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COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Taken June 12, 2018  
Commencing at 9:30 a.m.

Pages 1 - 88, inclusive

Taken at  
Community Hall  
Venetie, Alaska

Reported by:  
Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

## A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S

For United States Department of Interior:

Joe Balash  
Assistant Secretary

Mike Gieryic  
Solicitor

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

Karen Mouritsen  
Acting State Director

Nicole Hayes  
Project Manager

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

Greg Siekaniec  
Alaska Regional Director

Hollis Twitchell  
Natural Resource Specialist

For EMPSi:

Chad Ricklefs  
Project Manager

Amy Lewis  
Public Involvement Lead

Taken by:

Mary A. Vavrik, RMR

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. KAREN MOURITSEN: Hello, everyone.  
3 Thank you for being here. We are going to get started. I  
4 think you all can hear me, right? Okay. I'm Karen  
5 Mouritsen Acting State Director for BLM Alaska. Thank you  
6 for coming to our scoping meeting for the coastal plain  
7 EIS. Please continue getting breakfast and getting  
8 situated.

9 And we first really want to thank the people of  
10 Venetie for the wonderful dinner last night they provided  
11 for us and for providing breakfast this morning.

12 So in a second, I'm going to introduce everyone.

13 Do we want to have an invocation? Okay. Opening  
14 prayer and opening song. And we are fixing the  
15 microphone, so that will be in just a minute. So continue  
16 getting breakfast.

17 So why don't I introduce people while we are getting  
18 the microphone hooked up. I'll just shout. How about  
19 that? I'm Karen Mouritsen, Acting State Director for BLM  
20 Alaska. Joe Balash is our Assistant Secretary for Land  
21 and Minerals Management at Interior. And we have got Greg  
22 Siekaniec, the Regional Director of Fish & Wildlife  
23 Service. Nicole Hayes is our project manager. Mary  
24 Vavrik is our court reporter. And before we start, I'll  
25 give you a few tips on speaking so Mary can make sure she

1 gets your words down correctly.

2 Let's see. We have Hollis Twitchell and Brandon  
3 Bosch from Fish & Wildlife Service. Stand up and wave.  
4 Chad Ricklefs and Amy Lewis, they are assisting us with  
5 this meeting. Mary Rose Gamboa is going to translate for  
6 us. Thank you, Mary Rose.

7 Mike Gieryic is here from Interior in the kitchen.  
8 Thank you, Mike. And that's everyone who has come.

9 So do we want to have the invocation now? I guess I  
10 can say a few -- There is a list for speaking. So we are  
11 going to have the invocation, and then Joe is going to say  
12 a few words, and then the purpose here is to get comments  
13 from you all. And so please sign the list back there.

14 So when we do take comments from you, if you come up  
15 here and speak into the microphone so that Mary can hear  
16 you clearly and take -- Mary is taking down the  
17 transcript. If you want something translated, just wave  
18 your hand or something and let us know. We will have Mary  
19 Rose translate. When you give the comments, if you are  
20 speaking in Gwich'in, that's great. If you speak in  
21 another language, would you please let Mary know because  
22 she's noting down whether you are speaking in Gwich'in or  
23 something else if she doesn't understand.

24 And please say your name clearly for Mary when you  
25 start your comments so she can note down who it is.

1           So should we -- do you want to say something first?

2                   MR. JOE BALASH: Are we ready for the  
3 invocation?

4                           (Invocation offered by Trimble Gilbert.)

5                           (A song was sung by the community and  
6 drumming was performed.)

7                   MS. KAREN MOURITSEN: Okay. Thank you.  
8 We will have Joe say a few words, and then Nicole will  
9 make her presentation, and we will get to the speakers.

10                   MR. JOE BALASH: Good morning. As Karen  
11 said, my name is Joe Balash. I'm the Assistant Secretary  
12 for Land and Minerals Management at the Department of the  
13 Interior. And for many of you, you do know this already,  
14 but while I live in the Washington, D.C. area now, I lived  
15 in Alaska for 30 years. This is my home.

16                   And the process that we are undertaking here for the  
17 Department of the Interior is a critical one, one that I  
18 am personally involved in and attending all of these  
19 scoping meetings and will be back to the region again as  
20 this conversation moves along.

21                   I know that there is enormous passion, and today when  
22 you make your remarks, don't feel any hesitation. Please  
23 speak freely. Communicate with us and tell us what is  
24 important to you so that we make sure to take note of that  
25 as we begin this Environmental Impact Statement process.

