$50 five-gallon gas, go out and get wood to keep us
20 warm during the winter. We got to buy \$20 two-gallon gas
21 for four-wheeler to drive around right now.

22 And when you drill oil up there, you know what's
23 going to happen? Inflation. Everything will go up. They
24 are going to start killing our caribou, most likely start
25 selling it back to us. We are not used to that. We are

1 used to go out there and just killing them and bringing
2 them back in and then just share.

3 There is a lot of hurt people around here. A lot of
4 them. I see them. Young ones that don't even want to
5 speak up, but it's like us speaking up for them. That's
6 what we keep in us is a strong heart. And we could be
7 cold-minded if we want to be. But again, we are Neets'aii
8 Gwich'ins and we are kind, loving, caring, and we all
9 believe -- we believe in God. We pray.

10 I pray today that you hear every word that anybody,
11 every person said in here, that you will extend the June
12 thing to maybe August. Like I said, if a white person
13 come up to me and talk to me, I wouldn't understand a word
14 they say because they are using their complicated words.
15 But if an Athabascan -- Gwich'in Athabascan come to me and
16 talk to me in Gwich'in, I'll answer right back because I
17 know how to speak, read, write and hear.

18 And these pictures on the wall, that's my dad over
19 there. That's my grandpa right there Albert -- I mean,
20 Titus Peter. Very strongly people. And over there, that
21 picture, that's how we lived a long time ago. They didn't
22 have no roof over their head. They had tents. My mom
23 lived on this earth 91 years and told their stories with
24 us, and those stories were happy. She told us about these
25 families around here. They didn't grow up rich. They

1 grew up poor because they didn't know nothing about money.
2 We don't know nothing about money in those days, but these
3 days it's just cash, money. I don't really go for money.
4 I'd rather pray and have faith, and God will provide
5 everything.

6 So please, listen to these people here. We are
7 hurting. And we are all Gwich'ins. Mahsi'.

8 MR. WILBUR JACK KENNEDY: That was my
9 wife. My name is Wilbur Jack Kennedy. I'm from
10 Shahnyuutii', Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories,
11 Canada. And we are the people of the headwaters. And
12 each day I get up in the morning, I first of all pray for
13 my kids and I pray for the elders and those little babies.
14 And I pray for all of you because I'm here on your land.
15 I know I cost one penny, but I'm an American now since I
16 married into the Neets'aiti. So that makes me two penny.

17 And I lived with you guys for all these years. How
18 many years now I forgot. But I grew up with you guys, and
19 you kids are all grown up and elders are gone. But elders
20 are here yet. And I could see them talking about ten
21 years ago about what's going on, and it's still here and
22 it's still happening. And I pray each day that the land
23 is always there. And it's for the animals. And we are
24 just trespassers on your land. But I pray that fish is in
25 the water. And I see that more airplanes in the sky than

1 birds today.

2 I see caribou. I don't know. I don't understand
3 this part. It's 216,000, but I seen it one time that they
4 mingled with the 40-mile herd. I see it just black with
5 all kinds of animals around. I couldn't believe how black
6 that area was. I think they mingle in with the 40-mile
7 herd, maybe the Central herd, too, because animal are
8 wiser than us.

9 I migrated with the geese in the springtime. I try
10 and beat the leaves before they come out and then I
11 migrate back in the fall time with the caribou to go home
12 and go see my people again. I miss home sometimes, but
13 this is my home. This is where I'll be. Where my wife is
14 I'll stay. And I respect the women of this land. I
15 respect them because they are strong people.

16 Look at the tribe. Look at the soul, beautiful and
17 so strong-hearted and so educated. About five years ago I
18 said that you have a lot of potential here. And I see the
19 chiefs. I see all you guys talk together. This is what
20 we need. This is how we are going to be strong. We are
21 going to come together and stand together. And you chiefs
22 are there for that. And we are right behind you as
23 council, as members. I'm so glad to be a member. I think
24 I'm a member of every tribe because I have been through.

25 As a singer/songwriter I keep it to the point and

1 plain and simple. I see and hear and I feel what you are
2 all are doing. And I'm going to fight for this as well.
3 And I have written songs, too. It hasn't come out yet,
4 but I'm pretty well sure it's ready and it's powerful and
5 it's to the point, because we have got to really listen to
6 these elders now. How many years, Sarah? How many years
7 of fight, how many years of heart, standing up to these
8 people now.

9 And I want to say that why are you so rushed? Why
10 are you so rushed in taking what's so valuable? Why are
11 you so rushed with greed, you know? I want to speak by my
12 heart. I speak and I have respect for the jobs out there
13 that it's going to create, but I ask you once, you
14 evaluate this, this and that and that, but I ask you, put
15 a time lapse camera on a pipeline, put a time lapse camera
16 on the land, on the birthing grounds. You will see it
17 move.

18 You will see that pipeline on stress. You go into a
19 pipeline, I bet you everything there is a lot of stress
20 there. How many years it's been there now. And I ask you
21 to assess that before you assess that other birthing
22 grounds and stuff for the birds and all that stuff because
23 time lapse really show motion, and there is things
24 happening out there. And it's going to happen.

25 There is something big that's going to happen one of

1 these days. Maybe it's this that's happening now. And I
2 pray that we stand strong and look after our children, our
3 elders, because what's happening here is happening over
4 there in Canada and it's from the same people, the
5 Gwich'in Nation.

6 My mother is from Old Crow, Yukon Territory right in
7 the middle of the Yukon -- or the Gwich'in Nation. My dad
8 come from this side. I was asked by my older sister to
9 check Tanana because I think he might be in the old grave
10 site. And I seen Shyanahiti's [ph] grave. And we call him
11 Shyanahiti', and we have different dialects of this man.
12 He helped a lot of people throughout the Gwich'in Nation,
13 and he fought for the animals. And it was a hard time, I
14 tell you, because I hear a lot of stories. I grew up on
15 elders, which I was so proud to. And today I listen to
16 these elders, and they tell me there is no birds and there
17 is a lot of erosion.

18 And what I'm afraid of is we look at Prudhoe Bay. If
19 you assess that damage there, you will probably see a lot
20 of erosion. And where is that stuff going to seep to?
21 It's got nowhere else to go but to the ocean. Everything
22 goes to the ocean. Why we are protectors of the
23 headwaters is that we don't allow no placer miners, you
24 know, no fracking on our land in the Gwich'in Nation in
25 Canada because it's very dangerous, and we don't allow no

1 fracking, no way, because it's in our headwaters.

2 And we can even thank the trees for giving us warmth.
3 We thank this whole thing for giving us life. There is
4 something out there that's going to happen, and you guys
5 are going to need us. And we will be here for you. And
6 you are going to need our water. I know that much.

7 And look around you, everybody. Everything in this
8 place is all plastic. You got plastic on you. You drink
9 plastic. I bet your water is full of plastic you are
10 drinking. And I advise you that plastic is not the
11 answer. And plastic is oil. That's where we get oil from
12 is plastic. You need oil for a lot of things. You are
13 probably drinking oil right now.

14 So I advise you that you make assessment on your
15 damage before you assess the land or animals or birds or,
16 you know, us as a human beings. You are human as well.
17 You have a heart. You have these feelings. I know you
18 feel us. I know you have respect. It's all we are asking
19 is that respect. And that respect is inside you and
20 inside your words. You are here. We respect you. Come
21 back and come on the land and see these people. See how
22 beautiful they live. Go up there. You will want to come
23 back. My friend Keith Nitran, he's in the --

24 I tell you one thing. I wrote a song one time, it
25 was the caribou song. And I didn't -- I just wrote it of

1 my heart. And I was in the mountains and I was singing to
2 myself in the mountains when I had my gun and my pack
3 sack. And we were going for caribou, and this song came
4 to be. And I told the Porcupine management board in
5 Whitehorse, Canada to come check this out. And in it was
6 they first started off with the dirty side, which is the
7 oil pollution of the dirty side of the song. And I wanted
8 to end it with a beautiful side, which is here, which is
9 the children, elders. And there is no more elders left.
10 It's going to be harder and harder and harder without the
11 elders.

12 And that song, we took it down. Me and Keith Nitran,
13 we took it down to the Lower 48 and I had a good trip down
14 there. We were going over the turnpike of New Jersey
15 going into New York where that bottle cap they call it. I
16 went there. And you had to pay I don't know how much to
17 get through there to go to New York. And coming through
18 New Jersey I said, wow, look at that. One of these days a
19 plane is going to hit that. And there was oil tanks.
20 Like for miles you could see oil barrels just for miles.
21 And for sure, something happened by those twin towers.

22 And I swear there is something going to happen in
23 this world today the way it's going. People not trusting,
24 people not loving, people not having the heart and
25 respect. So I pray and hope that you can assess the

1 damage done.

2 We go through Canada, there is a -- there is so much
3 damage. It's called sand pits. They take the oil out of
4 the sand. And it's like Neil Young, he's a professional
5 writer as well. And he went through there and he said
6 it's like hell on earth. There is nothing alive. And all
7 that thing is seeping out and going into the McMurray
8 River, which goes into the great Slave, which goes into
9 the MacKenzie and it comes right up towards the ocean.
10 And it goes in -- we come out of the Peel River into the
11 MacKenzie and into the ocean. Everything goes into the
12 ocean. That's where you will find most of that plastic.
13 Plastic pollution is a very delicate situation, as well.

14 So with this, I'd like to add on more couple of
15 hours. Always have a heart and within you always laugh
16 and joke. But take this serious at this time. And feel
17 what Gideon said there. All the -- ten years ago this is
18 still happening. Since I was small, it's still happening.

19 And they are all gone. Like I say, Chief Johnny
20 Charlie was our great chief. Every time he said, boys, go
21 for wood, and we are gone, no money involved. We just do
22 it for the good of our heart. And we ask you, give it
23 some time. Give it some thought. Don't rush into things.

24 Like my mother, my grandmother and her mother before,
25 if there is something wrong, like touch something, like

1 this don't belong me, I don't touch it because it's very
2 valuable. And she said do things right or don't do it at
3 all. Do it right so that you don't have to come back and
4 do it again. Do things right and pray and give thanks to
5 what you do and all things will come in a good way and
6 will come back to you in heart and respect.

7 We are just asking you to respect and give a little
8 timeline and tell your president that we really need your
9 help. Tell your president if he has a heart, that we will
10 vote for him if he stops the drilling in ANWR. That's all
11 we ask is respect and kindness. And I hope you have a
12 good stay here and enjoy yourself. And they are nice
13 people. They are really beautiful people.

14 And I thank you to be on your land. Thank you very
15 much. And you have a good day. And God bless you all.
16 And I'll be praying for you. Mahsi' Choo.

17 Canada will be on your side, as well, too. So I'll
18 be going back to Canada and telling them what I see and
19 what I hear and what I know. So Mahsi'.

20 MS. TONYA GARNETT: I had a question
21 earlier, Nicole, whether or not if we can see the
22 transcripts after they are ready to look for any mistakes.

23 MS. NICOLE HAYES: I'll have to find out
24 and get back to you on that.

25 MS. TONYA GARNETT: All right. And then

1 just a few announcements. The Venetie charter, the people
2 that came in on the charter, it's going to be here at 4:00
3 p.m. So if you are on that charter, you have to be ready
4 to go. And with that, some of the people from Arctic
5 Village said we had two people from Venetie on the list
6 and they wanted to say something before they left, if
7 that's okay.

8 And then also we have a couple other charters, and
9 one of them is the State folks will be leaving soon. We
10 just wanted to thank you guys for coming and joining us.
11 Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott and the other State
12 folks, the Division of Natural Resources and Fish and --
13 Fish & Game, we are -- thank you for coming and listening
14 in. We appreciate that you come here and listen. And
15 thank you for agreeing not to testify and just to be here
16 in service to us to listen. We appreciate that. We want
17 to ask -- respectfully ask for your support in supporting
18 us in this -- getting an extension of the scoping period
19 and also more -- more locations for hearings. As you can
20 see, we have a lot of other people that want to be heard
21 in other communities. Thank you.

22 MR. LANCE WHITWELL: I'm going to sit down
23 before my knees make me sit. My name is Lance Whitwell.
24 I'm the environmental director for the Native Village of
25 Venetie. I have been the environmental coordinator for

1 about 20 years now, since 1998. We have had a lot of
2 issues up here that we have worked on through the years.
3 We have had our ups and downs with the federal government.

4 When I first got up in this country, there was some
5 animosity between the refuge staff and the tribe. Ever
6 since they created the refuge, it seemed like they were
7 trying to limit the tribe's access to cultural and
8 customary use areas on the refuge site. And there was
9 quite a bit of animosity and very little cooperation
10 between the refuge and the tribe itself.

11 And for the last 20 years or so, we have tried to
12 build on our partnerships with them and the relationship
13 that we have with them because we have -- we have come to
14 realize that we are both really trying to accomplish the
15 same goal because we are trying to protect the land and
16 the animals that cross and migrate between the refuge and
17 tribal lands here.

18 And it's not only the caribou. The moose, bears,
19 sheep, everything migrates back and forth between these
20 two borders. And I like to think, you know -- the refuge
21 staff would probably agree -- I like to think that we are
22 on a pretty good working relationship now because they are
23 trying to protect the caribou in the refuge and we try to
24 protect our land and take care of the environmental issues
25 on our land to make sure that we are protecting the

1 caribou and migratory animals, also.

2 And I think we are at a good place right now with a
3 working relationship with them, and then all of a sudden
4 this law passes. And now here we are with the federal
5 government and the BLM trying to undo this relationship
6 that we have built for the last 20 years. This whole
7 relationship that we have that was very difficult to build
8 was built on mutual trust. We trusted they would protect
9 them on the refuge. They trust that we would protect them
10 on our land. And now it seems with the stroke of a pen a
11 lot of that trust could be missing. I just wanted to
12 bring that up. Hopefully it doesn't continue to be that
13 way. It's very difficult for the refuge staff to
14 accomplish their mission up there without the cooperation
15 of the tribe here because this is the airport they use.
16 This is the facilities that they use here to gain access
17 to their refuge up there.

18 But as you have heard from many of the speakers
19 today, the climate is changing. There is no doubt about
20 that. Things that are changing with the climate, of
21 course, we have mentioned the weather getting warmer. It
22 rains in the winter. When it rains in the winter, it
23 forms a hard crust on the top of the snow. And as Gideon
24 was saying, you could see -- if you are following the
25 trails you will see the scarring on the caribous' legs

1 because they have to push through that hard crust of ice
2 that's on top of the snow.

3 And as the water, the rainwater goes down into the
4 snow to the ground layer and then refreezes as ice, the
5 caribou can't dig through the ice to get to their food.
6 And many of them starve. There has been many natural
7 occurrences to where almost half of the caribou herd has
8 died in one year, in one event. And it is still
9 happening.

10 Something I didn't hear mentioned in here, we heard
11 Wilbur talk some about the Canadian side over there that
12 also depend on these caribou, but the caribou in the last
13 few years have migrated farther east than ever before.
14 They have migrated farther south than ever before. And
15 when they go to these new areas, they are going into
16 places where there are road systems, and that gains easy
17 access to them on the Canadian side. And I believe the
18 last report I read was between 40- and 70,000 caribou a
19 year are hunted on the Canadian side. In a herd of
20 200,000, which 40,000, 50,000 of them being hunted each
21 year, that's hardly sustainable, you know.

22 And a big problem that the Porcupine Caribou
23 Management Board has brought up is that the ease of access
24 to hunters on the Canadian side is leading to a lot of
25 wanton waste. A lot of people go out and they see

1 caribou, and they just start shooting. You know, you can
2 kill three or four caribou with one bullet when they are
3 all in a big herd. And a lot of them are just being left
4 to waste. So we have got that.

5 We have got the permafrost melting, Faith mentioned.
6 We have got several areas even on this side of the river,
7 and there is many more on the other side of the river,
8 where the permafrost is melting and changing stream flows,
9 changing sedimentations in the streams. It's affecting
10 the biodiversity in the waters. And I see in your maps
11 back here, the coastal plain has at least seven major
12 river tributaries that run right through there. And these
13 mountains right here, the Brooks Range, this is the
14 Continental Divide. The Continental Divide means that
15 everything on that side of the mountains runs toward the
16 Arctic Ocean. Everything on this side of the Continental
17 Divide, these mountains, runs toward the Pacific Ocean and
18 to the Yukon River.

19 But these two river valleys that you see going up
20 right here, these go all the through the mountains and
21 they come back on the other side on the other side of the
22 Continental Divide. They are connected. And Arctic char
23 and Dolly Vardens, they migrate up here and they spawn in
24 the Chandalar River right here. So whatever happens out
25 that way is going to directly affect the fish and the

1 biodiversity in our river, also.

2 The taiga, this kind of forest that you see right
3 here is called the taiga. And it's like the farthest
4 north timber, the farthest north trees. But that's not
5 being the case anymore. There has been more and more
6 spruce trees, willows, shrubs all moving north. They're
7 migrating north as the climate changes. And you know,
8 caribou eat lichen. Here we call it caribou moss. It's
9 lichen, and it grows about one inch every hundred years.
10 And when you have shrubs and other kinds of trees that
11 start growing, it shades out that moss, and that moss
12 cannot grow. It will not regrow once the caribou have
13 eaten it.

14 The sea level rising we heard some people mention.
15 It's not only the erosion problem that it's causing along
16 the coast. The flooding that's been occurring on the
17 coastal plains on the low-lying areas, I believe this is
18 the third year in a row that Deadhorse has been flooding.
19 The pipeline haul road has been shut down three times
20 because the last three years it's been flooded out.
21 That's climate changing.

22 Insects. We have been seeing a lot of strange
23 insects, new insects that we have never seen before.
24 Especially when the caribou go more southerly, there have
25 been incidences of ticks, big, huge ticks that get

1 infested on them, and they can actually suck a caribou's
2 blood until they are dead. They suck all the blood out of
3 them.

4 Polar bears. You have heard a few people talk about
5 the polar bears that are being threatened now. One of the
6 only strongholds that they have has been Kaktovik because
7 they have got the whaling -- the remains from their
8 whaling and what they call the bone pile up there. And
9 it's been reported that the polar bears are now cross
10 breeding back to the grizzlies. They are saying that they
11 originally evolved from grizzlies, and now they are
12 devolving back into grizzlies. They have seen polar bears
13 up here on the mountains following caribou. They have
14 seen polar bears in Fort Yukon 150 miles south of here.
15 And that's 500 miles from any coast. There has been other
16 mammals. They are hunting other mammals out there, not
17 just the caribous. You know, there's all kinds of ground
18 squirrels and moose and things like that up there, too.