1           Nicole is going to explain a little bit more about  
2 what we are here today for and how that feeds into a  
3 longer and larger process, but we are wanting to make sure  
4 that we understand all of the right issues and we want to  
5 make sure we evaluate all right issues in this process.

6           So if you would also just take note, we had a  
7 conversation yesterday about making sure that the meeting  
8 and hearing we are going to have on Friday in Washington,  
9 D.C., I've secured two spots for Dr. Stern and for Tiffany  
10 so they both get the opportunity speak in Washington at  
11 the hearing in Washington, D.C.

12           So thank you for your hospitality. Thank you for  
13 hosting us here, and look forward to a productive meeting.

14                   MS. NICOLE HAYES: Thank you, Joe. Again,  
15 I'm Nicole Hayes. I'm the project manager for the coastal  
16 plain oil and gas leasing EIS. I'm going to go quickly  
17 through the presentation because the reason why we're here  
18 really is to hear from all of you. And we do have to  
19 leave by 1:30 today, and so we want to ensure we can hear  
20 from all of you.

21           That being said, I think Tonya is going to help  
22 facilitate. So we are going to try and start with elders  
23 so they can speak and share whatever comments that they  
24 want to share with us on the record. And then -- Tiffany  
25 is going to ensure the speakers that have signed up can

1 come up and speak. And then we are going to try and keep  
2 it to five minutes so everybody has an opportunity. And  
3 then if there is more time at the end, then you can come  
4 up again if there is other things that you wanted to say.

5 After each slide I go through, Mary Rose is going to  
6 translate. Again, I'm going to be pretty quick. So if  
7 you have questions, during break please come up and find  
8 me and ask whatever questions you may have.

9 Today we are going to go through why we're here, the  
10 coastal plain oil and gas leasing program. We are going  
11 to discuss the requirements of the Tax Act which require  
12 the oil and gas leasing program, what the agency  
13 responsibilities are, why BLM is here, what Fish &  
14 Wildlife Service's role is, what the NEPA process is and  
15 what goes into the Environmental Impact Statement.

16 Subsistence and ANILCA Section 810, how that fits  
17 together and how that rolls into the Environmental Impact  
18 Statement and the NEPA process and how to participate.

19 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

20 MS. MARY ROSE GAMBOA: What I said is as  
21 you speak, I like to do a short sentence at a time because  
22 if you make it too long, then I forget what you say. So I  
23 could do it -- chop it up a little at a time and then I  
24 can translate it.

25 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

1 MS. NICOLE HAYES: I'm going to do what  
2 Mary Rose suggested and just do a couple sentences and  
3 then pass the mic back to her. So the Tax Cuts and Jobs  
4 Act was enacted on December 22, 2017.

5 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

6 MS. NICOLE HAYES: It requires the  
7 Secretary of the Interior, which delegated down to the  
8 Bureau of Land Management, to implement an oil and gas  
9 leasing program within the coastal plain area, the area on  
10 the map. It's the 1.6 million acres within the 19.3  
11 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

12 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

13 MS. NICOLE HAYES: It also requires us to  
14 have a minimum of two lease sales, with the first one  
15 being within four years of enactment of the Act, the  
16 second one within seven years. Each lease sale must have  
17 or offer for lease up to 400,000 acres of the highest  
18 potential hydrocarbon areas.

19 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

20 MS. NICOLE HAYES: And I said up to  
21 400,000 acres. It must be a minimum of 400,000 acres.

22 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

23 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So regarding the agency  
24 responsibilities for the oil and gas leasing Environmental  
25 Impact Statement, BLM administers all federal mineral



1 estate, including oil and gas under the Arctic National  
2 Wildlife Refuge.

3 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

4 MS. NICOLE HAYES: BLM is responsible for  
5 developing an oil and gas leasing program, and we conduct  
6 the lease sales.

7 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

8 MS. NICOLE HAYES: The Fish & Wildlife  
9 Service is responsible for administering the surface of  
10 the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. They manage the  
11 surface, and they are also a cooperating agency in this  
12 process, so we are working very closely with them.

13 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

14 MS. NICOLE HAYES: This next slide shows  
15 the extent of the BLM oil and gas leasing and development  
16 process. We are in the leasing phase. Our Environmental  
17 Impact Statement is for the leasing program. Any  
18 subsequent or separate activities would require a separate  
19 NEPA analysis or some sort of environmental document.