19 But the migratory birds, I was kind of surprised that
20 it would even be offered for exploration up there. And we
21 have got a road project in Venetie, and by federal
22 regulations, as we use federal funds, we are not allowed
23 to do any kind of work during the month of June because
24 that's when the migratory birds are flying. We are not
25 even allowed to build a road or do any kind of excavations

1 during the waterfowl migration time.

2 There is a difference in vegetation between the
3 uplands, the foothills on the other side of the Brooks
4 Range here and the coastal plain. The coastal plain is
5 rich in minerals, salts because of the salt air, and it's
6 so windy that bushes and shrubs and trees and stuff can't
7 grow. So there is a specialized ecosystem that grows
8 specific types of vegetation that the caribou mothers need
9 to eat after they give birth. It's high nutrition. It's
10 the highest nutrition area that they can find, and that is
11 one of the reasons why they give birth there. And you
12 can't find those in any other areas. If you look at the
13 map, if you look at the elevations on the map, the coastal
14 plain is a low-lying area. If you get off of that plain,
15 you go back into the foothills again, and it's a totally
16 different kind of vegetation.

17 And so any kind of exploration up there is -- it's
18 going to affect the diversity of the ecosystem up there.
19 We have seen a lot of outside hunting pressure coming here
20 lately, not only on the Canadian side. There has been
21 instances where Fairbanks area had a big forest fire so
22 the hunters couldn't fly out of there, and they brought
23 them all out here. They brought hunters out here to this
24 airport because it's a public airport. And they were
25 flying them to hunt caribou to the east of here. And they

1 shot all the scouts. You heard Gideon talk about the big
2 bulls, the big lead bulls with the big racks. That's
3 exactly what the hunters are looking for. And if you kill
4 the scouts, the herd will scatter. They won't come. They
5 will not follow.

6 One of the elders was telling me one time that
7 caribou have a scent gland in their foot, and as long as
8 they are going good, they are putting off a scent that
9 says it's fine, this is the trail, follow me. But if they
10 get spooked or if they get startled or something like
11 that, then it goes to an adrenaline type of a deal and
12 they put off a different smell and the rest of the herd
13 will not follow them. It doesn't take much to change the
14 migration of the caribou herd. It doesn't take very much
15 at all.

16 I really liked what a lot of the youth were saying
17 about growing up here and what they learn here. And I
18 really like what Faith Gemmill said is that we -- we don't
19 just teach them to hunt. When they're out hunting, they
20 are learning life skills from their dads, their uncles,
21 their grandpas. They are learning life skills out there.
22 And I really love Arctic Village because of that fact.

23 All of my children have come up here, and when they
24 come here, they don't want to go back home. Many times I
25 leave them here with their family. All of my children

1 went to school here at one time or another, and they love
2 it here because of the -- they have got a freedom here and
3 learning these skills instead of learning the technology,
4 you know.

5 And I see children grow up here in Arctic Village who
6 don't even have family here in Arctic Village. People
7 will take them in from other villages. At-risk children,
8 whether it's family problems, youth problems, legal
9 problems, those children come here and they straighten out
10 and they grow up in a good way and they learn and they
11 change. And then they could go back home when they are a
12 little older. And they go home, and they are perfectly
13 normal kids with a better mindset than when they started
14 out. So it's a lot more than just hunting up here.

15 As Wilbur was saying also, you know, the coastal
16 plains and the Arctic refuge where it crosses over the
17 Canadian border is the MacKenzie River Delta. And that
18 area is a really highly developed area and is getting more
19 highly developed. And so there really is no other Arctic
20 coastal area to where these caribou would be able to go,
21 you know. And as much as we have studied, as much
22 traditional knowledge as we have about the Porcupine
23 caribou herd, nobody knows what they will do. Nobody
24 knows what's going to happen if they go over that mountain
25 and there is an industrial complex there. Nobody knows

1 what they are going to do. They may join the other herds.
2 They may just scatter. They may just be absorbed into
3 other areas. They may never come back here.

4 These river valleys right here that cut through the
5 mountains, the caribou come through here because they are
6 heavy. They are heavy with calves. They are pregnant. A
7 caribou calf is 40, 50 pounds. And that mother caribou is
8 maybe 150 pounds. Can you imagine that, trying to walk
9 through three feet of snow over the mountains? But these
10 river valleys, they go all the way through to the other
11 side. That's why they come here. That's the easiest
12 route for them to go over to the Arctic refuge and the
13 coastal plain. There is no other way. The only other way
14 is for them to go 200 miles east and cut up right through
15 all the flats, the Porcupine River flats.

16 And I think the people here have shown you quite a
17 bit that it's a lot more than just subsistence food that
18 would be affected here. It's cultural, socioeconomics.
19 And the hard part is that just nobody knows what they will
20 do. And one of the elders told me one day that there is
21 three things in this world that you can never predict. He
22 said you never can predict which way the wind is going to
23 blow. You can never predict which way the caribou is
24 going to migrate. And you never know what a woman is
25 thinking.

1 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Before we take a
2 break, right before our five-minute break, Ernest will
3 speak just for five minutes.

4 I just wanted to say, you know, I'm not trying to be
5 disrespectful, but just to be mindful of time because
6 their plane has been waiting at the airport. They don't
7 want to leave. They want to hear everybody and everybody
8 has something to say. We have a list of people still.
9 But just be mindful of how long your comments are. That
10 would be helpful.

11 MR. ERNEST ERICK: Thank you for being
12 here, all of you, federal government, State of Alaska,
13 Fish & Wildlife, tribes. I'm happy we are all here today.
14 You know, Joe, Secretary of Interior, you know, a number
15 of times they left a scar on Alaska. And that scar is one
16 of the biggest oil spills there was at Valdez, you know.
17 And that's a big mistake they made, the federal
18 government, the State of Alaska, because they never did
19 talk to the tribe. So the other thing is that Fish &
20 Wildlife, you protect so much out there in the rivers, but
21 you are not protecting the tribal food. And we need to
22 continue doing this kind of stuff. It's your and my
23 responsibility.

24 Once upon a time this guy went up to the pipeline and
25 shot it. Over 200 to 400 gallons of crude oil wasted,

1 money being wasted. That's another scar that the federal
2 government and the State of Alaska made. And the
3 pro-development and also Shell Alaska. Those are the
4 scars that was made on Alaska because they didn't speak to
5 the tribe at the time.

6 1968 when it took nine years for the federal
7 government and the State of Alaska to dip into the Prudhoe
8 Bay because the Inupiat Indian Eskimos didn't understand
9 what's happening up there under their roof, under their
10 floor. The roots of their land was taken from them.
11 Today the Native Village of Barrow are trying to be heard
12 out there and to the world, and they are not being heard.
13 They need to listen to the tribe within the state of
14 Alaska. It's very important.

15 You left a scar for me because when Indian Country
16 cases came along, you dumped me because I said that we
17 have 229,000 recognized tribes within the state of Alaska.
18 That's Indian Country, Indian people, Eskimo people,
19 Athabascan, Haidas. They were all there.

20 Don't get me wrong. Okay? Because national level
21 firefighters, oil company, Doyon, they are all letting
22 their land burn for nothing because they have laws,
23 prescribed land, unlimited areas, killing the wildlife off
24 for the last 40 years that we have been representing since
25 1988 and before memorial of time. Those people up there,

1 the leaders, the second in command -- Jimmy Roberts, that
2 picture up there, that's my grandfather. He lived off the
3 land.

4 In 1910 a lot of his brothers, his forefather, his
5 father, they walked the land and left a footprint right on
6 that 1002 land. Those are the footsteps of these
7 descendent people here today. I'm very tired with the
8 last 30 years as a former chief back then making those
9 kinds of decisions over the tribe. It's not very good.
10 These 300 people that the federal government, Trump
11 Administration, 300 people -- we have 17,000 people that
12 lives, that migrates inside Alaska and Canadian. Somebody
13 made a border between our national Gwich'in land.

14 Something is going on now today. So the national
15 level, the white people are making a little bit different
16 decision among yourself. And coming up here, we have been
17 having history, documents, science. We have our own
18 science in each village that -- Yukon Flats. Yukon Flats
19 is over 260,000 acres one way, acres of land. Inside of
20 there there is over 12 recognized community villages.
21 They are being affected today. National Congress American
22 Indians need to wake up. The 500 leaders need to wake up
23 today because we are being tricked again. Ever since
24 1980 -- '68 land claim.

25 These are the things that affect us. They didn't --

1 we were not part of the Land Claims Settlement Act. We
2 went for the land, the subsurface title rights, fee simple
3 title owned by the tribe. 1.8 million acres of land that
4 belongs to us, our descendants and the future generation.
5 The waters, the headwaters, the lower waters, it all
6 belong to us. What are you guys doing 300 people that
7 Trump Administration trying to make a decision over me?

8 I have learned for the last 30 years all document,
9 science, professional from federal government, State of
10 Alaska, you didn't listen to us yet. You are killing my
11 birthplace of my -- where I was born, that footstep my
12 grandfather gave me, that mark that's identified that it
13 belongs to me. It belongs to the tribe and it belongs to
14 the people, the descendents.

15 The indigenous people is very strong today because
16 one time once upon a time Hitler was coming. All of us
17 were scared. But the Gwich'in people were not scared
18 because we made a song for him. And it stop right there.
19 So if you are going to deal, already made a mark on Alaska
20 from oil spill, from not giving us a direct scope of
21 progress that we need to make a little bit longer for the
22 tribe. You identify maybe six or seven tribes that's
23 going to testify and put a comment on a piece of paper. I
24 don't want that to happen.

25 As whole United States, the Native people within the

1 state of Alaska and also the national level, we need to
2 hear our voice today. We need to wake up here. This
3 group of people that's discriminate me and my 20
4 grandchildren that I work hard and trap and hunt and fish
5 and that all those species that live on the Arctic
6 National Wildlife Refuge is their food is up there.

7 Only thing that federal government and the State of
8 Alaska and the oil company are doing is creating bacteria
9 to us. We don't want that happen on our land, the tribal
10 land. I have been seeing it. I taste it. I look at it.
11 I see different faces. But my grandmother lived to 100
12 years old and raised me up with 11 of us. We were little
13 white skin. We were a little bit three-quarter
14 Athabascan.

15 We have a choice on land. What kind of leadership,
16 what kind of direction we are going to be leading our
17 people. We scope it down. We recognize it back in 20, 30
18 years ago. You guys are bringing up the same fight, same
19 money making -- spending all that money of government
20 funding, state funding to pay for a science -- one little
21 guy came in once upon a time with a bible kind of looking
22 to destroy us, but lucky we were believers.

23 We believe in Indian people. We believe in our way
24 of life. We believe in the Creator. We pray for the
25 food, the water, the earth, the other races in our

1 community and throughout the whole nation. You guys
2 nearly [indiscernible] because the wilderness did that to
3 you. The earthquake is coming. The Hawaiian are having
4 trouble with their environment today. What's going on
5 with Trump Administration today, those 300 people trying
6 to rule the world, trying to give the wrong
7 decision-making to the tribe and all its little workers.

8 Something is going on big here today. There has got
9 to be a stop, final, no decision-making on that refuge
10 land, the 1002 land. That sacred ground is very important
11 for the living people in the world because I need that
12 food just like the animals and the species.

13 So Joe, and also the State, the state governor, they
14 need to wake up a little here today. From this day till
15 the next four years from now, you go through the whole
16 shebang of who is protecting those areas, put it on a
17 piece of paper and do good things. Have a more scope of
18 work and a better community and better knowledge and
19 leadership because that leadership today is not working
20 for anybody. It's just that they are spending a dollar to
21 make a dollar.

22 United States and the state of Alaska is not poor.
23 Think about the other opportunities out there that we
24 already leave those scars on. Those opportunity -- we
25 need to dig that pipe up, clean up the land that you white

1 people out there that destroy that. I didn't do it. The
2 tribe didn't do it. You did it. You clean it up. You
3 bring up a percentage of opportunity, job to those
4 communities that needs it or to those cities.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Five-minute break.

7 (A break was taken.)

8 MR. GIDEON JAMES: I just want to read a
9 short statement I wrote. My name is Gideon James, Arctic
10 Village. Arctic Village and Venetie optioned out of ANCSA
11 and return the title of land to tribe, 1.38 million acres.
12 Throughout history, animals, ducks, fish utilize our land
13 ever since time immemorial. Our people see these
14 migration patterns happening each year cycle and season to
15 season. Proposed area to be studied is the core area that
16 these animals begin new life, and geese, likewise.

17 Tribe have clean land, water and food for these
18 animals and birds. Have lakes and streams for healthy
19 fish to spawn and return. Each year cycle season to
20 season they return.

21 So proposed oil and gas drilling will destroy the
22 birthing area for forever. And this should not happen at
23 all. Gwich'in people will continue to say no. No. No.
24 Everyone in the hall, let me see show of hands that you
25 agree with me. (Hands raised.) Let's show of hand. We

1 say no. No. No.

2 MS. JOYCE JOHN: Good afternoon and
3 welcome to our tribal land and private land of our 180 --
4 1.1 million acres. And we do own the land. We own
5 everything. I like to say something about hunting and our
6 land and our animals and our people. (Speaking in
7 Gwich'in.)

8 I said my name is Joyce John. I'm from Arctic
9 Village. I raised up up here, and I -- my parents are
10 late Abraham John, Sr. and Dorothy John. And my
11 grandparents are Jimmy John, my dad's side, and my mom's
12 side are Ezias James and Martha James. And my great
13 grandparents are Reverend Albert Tritt, the one you guys
14 hearing all day. And we are all one family. We all came
15 from one family. We are all brothers, sisters. We are
16 all grandmas, grandpas.

17 In 1988 when they first got that gathering here, this
18 place, this hall was full, full with people, full with our
19 elders. Our elders' names are down there at the Hero Park
20 right now. And we are going to put more on there. I'm
21 proud of those elders. I cry for them because they put
22 food on table. We walk for it. We hunt for it. We carry
23 it back. And we pass it to these -- our children, our
24 grandchildren. I'm a grandmother now. I'm a single
25 parent. I raise up my kids here, and my kids are still

1 here. They are raising up their kids. We go out camping,
2 go upriver, go fishing. We get this and that to survive.

3 We go on mountain. We don't drive up. We don't --
4 we don't -- we don't drive up on the four-wheeler in those
5 days. We got dog teams. We let the dogs carry stuff for
6 us. We got our backs. The Creator gave us all this to
7 take care of it. Gave us the legs to walk on, to sleep on
8 the land, to smell the plants, hear the birds, look at the
9 nice blue waters.

10 Our lakes are clean. Our rivers are clean. We --
11 we -- we breathe in nice clear air. We own all that. If
12 you guys open ANWR or open to drill, I think about my
13 great-great-grandkids. I think of them. What are they
14 going to do? Where are they going to turn to? The store
15 is not going to help them. The money is not going to help
16 them. I'm 50 -- I'm 54 years old. Every year of my
17 lifetime I live up on the mountain with all these kids.
18 Kids even don't have parents that they go up and we teach
19 them. We want to learn. We want to do it. We help them.
20 We teach them. We tell them every little part. Why are
21 we holding this? Our grandparents taught us everything:
22 Our language, the ways of our life, the way we speak, the
23 way we stand.

24 Yeah, everybody said we are poor. No. We are rich
25 inside. We want you people to know where we came from.

1 We didn't came from there from yesterday. We were here
2 thousands and thousands of years. Look in the Tanana
3 side. They are crying over there. They want to be here
4 to survive. In 1988 we testified here, right here in this
5 building. A lot of our elders cried, crying because this
6 today, we are going to see it and we are here.

7 Please take our words. Take it back down. Tell them
8 we say no. No drilling. Think about your guys'
9 grandkids. Maybe in the future your grandkids might come
10 up and live among us. And they will be Indians. They
11 will come back knowing how to be Indian. Honestly. We
12 got a lot of nonNative here. They come back. They live
13 among us. They live like us. They work with us. They
14 tell us this and that. I'm proud of them. And since
15 1988, the elders wrote a treaty. And I hope you guys
16 found that treaty and work on that.

17 Another one is -- is I'm worried about my future.
18 I'm not worried about me. I'm worried about these young
19 kids. They will be elders. They will be elders. They
20 will be leaders. They will have more generations to come
21 which we won't see. And they will see these -- they will
22 see all this. Look at the trees out there. 1988, those
23 trees weren't there. They were small. It grew up with
24 us. We live with it. It give us medicine. Same thing
25 what caribou eats. It helps them live healthy way of

1 life.

2 Look at all of us. Every day we eat our food. We
3 don't get sick. We get more power. We get more strength
4 to go on, to teach our kids what we know about our
5 ancestors.

6 I could say more, but I'm worried about our
7 generation. And please go back and take what the people
8 said here on behalf of all the tribes. And please include
9 the Canadian because that's where our most our relatives
10 are, like the most -- some of these people say in 1988
11 when they came over, they haven't seen their relatives
12 over 50 years. They cry. They sing. They dance. They
13 hold each other, laugh. They tell each other their
14 childhood stories. They remember going traveling back and
15 forth.

16 And what would that -- like Debbie said, I sit by the
17 campfire. I build fire outside. We all do. We cook
18 outside. That's what all -- we like to smell our smoke.
19 I bet you when you guys go home, you guys going to
20 smell -- miss that smelling and smell of that caribou
21 meat.

22 This one lady came up from Lower 48, live among us
23 and wanted to learn our language -- I mean, our ways of
24 life. She was here like two weeks, and that woman, she
25 put her jacket in her Ziploc bag, say I'm going to take

1 this home and just smell, and every year on Christmas I'm
2 going to smell it, and I'll remember you people. Yeah.

3 There is a lot of people out there helping us to
4 open -- to hear our words. So please take it back and say
5 no, no, no. No, no, no. Okay. Mahsi'.

6 MS. TONYA GARNETT: All right. Just a
7 quick reminder, if everybody can shorten their comments so
8 that we just get your main points so we have a chance for
9 everyone to speak. Grandpa Gideon said so.

10 MS. KAYLA NIKOLAI: My name is Kayla
11 Nikolai. I'm from Arctic Village. They shouldn't drill
12 because caribou means a lot to us. One of you are going
13 to lose something or someone in your life because I lost
14 someone in my life that I will miss till the day we meet
15 again. And I don't want to lose the caribou because they
16 are important to us. So don't drill.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Next there is David,
19 Jr., Winston, Keely.