20 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

21 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this slide shows the  
22 National Environmental Policy Act process. It started  
23 with enactment of the Act on December 22, 2017, but the  
24 EIS actually was started with the scoping on April 20,  
25 2018. The parts of this process I really want to

1 highlight are the public comment periods. We are in one  
2 of them right now. It's the scoping phase. It goes  
3 through June 19, 2018 and also when the draft EIS goes out  
4 for public comment. I also want to highlight that  
5 government-to-government consultation occurs throughout  
6 the process, and so tribal councils and tribal governments  
7 can provide input into the process during any time.

8 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

9 MS. NICOLE HAYES: And at the completion  
10 of the Environmental Impact Statement process, which are  
11 all these steps outlined on these slides, then we prepare  
12 a Record of Decision and would hold the first lease sale.

13 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

14 MS. NICOLE HAYES: A critical part of the  
15 NEPA process here in Alaska, but it's a separate process,  
16 is subsistence and how it fits in with ANILCA Section 810.  
17 ANILCA Section 810 requires an initial evaluation of the  
18 leasing program's impacts to subsistence uses and  
19 resources.

20 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

21 MS. NICOLE HAYES: If the initial  
22 evaluation is it may significantly restrict subsistence  
23 uses, subsistence hearings are held. And these  
24 subsistence hearings are held during the same time a  
25 public comment meeting would be held, so the public

1 comment meeting -- again, it's separate, so the public  
2 comment meeting would wrap up, and then a subsistence  
3 hearing would be held to receive input into the  
4 subsistence impacts and the ANILCA 810 process.

5 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

6 MS. NICOLE HAYES: And once the final EIS  
7 is prepared, the final determination, the final ANILCA 810  
8 determination is appended to the final EIS.

9 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

10 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So the decisions that  
11 we have to make pertain to the alternatives and  
12 development of the alternatives, what lease sale tracts to  
13 offer for sale, what lease stipulations should be, so  
14 where are the areas that you are most concerned about,  
15 what are the resources you're most concerned about, what  
16 are your recommendations for best management practices or  
17 areas to avoid. That's the type of input that we are  
18 looking for and that we really need as we develop these  
19 alternatives.

20 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

21 MS. NICOLE HAYES: To date we have seven  
22 cooperating agencies: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,  
23 as I mentioned, the Environmental Protection Agency, the  
24 State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough, and the Native  
25 Village of Venetie Tribal Government, the Arctic Village

1 Council and the Venetie Village Council.

2 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

3 MS. NICOLE HAYES: Cooperating agencies  
4 provide input into the development of the Environmental  
5 Impact Statement process, and they bring their specialized  
6 expertise, so provide input into those sections in which  
7 they have specialized expertise or jurisdiction by law.

8 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

9 MS. NICOLE HAYES: Up on the screen is a  
10 tentative schedule. We did start the EIS process, the  
11 Environmental Impact Statement process, with publication  
12 of the Notice of Intent. We are in the scoping period  
13 right now. According to the schedule, we will be  
14 developing and we do have an alternatives workshop  
15 scheduled for July. We will be developing alternatives  
16 this summer with publication of a draft EIS in the fall.  
17 There will be a public review of that draft in the  
18 fall/winter time frame. We will revise that draft  
19 Environmental Impact Statement based off of those public  
20 comments we receive during that period, and then the final  
21 EIS would be published in the spring of 2019 with a lease  
22 sale and a Record of Decision in spring/summer 2019.

23 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

24 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So this is just our  
25 schedule of scoping meetings. We have had all of them

1 except for Kaktovik and Washington, D.C., which Kaktovik  
2 is this afternoon, which is why we have to leave at 1:30,  
3 and then Washington, D.C. is Friday. So we look forward  
4 to seeing several of you in Washington, D.C.

5 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

6 MS. NICOLE HAYES: The most important part  
7 of the scoping process is providing comments, so we will  
8 start taking public comment as soon as I wrap this up.  
9 But you can also go online and submit them on this web  
10 address that's on the handout at the front desk with Amy  
11 and Chad. You can email them to that email address, or  
12 you can mail them in via hard copy if you are not  
13 interested, or you can do a combination. So if you do  
14 provide public comment today, please, if you have written  
15 testimony, please provide that to Mary, as well.

16 (Translation into Gwich'in.)

17 MS. NICOLE HAYES: So that concludes my  
18 presentation. And we can start taking public comment  
19 right away.

20 MS. MARGORIE GIMMELL: Hello. My name is  
21 Margorie Gimmell. I'm from Arctic Village. Venetie is  
22 part of the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government.  
23 Arctic Village and Venetie are one tribe. And I just  
24 wanted to welcome you guys here to this community and for  
25 this day to share our knowledge and culture.