20 MS. KEELY O'CONNELL: Hi. I'm Keely
21 O'Connell. I am a teacher here, and I am absolutely
22 humbled to be speaking after these amazing activists,
23 particularly my own students, who I'm so proud of.

24 What I wanted to say was that I have nothing to add
25 scientifically or sort of special social knowledge or

1 anything like that, but having lived and worked in Arctic
2 Village and Venetie for the past four years, I can say
3 that I have learned vast amounts of important stuff from
4 the kids that I work with and that their cultural values
5 of cooperation and forgiveness have something to teach
6 everybody in the world, especially white people and sort
7 of western culture and the dominant culture in the United
8 States, and that harming the environment that this culture
9 and these people depend on would cost everyone that --
10 that opportunity to learn.

11 So I absolutely stand with the Gwich'in people on
12 this matter.

13 MS. TONYA GARNETT: All right. Has David,
14 Jr. or Winston come up yet? Jerrald? Jerrald John.
15 Galen Gilbert.

16 MR. GALEN GILBERT: Hi. My name is Galen
17 Gilbert. I am 30 years old and I lived in Arctic Village
18 all my life. I'm a former council member and a former
19 chief of 2015. I ran for one year, and now I have a
20 family. I have a big family now. I have three girls, and
21 I'm just a full-time father now.

22 And our -- again, like for the hundredth time
23 probably for today, caribou is our main source of food.
24 And that ain't no lie. My cousin Daniel was up here
25 talking about the caribou and his girls picking that over

1 candy. That's -- that's 100 percent true with my girls,
2 too, because caribou it's so unexplainable, I mean, in how
3 it's part of us. We have to have it every day and
4 including every season. My grandfather Trimble Gilbert
5 also said to me and to my girls, always feed them
6 (Gwich'in word). That's Native food and -- because he
7 said I want them to be strong and I want them to eat just
8 Native food. So I'm holding that word and I'm standing by
9 that word till the day I die.

10 And also you guys come up here and live one year up
11 here, yeah, I think you guys would stand by with us. And
12 I just want to end this by saying you come live with us
13 one year, yeah. You might like it. You might not. But I
14 guarantee you will be Indianized.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. WINSTON ERICK: My name is Winston
17 Erick. I've just got a couple things to say about caribou
18 and people and the Neets'ain Gwich'in. I'm originally
19 from Fort Yukon and Venetie. I have been here since 2013.
20 I participate in quite a bit of hunting and gathering
21 since I have been here over five years, and I got to know
22 the -- I got -- I'm not down, but I mean, I'm getting to
23 be a decent hunter and I'm trying to respect, but I -- my
24 time here hunting, I -- the respect between the Neets'ain
25 and caribou are pretty powerful. And I saw it two or

1 three times, and it just opened my eyes since I have been
2 up this way.

3 And I think, you know, like, why would you want to
4 destroy such a beautiful -- I think that's just a one time
5 thing, too, so -- and that's all I want to say.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. JERRALD JOHN: Hi. My name is
8 Jerrald, and I'm from here, this beautiful land. I grew
9 up here. I have been a hunter all my life. And if you
10 could look out the window, I have traveled as far as you
11 can see. And I have hunted sheep. I have hunted moose.
12 I even made fish traps to capture fish. And you guys
13 heard it from the old. You guys heard it from our youth.
14 And what they are going to do up there to me personally is
15 not right.

16 And it's just not caribou that's being affected.
17 There is wildlife such as snow geese. And if you think
18 about it, snow geese travels all over the mid U.S.
19 where -- all the way from Utah, all the way from South
20 Dakota, North Dakota. There is geese that travel that
21 far. There is birds from Antarctica that travel here up
22 there. There is birds that come from Washington, D.C.
23 There is birds from Texas. There is birds from
24 Madagascar. There is birds from New Zealand. Now, the
25 list goes on.

1 I say that they should have a say in this too, these
2 other countries. These are their birds, too. And I --
3 like I said, I have been here all my life. And I really
4 depend upon the caribou.

5 And Joe, Steve, you guys seen the prices at our
6 store. I see you take a picture of our steak, you know.
7 Can you feed your family constantly on -- maybe you can,
8 you know. Maybe with your salary cap, yeah. But can you?
9 You know, so guarantee you 100 percent if you were living
10 here, you would be hunting alongside us to feed your
11 families. Right? Think of your brother. Think of your
12 sister. Think of their -- think of your nieces, you know.

13 Me personally, I hunt for this whole community here.
14 I have done it countless times. And for instance, this
15 coming spring I harvest a lot of birds and I handed out
16 birds to every single elder in here. And I could harvest
17 at least ten in a night and I'll give out nine, and I'll
18 eat one myself and just keep doing it over and over.

19 And right now we are like all other villages. We are
20 waiting for the breakup of the rivers, which has happened
21 since you guys have been here. The river is breaking up.
22 When the river rises, that's when fish travels. And when
23 it lowers, that's when we try to harvest as much fish as
24 possible for winter. And our winters are long, dark and
25 cold. We are talking 60 below weather, 65.

1 You know, there is guys in here that could testify to
2 it that we are spending \$64 on five gallons just to dilute
3 it with two-cycle oil. Now, we spend \$62 on gas. And as
4 you can see at every house here, we have chimneys, right?
5 And a lot of us guys go out into the cold to harvest wood
6 to heat families.

7 And alongside that, we go on long trips in these
8 mountains. We will go four or five mountains back just to
9 look for caribou at one point. And we will stay out there
10 a couple days and come back. Then we will try that way if
11 there is nothing. And a lot of times we see a lot of
12 caribou coming up over this way.

13 And you could just see it in all the young guys.
14 When the caribou come, there is just this great
15 anticipation, and they head up there to the mountain. You
16 know, whatever reserves of money they have, they spend it
17 on a little bit of food to stay out there. The only way
18 to get it is to stay out there. And a lot of times it is
19 so remote that you need -- you know, you have to be on
20 foot. You know, you can't get there with an ATV. You
21 will be on foot. You will be packing your meat out. And
22 when you come back to camp, you will see little kids and
23 elders happy, you know. That's our hard work doing it for
24 them. And that's just one day, you know. It's year-round
25 around here that we are constantly outside, constantly

1 walking.

2 And like right now there no caribou, right? There is
3 nothing. We could all of us could go for a walk and see
4 nothing. They are all up there on the coastal plain
5 having their young. They are having their babies. And
6 right now there is a lot of waterfowl heading up there
7 right now.

8 And like I said, it's just wrong, you know, going up
9 there. I have families and friends that actually worked
10 up there, you know, as you heard before. They said they
11 have no regard for the land up there. You know, I have a
12 -- one of my younger friends that I helped grow up, he's
13 up there. I talk to him. What you been up to up there?
14 Oh, I just been cleaning three weeks straight. What --
15 well, what are you cleaning? Trash. All right. There is
16 trash up there. You know, there is, like, total
17 disregard. I have family and friends that are telling me
18 this.

19 And like I said, they've got to have people on site
20 making sure that they are doing sufficient right. And
21 it's not right that -- you know, like I said, if there is
22 hydraulic fuel, hey, that's contamination, right?

23 Like I said, it just -- I'm really worried about not
24 just the caribou, but the other species that we really
25 depend upon, you know, like waterfowl right now. For

1 instance, as soon as this stuff is over, I got plans with
2 some of my friends here to go and head out. As soon as
3 this meeting is done, I'm heading out to go harvest some
4 birds, plain and simple.

5 And yeah. That's all I got to say. I just hope you
6 guys make the right decision, not just for me, but for all
7 United States so they could experience -- you know, when
8 they experience tens of thousands of caribou, you don't
9 want them to disappear, you know. There was millions of
10 buffalo. Now there is less than 1,000. And think about
11 the white rhino. There is no more white rhino.

12 You know, it's -- it's wrong, you know. They got to
13 start -- we got to start protecting stuff. And this is
14 what we are doing right now. We are protecting our
15 caribou. You know, I don't know if any of you guys heard
16 of the white rhino, but there is none. Nothing. You
17 know, there is little babies in here that probably would
18 never -- like, what is a white rhino? I don't want a
19 little boy saying, oh, what was a caribou, you know.

20 They used to -- they are still roaming this land.
21 It's like down there on the grass plains, you know, there
22 used to be millions of buffalo. Now you can't even see a
23 herd of 100. It's -- you know, it's kind of scary to me.
24 And I just don't want my future generations to, you know,
25 not -- lose our caribou. You know, that's what we eat,

1 you know. It's like you guys' moose that you harvest, you
2 know, you don't want that to disappear. You don't want
3 nothing to disappear.

4 Just me telling you from what I experience and seen
5 and heard, and that's all I got to say. Just make sure
6 you guys make the right decision.

7 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Okay. So we have --
8 we still have probably about ten more people on the list,
9 and we only have, like, 30 minutes. So if we can keep
10 comments two to three minutes. Not trying to be
11 disrespectful, but everybody wants to say something.

12 MR. DAVID SMITH, JR.: I know it's been a
13 long day. I feel it myself. But my name is David Smith,
14 Jr. I'm second chief, Arctic Village.

15 Along with the caribou migration and the area that
16 they plan to drill, like Jerrald said, with waterfowl,
17 just as you guys get excited to see Christmas, New Year's,
18 Halloween, if your kids get excited, we get excited when
19 the animals come around. When the caribou come, you will
20 see more people up on the mountain than you will here at
21 the community hall.