1           And so let's see. I have -- so I say I'm from Arctic  
2 Village, which is also Vashraii K'oo in Gwich'in. My  
3 parents are Marion Swaney and the late David Albert. My  
4 grandparents are Abraham and Dorothy John. I'm Neets'aii  
5 Gwich'in from Arctic. I have been here almost 40 years.  
6 All I've known is my people's way of life, our traditional  
7 culture. I would like to talk about vadzaih, the caribou.  
8 Like what a lot of my people say, the caribou cannot speak  
9 for themselves, so we have to speak for them.

10           We want to protect our way of life. People can view  
11 us as poor. We don't feel poor. The most important thing  
12 my tribe has taught me is that the land is important and  
13 we are rich in land, and this is what is important to the  
14 caribou. Our people have to advocate for them to protect  
15 all that's involved and all the people and the animals.

16           We are here. We live here. We know what is best for  
17 our people. Believe me when I say that this will  
18 devastate our people, leave us with no culture and the  
19 caribou with no home to go to. And the caribou will be  
20 confused and have nowhere to go.

21           Although the directive is to drill, we ask the  
22 government for no-action alternative.

23           Mahsi'.

24                           (Translation into Gwich'in.)

25                           MS. TIFFANY YATLIN: Hi. My name is

1 Tiffany Yatlin. I'm from Arctic Village, and I'm the  
2 tribal administrator for the Arctic Village Council. I  
3 have three children, ten, six and six months. 100 percent  
4 of my people live off the caribou and the fish and the  
5 birds. The Arctic Refuge issue will really destroy it.  
6 What will happen if we don't have any caribou? My kids  
7 and my people will be in danger. The high cost of food in  
8 our local stores are already high to get for our  
9 residents. The airfare and the freight also are high.  
10 This is my third scoping meeting I have attended, and it's  
11 not easy listening to all these comments and concerns.  
12 And I hope you take this into consideration and think how  
13 important this issue is to us. Our livelihood is at  
14 stake.

15 Mahsi'.

16 MS. SARAH JAMES: I'm going to be really  
17 brief. This is part of the testimony. We have got -- we  
18 got a whole map of where Gwich'in are living and what  
19 place we are talking about, and people put down their body  
20 to prove they want to save the Arctic. And the paper they  
21 hand out over there, there is also written. If anybody  
22 want to do written, be sure and do that. And my brother  
23 Gideon brought in arts and craft with caribou bones right  
24 here that we do use it in arts and craft and way of life.  
25 We've got drum to tell a story. We have got a book here.

1 It's called We Do It Ourself. 1991. It's still good.  
2 And we are going to submit this into the testimony from  
3 Venetie.

4 And then we also got a friend that took a lot of many  
5 good pictures of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Art  
6 Davidson. The family are making a documentary for us. So  
7 if you could just let them tell our story. And this is a  
8 map shows where the mountain is at, where the caribou are  
9 at now, all that kind of stuff.

10 And we got a new copy of National Geographic. It's  
11 already submitted by the photographer to the testimony.  
12 And the title of the whole book is Planet or Plastic.  
13 It's a pretty clear message here. And it got a lot of  
14 caribou here. That's what we are talking about. And this  
15 is my only copy, but it already got submitted.

16 My name is Sarah James. I'm the spokesperson for  
17 Venetie Village, Arctic Village, and the whole  
18 reservation. I got honored by the whole tribe here to be  
19 advisory. And that's -- I'm really honored. If anybody  
20 doubt this, I got a copy here.

21 And there is more about our culture. And yesterday I  
22 was talking about what we are really talking about is it's  
23 like the (Speaking in Alaskan Native language). Iizhik  
24 Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit. Norma Kassi from Old Crow gave  
25 it the name, Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit, Sacred



1 Place Where the Life Begin. That means a birthplace.

2 Like me, a woman, when I had -- when I was going to  
3 have my baby, I prepare to have my baby for nine months  
4 and then to deliver, and then nursing and then training.  
5 We did -- all the mother do that. All life do that.  
6 Caribou do that. And that's the place they want to do gas  
7 and oil development. (Speaking in Alaskan Native  
8 language.) It's a good place, a safe place, a healthy  
9 place to have caribou cow to have the calf. And they have  
10 done that for thousands of years.

11 Each and every one of those caribou -- right now I  
12 think there is 250,000 Porcupine caribou herd, and each  
13 one born right there. It's been like that for thousands  
14 of years.

15 Even when bow and arrow day, our people went through  
16 a lot of starvation before. It's not like -- they don't  
17 even bother with calving ground then. They let that thing  
18 process so they can live. And that's where they want to  
19 do gas and oil development.