22 Just last week it was my birthday, my 21st birthday.
23 Instead of going to a bar, going out and doing something,
24 I was out there hunting. The present I got was what we
25 call hun'luck, was a bird that we hadn't seen yet and

1 Jerrald shot it and presented it to me. That was my
2 birthday gift. That's what I appreciate. I being out on
3 the land and I appreciate what my forefathers fought to
4 protect and what I'm going to fight to protect.

5 So as long as I'm still up, I'm not going to stand
6 down for the caribou. They protect us. They provide for
7 us. And when they are in danger, we are going to protect
8 them. We are going to provide for them. They can't come
9 here. They can't go to court. They can't speak. So we
10 will speak for them.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. CHARLIE SWANEY: I'll try to make this
13 as fast as I can. I have a few things to say, but they
14 tell me we are running out of time. My name is Charlie
15 Swaney. I've lived here almost 30 years with my wife.
16 I've helped her raise a family here. These past few
17 years, me and my wife have been blessed with four precious
18 grandkids. Now with the grandkids, that's what I have
19 been focusing on more than ever right now, trying to teach
20 them the outdoors.

21 I've lived out in the outdoors all my entire life.
22 50 years I have been out hunting caribou, skinning
23 caribou, cutting them up, bringing them home, putting food
24 on the table. And I'm trying to teach them that. Not
25 just them, but others. I'm here for these kids. I speak

1 for these kids. The ones that can't come up here and talk
2 right now, I'm speaking for them. I speak for them with
3 my heart.

4 Back in -- back in 2002 -- I mean '92, two elders
5 came up to me, and they sat down with me at our house and
6 they asked me if I could speak for them. They told me
7 that I'm good with -- with English language, and I
8 understand a little bit better than -- how, you know,
9 explaining how things are explained and then I sit down
10 and explain it to them. But they asked me to talk for
11 them. And that's when I started coming up on a microphone
12 or in front of a camera and start talking. And over the
13 years I've learned better ways of doing that.

14 I've taken a lot of people out: Smithsonian
15 magazine, Field & Stream, NBC News. I've taken them all
16 out. I've shown them our lifestyle here. They have come
17 up here because they hear the threat of oil development in
18 the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and that's why they
19 came here. One thing that's different, though, is when
20 you see pictures of this place or you see it on video it's
21 way different than when you see it with your own eyes.

22 Back when Frank Murkowski was our senator, one time
23 he got up on the Senate floor in front of all his
24 colleagues and he held up a white piece of paper like
25 this, and he said, this is the Arctic National Wildlife

1 Refuge. This is what he had in front of them. Look out
2 there. That don't look like this. That's what he said in
3 front of all his colleagues right there on Senate floor.
4 I remember that. I'll never forget that.

5 These people here, they speak from their heart. They
6 speak from their mind. They have -- for thousands and
7 thousands of years they have relied on the caribou that
8 comes through here so they could eat. Just recently we
9 seen thousands of caribou going by here, going by here for
10 one reason and one reason only: That's to get up to the
11 calving grounds up there. They are migrating up there,
12 and that's where they are now.

13 And I wish it was possible that all of you could fly
14 up there and see all those caribou up there because it's a
15 site you will never forget. I had an opportunity to do
16 that one time. There was 80,000 caribou there, and I
17 still see it in my mind. That's something you will never
18 forget. And that goes to show just how many caribou go
19 there for one reason. And that's not just them. All the
20 different species of birds. I mean, birds that come from
21 thousands and thousands of miles just to go up there to
22 have their young. That's -- that's how precious that
23 place is to these animals and to these birds.

24 I know -- I know for a fact if oil development took
25 place up there, they are going to go somewhere else. And

1 if they do go somewhere else, we are not going to see them
2 come through here anymore or when they come back from
3 there, migrating back through here. I know that's not
4 going to happen anymore.

5 In the fall time, like a lady up here earlier said,
6 when they come back through here, they let the leaders go
7 through, and then after that people go up there to the
8 camps and make camp and -- but when the caribou show up
9 here, they finally start showing up, you look at people's
10 attitudes here. Their attitude changed. The caribou are
11 here. They know they are going to eat good again. You
12 see it in everybody, even those kids. They know they are
13 going to eat good again. That's their lifestyle that's
14 been their lifestyle, and that's the way they want to keep
15 it. You know, money -- money isn't everything.

16 Right here you go out in the woods somewhere, you get
17 stuck, all the money in the world ain't going to help you.
18 But the caribou or the fish or the ducks or whatever that
19 go by, there's one thing that everybody has to do,
20 everybody. They have to eat. You can't eat money.
21 That's why it's so important to us. That's why when I --
22 when we mention about money, money isn't everything. You
23 know, it may look that they're poor, really poor here and
24 all, but this is a rich lifestyle we live here. Healthy.

25 As Myra was saying, when she goes up to the other

1 places and they see all these health problems, we don't
2 have that here because there is no pollution here. You go
3 down to that river and the water or the lakes here, you
4 get a cup, you dip it out and you drink it. You can't go
5 to Fairbanks and do that at Chena River or you can't go to
6 Anchorage and do that at Campbell Creek. No way. But you
7 can still do that here, and that's what they continue to
8 want to do.

9 Now, one thing I don't really understand right now is
10 I don't know why some Canadian people couldn't come over
11 here and talk for you because they depend on this caribou
12 just as much as these people here do. I don't understand
13 why they are being left out. You know, they are -- the
14 Gwich'in people, just like these people are here, and that
15 part I don't understand. Why aren't they -- some of them
16 that were able to be here so you could hear their words
17 about over there. You heard from one of them here
18 earlier, but I don't think -- I don't think that's right
19 to just have it mainly in Alaska because Canada is the
20 biggest part of their life over there, too. And I don't
21 think that's right.

22 But one last thing that -- one last thing that I will
23 tell you. Everybody in here knows it. One last thing
24 I'll tell you is if the coastal plains up there, the
25 birthing grounds are left alone, one thing we do know is

1 the caribou and all these different species of birds will
2 continue to go back there to give birth to their young
3 where they take their first breath of fresh air, their
4 first step on earth, their first bite to eat, where they
5 learn to walk, where they learn to run. Everything. All
6 that happens up there. And if it's left alone, that will
7 continue. That's one thing we do know.

8 I thank you for coming, and thank you for listening to
9 the few words that I had to say. Thank you.

10 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Edward.

11 MR. EDWARD SAM: Good afternoon. To the
12 panel, I wish you would have a good heart and listen to
13 all these important speeches. From 1988 with different
14 panels we have expressed the same view. So we are doing
15 same thing. I hope you are listening. There is so much
16 things to say and so much important things that have been
17 discussed, from the elders from the past, elders that
18 passes, deceases.

19 My mind never changed opposing oil development, and
20 it stands. And I'm with all my tribes and I'm glad you
21 are giving me this opportunity to speak to you. I'm an
22 environmentalist. I'm a biologist. And we try to keep
23 everything healthy around our area where the waterfowls
24 will come back. The caribou won't change its migratory
25 route. We are really sensitive on all these matters where

1 we don't lose contact with the caribou.

2 You know, we have been -- from archeology findings,
3 from 26,000 years that we have been finding in the
4 headwaters on Canadian side, Old Crow River. Before it
5 was hard to get information like that. In order to get
6 information like artifacts from the headwaters of Crow
7 River, and we have to go through the Canadian embassy, the
8 American embassy just to pass along a simple paper that --
9 the findings. And since then, so 1984, President Reagan
10 passed into law Freedom of Information Act. That give a
11 big [indiscernible] opening the pages of what we stand
12 for.

13 We found some -- a lot of decline in waterfowl. 30,
14 40 years ago there was plenty. Like oil spill, Exxon
15 Valdez, it's never been cleaned. They just -- they just
16 cleaned the surface. And there are still side effects
17 from that. A couple years ago the Deep Horizon [sic] oil
18 drilling in New Mexico, how many millions of oil that
19 dispersed into the ocean? I believe some of that oil that
20 affected that coastal area where the waterfowl and the
21 geese survived during the winter before their migratory
22 route. So I blame the oil company for messing up
23 everything.

24 Like right now even if they open and develop the --
25 the oil up there at ANWR or 1002, we still going to pay

1 \$10 a gallon. I don't think it will change. Since 1977
2 when the first -- first oil flow, there is over two
3 million barrels a day that goes 90 miles west of Arctic
4 Village going through. The lowest was 250,000 -- that's a
5 couple years ago -- that's flowing through. But we still
6 get the same answer. We -- we still have to pay \$10 a
7 gallon, \$15 for a quart of oil for a fuel mixer. When you
8 got no job, it's pretty hard. So I want to ask you
9 that -- my vote for opening or drilling on ANWR is
10 absolutely no.

11 Okay. Thank you. Have a safe trip home.

12 My name is Edward Sam. I'm here in Arctic Village.
13 I'm a resident here all my life. Thank you and have a
14 safe trip home.

15 MR. ANTONIO SISTO: My name is Antonio
16 Sisto. I'm the grandson of Albert Tritt. What I've got
17 to say is I have stories. I have -- this one is still to
18 be told. That story is not for you, but my grandkids.
19 Living in the Arctic and Venetie in the past five years,
20 moving back to the tribal lands of our people, Gwich'in, I
21 feel alive. I feel happy to be here with my people and
22 stand with them. The beautiful thing about this land is
23 the power that can't be explained. My wife and my sons
24 are here, and we are happy. And my sons, they will --
25 they will hunt. And when things are at its worst, we will

1 have fresh biscuits and fresh meat.

2 I am proud to help and understand what we don't know
3 and to show you what you don't understand about this land.
4 The feeling of life on the hill of Arctic Village is a
5 beautiful place. There is no words to explain. It's not
6 any -- any website, and the feeling is magic. I just want
7 to say thank you and Mahsi' Choo.

8 MS. KATE HOLLANDSWORTH: Hi. I'm Kate
9 Hollandsworth. I grew up here in Arctic Village. I'm 25
10 years old -- so growing up here, it's hard to explain. I
11 can't -- it's been amazing. This is my baby right here,
12 Ryker. I was maybe about three months old [sic] with him
13 when I went out hunting for caribou. And I believe I made
14 him strong already by doing that. I plan on doing it
15 years from now and again this fall. I know women before
16 me and I pray for women after me to keep hunting while
17 they are pregnant with their babies, with their
18 grandbabies.

19 I'm up here speaking for my baby. He can't really
20 talk too well, but I'm up here speaking for him. I want a
21 future for him to learn our way of life, not in a
22 classroom, not in a building; up there in the mountains,
23 in the trees, in the fresh air. I believe that's the only
24 way to learn our way of life. And as -- as Galen
25 mentioned earlier, if you were to be here for a year,

1 maybe even a month or two, you would be Indianized. I
2 have proof of that.

3 My dad -- my dad came up here 20-something years ago
4 from Missouri, and he's never left once. He built us a
5 house, me a cabin, and all kinds of things. And I just --
6 I pray and hope that we can keep it that way, not just for
7 us, not just for the future, but for the past. I mean,
8 people have been fighting for years, and we all -- we are
9 all still fighting. And we are not going to stop. I just
10 pray and hope that we can keep it that way and just keep
11 everything safe as far as the caribou, the moose,
12 everything.

13 I just -- I hope you guys respect our wishes and hear
14 everyone out on what we would like to -- how we would like
15 to keep our land. Thank you.

16 MS. TONYA GARNETT: If everybody doesn't
17 mind, I have a young gentleman that keeps coming up, so
18 I'll give him a minute.

19 MR. ALEXANDER STEVENS: My name is
20 Alexander Stevens. I come from Fairbanks, Alaska. I'm
21 standing up here right now because if you drill, it's not
22 like cutting off a bit of your finger. It's not going to
23 heal back. It's going to stay. It's going to stay like
24 that forever. So just don't drill. It's not a good idea.
25 And it's not just the caribou you are affecting; it's all

1 the other animals in that area, too; all the birds. And
2 which one is a more valuable resource: The way -- our
3 culture, the way the culture moves or oil?

4 So if you wanted to protect something valuable, you
5 should protect the culture. And I am ten years old.

6 MS. TONYA GARNETT: We had no idea what
7 this kid was going to say when I gave him the mic. Good
8 job.

9 Robbie.

10 MR. ROBBIE MARTIN: Hi. I'm Robbie from
11 Venetie, but I have been living here in Arctic Village.
12 My parents are Shayna Tritt and James Martin. And my dad
13 taught me how to cook over a campfire into the woods. I
14 learned how to cook ducks and cut the caribou and use some
15 of the parts to cook over the fire. And I'm 13 years old.
16 It's a blessing to have. I don't want to lose or throw
17 that away.

18 It's hurting to think that the oil companies are
19 trying to take over on what we have, such as our land,
20 animals, but we rely on most importantly the caribou.

21 Thank you for listening.

22 MS. CHARLENE STERN: Good afternoon.
23 (Speaking in Gwich'in.) My name is Charlene Stern. My
24 parents are Florence Newman and Peter Stern. My
25 grandparents are the late James and Maggie Gilbert of

1 Vashraii K'oo. That's where I come from.

2 So you know, a lot of this proposal has to do with
3 the leasing program. And yet our people have been talking
4 about exploration and development. And I understand that,
5 you know, depending on the outcome of this EIS, there is
6 potential for a bigger EIS in the future regarding
7 development. But I think what you have to understand even
8 in this process is, for us they're both related and that
9 we see this proposal as a foot in the door. And to us
10 that is a threat, a direct threat. And so we oppose that.
11 We have opposed that for over 30 years. And I think, you
12 know, you have judged the sentiment from the room that we
13 have a no-compromise position on some of those pieces.

14 As our hunters, as our leaders, as our elders, as our
15 youth have spoken, what you are really hearing from is not
16 just the people of Arctic Village and Venetie. You're
17 hearing from caribou experts. You're hearing from caribou
18 biologists. You're hearing from wildlife biologists.
19 You're hearing from botanists. That's the level of skill
20 and training and knowledge that they hold. They might not
21 hold a degree from a western institution, but that's that
22 level of knowledge. And I think it's important that we
23 respect that.

24 They also, in addition to having that expertise, are
25 managers of these resources. We have been managing the

1 caribou. We have been managing the moose in this area.
2 We have been managing the fish, the wildlife, the
3 waterfowl for as long as we have been here. Whenever our
4 hunters make a decision about harvesting, they are
5 practicing active management. When they decide not to
6 shoot the first leaders that come through, they are
7 practicing active management. When they decide to take a
8 bull and not a cow, they are practicing active management.

9 And so I want to make that record clear because I
10 think sometimes there is this notion that our management
11 is not enough, that we are not qualified as biologists,
12 that we always need these experts from western
13 institutions to affirm our knowledge that we know based on
14 many, many generations. So I'll make that clear.

15 Our people -- it's hard to describe because you guys
16 just see the village as it is now. But when I think about
17 my grandparents, they lived all across this land, all
18 across these mountains, all across these lakes and rivers.
19 And there are many times where the animals weren't there
20 when they needed them. And our people faced starvation,
21 you know. My mom tells a story. She grew up -- she was
22 born out here on the land, not in a hospital. And she
23 tells a story about one time they ran out of food, and so
24 her mom, who was blind, went to the cache, and she was
25 literally scraping crumbs from our dry meat off our -- our

1 caribou from the cracks in the cache to make a soup broth
2 out of them for our family to continue living. That's the
3 kind of hard lives that people our -- where we come from.

4 I also want to just say something about my
5 grandmother. She was a story teller, a traditional
6 knowledge keeper, Maggie Gilbert. And she once told us
7 this story, this dream that she had. And this dream was
8 her walking in the mountain, and she came across one of
9 the caribou, the leaders, the old bulls, and he just
10 looked so poor and his fur was coming out, and he looked
11 very unhealthy. And she spoke to him. And our people
12 believe that we have a relationship, especially back then
13 where we could understand the caribou and they could
14 understand us.

15 And she asked him in our language what was wrong with
16 him, and he turned around and he said, there is no caribou
17 following me. There is no caribou following me. And so
18 when Faith was talking about prophecies, that's a
19 prophesy.

20 And so when we hear about this leasing program,
21 that's the fear. You know, like I said, you guys think,
22 well, you know, depending on this, there may be a later
23 EIS, but this -- this scares us, this proposal.

24 I want to make a clarification. A lot of our people
25 have talked about the birthplace of the caribou. We are

1 talking about the calving grounds and the post calving
2 grounds. I want to make sure that that's in the record.

3 I think that our people are looking forward to
4 participating as cooperating agencies, our tribes in this
5 process. We are also very much interested in the Section
6 106 process. We are the ones that have the knowledge, our
7 elders and our tribal leaders, about our traditional
8 cultural properties. And because we have lived all over
9 these lands -- north, south, east and west of here --
10 there are many traditional cultural properties that have
11 already been documented, but there's many, many more that
12 have yet to be documented. And so we look forward to
13 being able to work together to make sure that those are
14 documented in this process.

15 So those are just a couple things that I wanted to
16 say. Mahsi' Choo. Thank you very much.

17 MS. TONYA GARNETT: We have another young
18 gentleman.

19 MR. MARK JUNIOR: My name is Mark Junior,
20 and I'm nine years old. And I don't want them to take
21 away the caribou because we love them a lot and we don't
22 want them to go away, ever. We want them to stay here.
23 So please don't take them away. Mahsi' Choo.

24 MS. TONYA GARNETT: All right. Is there
25 anybody else that wanted to -- Carrie? I believe Carrie

1 is the last person, unless somebody else wants to.

2 Thank you guys for sticking around.

3 MS. CARRIE STEVENS: My comments are maybe
4 only about 45 minutes. It's brief.

5 My name is Carrie Stevens, and I first came to live
6 in Arctic Village in 1999. And from there I was very --
7 very blessed to have that opportunity. So I thank Arctic
8 Village for always welcoming me, taking care of me and my
9 son. They are the most gracious people, if you haven't
10 noticed. There aren't very many places on earth that are
11 left that are like this. Maybe on our hands we can look
12 at intact ecosystems that are still in relationship with
13 indigenous peoples. I do not take this lightly.

14 This is one of the last great places on our earth
15 that we sit with holy people. We hear that many times.
16 There is -- one of the only historic sites in our state is
17 here, and it is a church. Their stories carry that
18 spirit. And so I always have to recognize that and this
19 deep relationship with the world around them and the
20 ecosystem. And you have heard that all day.