20 If there is any -- any -- we got our own expertise.  
21 We need to sit with them government-to-government. That's  
22 what we are doing right now. And we got our own expertise  
23 that we can make our own decision as a government with  
24 their government. And that's what we are doing. And  
25 yesterday I was talking about that birthplace, Iizhik

1 Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit.

2 And another thing is that once the oil is in there,  
3 they are not leaving. Like I said, they are going to come  
4 in the summertime -- not summertime -- wintertime with ice  
5 road. There is always oil spill every day where there is  
6 oil development. And when it thaw out, it seep into the  
7 tundra. There is no technology in the world that will  
8 clean up the seep into the tundra. And the only clear,  
9 clean water come from Brooks Range up here, and it drain  
10 right into the Arctic Ocean. Very small area, very small  
11 coastal plain. And that's where they need to go. Once  
12 that oil is there and the water comes through, the water  
13 is going to get polluted in no time. Short time from the  
14 sale. That's water source. Ours is going the other way.

15 So once they are there, if they get this lease, they  
16 are not leaving forever. They are going to be there. And  
17 they call that development area, so we can't hunt. They  
18 can't have any birthing. Right now over at Prudhoe Bay  
19 and other development over on that side, people live  
20 there, too, our friends. They can't hunt. They can't  
21 fish there because it's a development area. It's a lease  
22 ground, a lease for oil. And oil are the -- in charge of  
23 it, and we can't even walk in and ask them questions.  
24 That's the way it's going be.

25 And today I had no time finding caribou legging. We

1 use every part of the caribou, even to the hooves, to the  
2 marrow, to the ligament. This is how we skin them and  
3 that's how we clean them. It's the way we cook it, and we  
4 eat it with dry meat. We also get -- we love muktuk. We  
5 like hooligan or fish from the coastal plain.

6 So the Inupiaq up there or the Inuit people up there,  
7 they are not our enemy. We are still friends. We are  
8 still neighbors, respected neighbor from the time  
9 beginning. So don't make them feel like they are our  
10 enemy. They are not. They are just traditional like us  
11 that really don't want to see gas and oil development.  
12 But it's the corporation that buys them good school, roads  
13 and all that, say, you know, we have to go for more. And  
14 it's not really them. So we share and we still friend and  
15 they are not our enemy.

16 So I just want to make sure we use a rattler for the  
17 hooves and the best foods and the warmest foods we have is  
18 caribou leg and foods. This is (Speaking in Alaskan  
19 Native language.)

20 And that's all I wanted to say. I don't want to take  
21 too much time. And anybody have idea is -- you know, you  
22 have a place right here that you can refer to. That's  
23 (Speaking in Alaskan Native language). Okay.

24 MR. ALBERT FRANK: My name is Albert  
25 Frank. I'm the tribal chief. I'm going to talk in my

1 language. (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.)

2 MS. SARAH JAMES: I think we have Eunice  
3 Williams next. She's one of the elders here in Venetie.

4 MS. EUNICE WILLIAMS: (Speaking in Alaskan  
5 Native language.) Friends and relatives, my name is  
6 Eunice Williams. I'm from Venetie, and I'm 81 years old.  
7 But I'm trying to say, I can't speak it in English. I  
8 can't speak English good, so I'm going to say it in  
9 Gwich'in. So what I'm talking about, I'm going to talk  
10 about -- I mean, I'm going to talk about caribou. And now  
11 (speaking in Alaskan Native language.)

12 Mahsi' Choo.

13 MR. ABRAHAM HENRY, SR.: Hello, everybody.  
14 (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.) No airplanes, no  
15 boats. We are here. We raised here. Every day we go out  
16 and hunt for something to eat, you know, every day. We  
17 survive. Our grandfather trained us. We hunted, you  
18 know. We saw the animals. I'm an old man now. I'm 82  
19 years old. I'm trapping, hunting, climb the mountain. I  
20 have a trap line and everything, you know, on my  
21 grandfather's place. Now I don't know what I'm going to  
22 say about it. It's beautiful country, God's country.  
23 Nobody bothered us. Nobody. Good living, you know, our  
24 whole mountain. [indiscernible] My son passed away. I'm  
25 82 years old now. Me and my family [indiscernible] I'm an

1 old man. I raised my children already. I don't worry  
2 about them no more. I have been married 60 years now.

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Translation.  
4 She did want to leave the instruction for the people up  
5 here after the translation is up to the -- to do the  
6 translation. Some people cancelled. You got the list,  
7 right?

8 MR. JERRY FRANK: Thank you for giving me  
9 this opportunity to speak. Mahsi' Choo. I welcome the  
10 visitors and all the delegations that have come in to be  
11 part of this testimony here today. I'd like to say thank  
12 you to my Grandpa Santa Claus.

13 And also I like -- you know, I kind of want to go  
14 back, kind of go back years where before all these going  
15 to happen, we are pretty much like stress free, that we  
16 live on this land that we depend on to harvest all our  
17 food for our family, for everybody, all the way from great  
18 grandpa to grandmas, mothers, families. We are all bonded  
19 strongly together, and we all depend on each other.

20 I kind of want to -- had kind of like a vision last  
21 night that says our Gwich'in caribou were going to go to  
22 Canada, and the other caribou was coming from Canada down,  
23 and they met at the border line. And the Gwich'in caribou  
24 say, hey, and the Gwich'in Canada caribou say, eh?

25 Well, I'm heading back this way. I got news for you.

1 Eh? And hey, they are going to drill on our land or where  
2 we go feed on -- our food is over there, and these oil  
3 companies in Washington, D.C. said they are going to drill  
4 on where we are going to -- our calving ground for  
5 thousands and thousands of years. Eh? Heck with you. It  
6 sounds like Washington, D.C. yourself, so I'm going to go  
7 back and fight for it.

8 Fast forward. I kind of want to bring out to this  
9 story something that was going to bring out that point is  
10 that we had -- I was in town, and they were having a  
11 harvesting forum at Morris Thompson's, and I just happened  
12 to stop by, and looking at all these Native arts and  
13 crafts, and I walked in this room, and they were having --  
14 it wasn't that much people, but I knew there was people  
15 from Canada Fish & Wildlife, probably Hollis. Were you  
16 there, Hollis? Was it --

17 But, when I thought about it last night -- and I know  
18 Sarah was there. It's harvesting management caribou, how  
19 much is Canada going to take and how much we are taking  
20 here. And I want to keep that numbers, how much we take  
21 per year for each people that hunt for caribou so they  
22 can -- we can keep counting on it and know how much we  
23 take, but save more for down the future.

24 And then out of somewhere, ANWR came out. And  
25 somehow the drilling came about. And one person says we

1 got the technology to go drill at an angle, and we don't  
2 have to borrow that ANWR. But we can drill underneath it  
3 and suck all the oil out. And somebody came up and stand  
4 up over there, Gwich'in. I have been here 300 million  
5 years, and I'm eating caribou for 300 million years. Also  
6 someone stood up right in the center and got up and said  
7 300 million years ago you were swinging from trees to  
8 trees. You had a long tail, a monkey.

9 But the point is, the two caribou, they were all  
10 stressed out. And that's the way I feel, too, now. A few  
11 years ago I was feeling good before the new administration  
12 came into the window and says, hey, we are going to drill  
13 ANWR. The whole thing changes real quick. It stressed me  
14 out. Is it going to stress out the caribou, too, when  
15 they are going to be disturbed on their calving ground?  
16 Are they going to be disturbed and are they going to be  
17 stressed out? Are they going to be able to do their  
18 normal calving to sustain the whole Gwich'in people here  
19 in interior? Also plus the coastal people, they depend on  
20 it. They depend on everything for the food.

21 Everything we use from caribou, it -- if we disturb  
22 and then they can't calve no more, it will be a blow to  
23 us. If you lose your caribou, you are going to lose your  
24 language. You are going to lose everything, who you are.  
25 You just can't depend on the moose. There is no more

1 story for caribou. So much how we depend on it.

2 So I don't want to take all your time. I can say  
3 words afterwards all day long, but I'll give somebody a  
4 chance because these guys have to leave at 1:00.

5 So thank you very much. And you guys think about it.  
6 I think about it. I think about my grandkids. My  
7 grandkids, they like that Native food. They like it.  
8 They say, Grandpa, what you going to cook today? Well,  
9 I'm going to dice it up and put macaroni in it. What do  
10 you call that? Indian goulash. All right. On the top of  
11 the Indian menu, we are looking at what we eat off this  
12 land as delicacy. You eat something wild, it's better  
13 than anything else in the world. Anything on top of the  
14 Indian menu is. Caribou is.

15 My mother is from Fort Yukon. She migrated in  
16 from -- her family migrated in from Canada area,  
17 Whitehorse. I can tell you all the stories about my  
18 grandpa, how he found Fort Yukon. He got stuck in a log  
19 and got [indiscernible], there was a pretty girl standing  
20 up there. That's all it took.