21 So I'm very, very concerned about the scoping
22 process, the EIS process, the 106, the 810 processes. I
23 understand you have a mandate. That's a law that you
24 didn't write that was passed. However, it is still within
25 your hands to ensure that the best possible job is done,

1 that it is the most comprehensive, holistic, thorough
2 study. I urge you desperately not to rush and not to make
3 haste in this work because that really truly is on you.

4 As you can tell, this is the lives of these people.
5 This is the lives of their relatives, the caribou. And
6 yesterday I grew very concerned about the limit of the
7 scope of the impact, particularly as it relates to
8 subsistence or ways of life.

9 We know that this is the largest refuge in the United
10 States, although Steve and the Yukon Delta refuge might
11 have wrestling matches over that, I hear. It's maybe a
12 few acres here or there. And it's one of three in our
13 entire country that is a managed remotely. There is a
14 sign at the airport.

15 You know that, as we just heard from Dr. Stern, this
16 is a room full of doctors. And no one has the knowledge
17 that they have related to this place.

18 Yesterday again I grew very concerned about
19 misinformation regarding the ANILCA 810 analysis and the
20 limitation of that scope and the limitation of the scope
21 of the work. The birthing grounds and nurseries of the
22 coastal plain feed far more than this community, than the
23 Venetie community, than the Fort Yukon community. Fort
24 Yukon is not standing up for their brothers and sisters.
25 They are direct harvesters, and it is shown that large

1 percentage of households across the Yukon flats rely on
2 the Porcupine caribou herd: Trade networks, social
3 networks, spiritual networks, cultural networks. This has
4 been documented numerous times. We shouldn't even have to
5 debate the level of scoping that should be taking place.

6 Now, that's just Porcupine caribou. So I desperately
7 urge you to consider those communities as scoping
8 communities and within your ANILCA 810 analysis and your
9 historic 106 analysis. The chief -- the traditional chief
10 of Beaver is from here. Everyone is related. Their
11 social networks are related. Their food sovereignty is
12 interrelated. Their food security, their health, their
13 well-being is all interrelated.

14 Now, we haven't even discussed migratory waterfowl.
15 We have the Alaska Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Those
16 waterfowl feed large portions of this state. And that
17 food is critical, critical to the spring resources and why
18 there is a special spring hunt. So I'm very concerned
19 about the limit on the scoping and on the analysis and on
20 the impact. It is as if you drop a pebble in a lake and
21 it will continue and it will reach out for longer than you
22 can see. That is how far the birthing ground impact
23 reaches, directly. So I would like to have that on record
24 and continue to have that on record. That was one of the
25 main points I wanted to make.

1 I also have great concern regarding data. And I'm
2 sorry -- oh, good. Paul is still here. Those gentlemen
3 are still here. Did you guys get all that? Paul, did you
4 get all that? Making sure. All right.

5 There is a large body of documentation of historical
6 oral stories. I couldn't even name the number of people
7 who have made their careers on the relationships and
8 networks of self-reliance of food resources alone in the
9 region. But there is a huge data gap in harvest data for
10 this community. So I don't -- you are going to have a
11 very large challenge in making an adequate, educated and
12 informed decision with the data that you have because it
13 is very limited.

14 So only if you are working again with tribal
15 governments to ensure that -- this data -- tribes should
16 have been collecting this data for years in partnership
17 with the refuges. So you are going to run into some
18 serious data gap issues there. Again, I'm worried about
19 the scope of impact.

20 Also, I don't even think we have discussed today
21 transportation corridors related to leasing or related to
22 development and the impact on any transportation corridors
23 and footprints on, of course, all of the resources we have
24 already heard about today, on water resources and on air
25 resources.

1 I'm also worried about your time frame. You are
2 going to have to document worst case scenarios and what is
3 your mitigation methodology going to be for those impacts.
4 We cannot plan that everything will be fine because we
5 know it will not be.

6 So really I just -- I very much appreciate your
7 coming here. I know it's a long trip. I appreciate you
8 listening all day to an amazing wealth of knowledge, but
9 for these reasons I very much continue to request and push
10 on the extension for the scoping period and that you
11 increase sites for scoping.

12 I just want to say that this is your legacy. This is
13 your legacy. All of you sitting at this table have power
14 and authority. And there are lives. It's like a war.
15 There are lives at stake. And I just hope every night you
16 can think about the legacy that you leave for your
17 children and your grandchildren as you consider every
18 else's grandchildren and children after that and this
19 great, great wonderful amazing place that's one of very
20 few left on this earth.

21 The National Petroleum Reserve sits right next door,
22 and it's not even tapped out. It's not even tapped out.
23 It's right there.

24 So thank you. Thank you for your time, your
25 consideration. And with all due respect, I very much

1 thank the elders and everybody from Arctic Village. Thank
2 you.

3 MS. PAMELA A. MILLER: Hello. My name is
4 Pamela A. Miller. I'll try to make a very short
5 statement, and it's about the scope of the change that
6 this EIS is proposing to look at. The lease is not a
7 simple piece of paper. You don't do it and then move on
8 to the details. The lease allows the whole kit and
9 caboodle. It gives a right, presumably, if it's done like
10 in the National Petroleum Reserve, to exploration,
11 development, production, transportation, roads, seismic,
12 gravel mines, ports, the whole thing. You need to look at
13 the whole thing now. You can't separate preleasing and
14 postleasing seismic. They are information the government
15 should have to inform the leasing program, presumably. It
16 is a comprehensive part of the whole plan.

17 In the Prudhoe Bay region, it's involved as much as
18 32,000 miles of seismic just by 2001. In the offshore,
19 they have done a lot more. They have done 197 miles of
20 seismic. This is driving heavy machinery in grids 660
21 feet apart on this fragile tundra. There was a one-time
22 seismic program. Its lines were one to six miles apart.
23 It was a very different program that had longstanding
24 impacts of which I witnessed in the winter and the summer
25 and as of the last time I was there.

1 It is simply wrong to speed ahead and not consider
2 that seismic. It's an integral part of the whole
3 operation that you are conceptualizing how you are going
4 to overlay the oil and gas leasing program on the existing
5 [indiscernible] of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to
6 preserve this land in its natural diversity of habitats
7 and populations, for water quality and quantity, for
8 subsistence, for upholding international treaties.

9 This is a very different reality than the National
10 Petroleum Reserve and you are not proposing a petroleum
11 reserve on a wildlife refuge. So given that the refuge
12 was safe, there was not a lot of funding for scientific
13 studies for decades. The baseline information and
14 integrating that together for any place will take longer
15 than a year.

16 So this is a highly political decision in a place
17 that it should not have. So I urge you to reconsider how
18 you are ramming through thinking you are going to do
19 leasing in this -- in this narrow window of time. It
20 won't work. And you will not be evaluating the direct,
21 cumulative and other impacts not only that will happen up
22 in the coastal plain itself, the connections to here that
23 are very vibrant every day, the way the birds, the way the
24 other animals connect to other parts of the world, the
25 whales, the seals and the way that the ocean and the land

1 have cumulative impacts. In the Trump Administration they
2 are both being considered at the same time.

3 So we sit here in one of the most beautiful places on
4 earth. And you have heard how it's in everyone's heart
5 here and it's in the hearts of people all across the
6 country and -- who have a stake in this, but this stake
7 here is the most powerful of all because they are
8 connected to the land. They have been that way forever.
9 And I've learned so much and I'm humbled from the people
10 here.

11 So I just wanted to make that point about the
12 comprehensiveness of the impact statement. And you really
13 need to take a step back. Thank you.

14 MS. CORA JOHN: My name is Cora John, and
15 I live in Arctic Village. I don't want you to drill
16 because caribou is our life. When I get older, I want to
17 learn -- learn my kids to get caribou, skin them and cook.
18 Drilling is bad and I don't want that to happen to our
19 culture. So please don't drill. Thank you.

20 MS. KAREN MOURITSEN: I just want to say
21 thank you everyone so, so much. We really, really
22 appreciated your hospitality, your beautiful community,
23 you all, the community. We just really, really appreciate
24 it. And we thank everyone for giving us such thoughtful
25 and heartfelt comments. And we have gotten them all on

1 the record, thanks to Mary. We've taken a lot of notes.
2 So thank you very, very much.

3 We had those handouts on the back table that told you
4 how to make comments, if you wanted to fax them or email
5 them or send us a letter. And so if you didn't pick any
6 up -- and I think there might not be any left -- but we
7 will get you some more so that we can make sure and get
8 your comments. And just thank you. Do you want to say
9 something in closing?

10 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Closing quick prayer.

11 MS. KAREN MOURITSEN: Okay. That would be
12 great. Thank you so much everyone.

13 MR. JIMMY JOHN: I just want to say thank
14 you. Great, great thanks to Tiffany Yatlin, Charlene
15 Stern, Tonya Garnett, Faith Gemmill, Sarah James, the
16 people who cooked: Marty Russell, Marion Swaney, Darryl,
17 the grill boy, Nikolai. And I got musicians. Who are
18 they? They're not around. I don't know. But all of you.
19 All the youth, good talking. I like that. Keep it up.
20 And elders right there. And my visitors. Thank you.
21 [indiscernible] You people do it some more. I'll be
22 there waiting for you guys. I want to know what you guys
23 are up to. Thank you very much. So thank you very much,
24 everybody.

25 (Off the record.)

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(A closing prayer was offered.)
(Proceedings adjourned at 5:37 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 _____ day of June 2018.

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

My Commission Expires: November 5, 2020