21 Thank you very much.

22 MS. CRYSTAL SISTO DRUCK: Hello. Welcome  
23 to Venetie, visitors and family. My name is Crystal Sisto  
24 Druck. I'm the great great granddaughter of Reverend  
25 Albert Tritt. My grandfather was the late Paul Tritt. My



1 grandma was the late Julia Tritt. My parents are Vern and  
2 Louise Sisco. My father is from San Carlos, Arizona. My  
3 mother is from Venetie Indian Reservation. I am the  
4 mother of eight daughters and two sons.

5 I live here in Venetie. And I'm not speaking for  
6 myself, but I'm speaking for the children, my children, my  
7 grandchildren, their future children. My mom wishes she  
8 could be here. My daughter serves on the Venetie Village  
9 Council. Her name is Tiliisia Sisto. It's her fifth year  
10 running on the Venetie Village Council. She is the  
11 youngest member. She is 23 years old. She's a single  
12 mother of two.

13 Right now all four of my oldest daughters wanted to  
14 be here to testify, but one got invited to the  
15 Denakanag'aa Elders and Youth Conference to represent  
16 Venetie village. That is Glenda Druck. She's a TCC youth  
17 delegate. My other three got invited to the YEAH Summit,  
18 youth environmental against alcohol and tobacco and  
19 healthy living. And my eldest that serves on the Venetie  
20 Village Council is their chaperone. So all four of my  
21 daughters are out representing the Venetie village.

22 And so I'm here to speak first for my oldest daughter  
23 Tiliisia. This past winter, we did not have no meat. We  
24 had no food stamps. We had no means of money. Our  
25 freezers were empty. We were living off of fish that was

1 given to us and sent to us from our friends in Grayling,  
2 St. Mary's, Kaltag, Ruby and Rampart.

3 My daughter got paid. She took her paycheck, bought  
4 a round trip ticket to Arctic Village. As soon as she got  
5 off the plane in Arctic Village she shot her first caribou  
6 this past spring 30 minutes after she got off the plane.  
7 The next day she sent us four caribous. So we were very  
8 fortunate because if you go to the store, the little piece  
9 of meat costs \$27.90. Times that by ten for 31 days, \$270  
10 times 31. I cannot afford this dinner alone. That does  
11 not include breakfast and lunch for my family, plus we  
12 have to pay for our own propane, which is \$300 of propane,  
13 which lasts 42 days. We timed it every time.

14 My daughter bakes. We bake. We live off  
15 subsistence. We live off fish. We live off birds, ducks.  
16 95 percent of our groceries comes from this land. Because  
17 we are not rich -- my husband only has a part-time job.  
18 My daughter has a part-time job. I just stay home and  
19 take care of the kids. Five percent of our groceries  
20 comes from Fairbanks. But if you include freight -- so if  
21 you are paying for a piece of meat or a box of meat, you  
22 are paying for groceries for \$70 in Fairbanks, plus you  
23 still have to pay for it to get it here to Venetie, which  
24 the freight costs -- with the freight prices rising, it's  
25 very outrageous. So basically that box of meat could feed

1 my family for maybe a week and a half, but we are paying  
2 almost \$270.

3 Right now yesterday we paid \$350 for two boxes of  
4 meat, a thing of tissue, and pull-ups and diapers. That  
5 does not include the freight coming from Fairbanks.

6 Coming from a big family with limited income and  
7 resources for my children, I just want to encourage you --  
8 I'm not a paid actress. I'm not here standing in front of  
9 you -- they didn't pay me to stand here to make you feel  
10 sorry for me. I'm an actual living person. My daughters  
11 would be here today but, like I said, they are out on  
12 their training trying to get more trainings in their  
13 systems to one day stand here and speak for their people.

14 But I just wanted to let you know that my daughter in  
15 30 minutes got off that plane, filled our freezers, and we  
16 still have caribou in our freezers. She shot her first  
17 caribou. And then when she shot her first caribou,  
18 traditionally you're supposed to give it away. And there  
19 was a dear friend of ours in Fort Yukon who passed away.  
20 His name was Eric Luke. My daughter sent that whole  
21 caribou to Fort Yukon. His family was very appreciative.  
22 That's what we do in our Native way.

23 When a young person shoots their first kill, they  
24 give it to the elders or anybody that's in need because  
25 that's how we are. We share with one another. And if one

1 person's freezer is empty, whether you have a big family  
2 or not and you have no money in your pocket, you still  
3 share. We are not stingy people. We love one another,  
4 care for one another. My children I have raised and  
5 believe in God because my grandmother Julia, you could  
6 smell her biscuits for miles around. She used to live  
7 right over here in this big blue house.

8 A few days ago on Sunday they had a singing and  
9 service there. It's been 22 years since I heard people  
10 sing in that house and had prayer and hold hands. My  
11 heart felt good. I walked in that house and I heard them  
12 singing. And that felt good because it was right before  
13 this meeting and it gave me strength to stand here and  
14 speak to all of you.

15 I know that you guys already have this goal of  
16 drilling, but there are real people out there that have no  
17 income, and there are a lot of people out there that has a  
18 big family like myself. My children live off the land. I  
19 have eight daughters. They all shot something. They all  
20 know how to live off the land. They all know how to get  
21 on a four-wheeler to go get a load of wood. If you see  
22 four girls going to go ptarmigan hunting, you know that's  
23 breakfast with pancakes.

24 We don't have a grocery store where we can go. This  
25 ain't Fred Meyer. I mean, a loaf of bread don't cost

1 \$1.69. A loaf of bread here costs maybe between six and  
2 \$9. A box of cereal costs up to seven to \$10. And for my  
3 family, that's just like one bowl each.

4 I just want to strongly encourage all of you to  
5 listen to me. This is my heart. If you could read my  
6 heart, to understand that there are real people out there  
7 that really, really, really depend on this caribou. And I  
8 know. I have been reading the newspapers and stuff  
9 saying, you know, oh, yeah, but they are driving on  
10 four-wheelers and this and that. And how is their lights  
11 going. You know, there are other ways around everything.  
12 If you really look deep down in your heart, you look for  
13 alternatives.

14 I mean, destroying a whole tribe that depends on  
15 this, it's like making us into a third-world country. We  
16 are in America and we are the ones standing in front of  
17 you begging for our rights for our land.

18 Just earlier I was reading in a piece of newspaper  
19 where this guy said how come if they know that they were  
20 going to drill on their land, how come I feel like I got  
21 stabbed in the back because my own people couldn't drill  
22 on that land and we couldn't profit from it. You know, I  
23 was reading that in one of these Anchorage newspapers  
24 articles, and sort of trying to hit me right there, you  
25 know. It's like, well, you know, if we could have drilled

1 on this land long ago, you would think we would have done  
2 that, you know. But we don't want that. Our children,  
3 our grandchildren and our great grandfathers and great  
4 grandmothers and those that passed on before us, they  
5 fought for something that they truly believed in and they  
6 left it here for us to live.

7 In the future if you guys drill that oil, I don't  
8 know what my one person's words can say to make a  
9 difference. All I am doing is pleading for my children  
10 and my daughter and her children and asking you please --  
11 I don't want the drilling here. I don't want to pay  
12 \$27.90 for a little piece of steak that I have to split  
13 ten ways.

14 That's all I have to say.

15 MS. MARCIE WHITWELL: Good morning. I'm  
16 wearing John Fredson's shirt today. He's the guy who --  
17 how you say? These are the guys who came up with our  
18 reservation, these pictures right here. These are our  
19 elders that came up with the reservation, and this guy is  
20 the one who helped them to sign -- teach them how to sign  
21 their names so they could sign the petition to get the  
22 reservation. I'm just wearing this.

23 But I was thinking about what I was going to say.  
24 And I had a dream yesterday. See, I was born in Margaret  
25 Creek down here. And then we moved here. And from here

1 these elders, they -- somehow they communicated a long  
2 time ago. That was the way of Native -- our way. But  
3 anyway, they send my dad to Arctic because we grew up --  
4 they grew him up like a hunter to hunt for people. And  
5 anyway, they move us to Arctic. And we got caribou meat  
6 from there to send here because a lot of people went to  
7 school in those days. There was hardly any hunters, just  
8 young people.

9 So that's where I came from, from going to Arctic.  
10 And my dad brought all of our family -- there is Myra and  
11 Kathy over there. There is like seven of us. We walked  
12 through that whole Arctic Village mountains because we  
13 were hunting for people to eat here. That was a lot of  
14 work. I was just a little girl, but my dad told us this  
15 is how we have to survive. If we don't do this, grandma  
16 will be hungry in Venetie. So that was in our heart as  
17 brother and sister. And we did a lot so, you know, people  
18 could eat here, and Arctic, too. There was a lot of  
19 elders, too. And we fed all of them.

20 And now they are talking about this caribou. I  
21 almost went there before. I went right toward that place  
22 where they have that -- where they have those baby --  
23 calving and all that. Anyway, when you go toward that,  
24 you are actually going to feel something. Something was  
25 there as a little girl I couldn't understand, but for them

1 those days, that was a big thing. There is our life right  
2 there. This is our lifeline right there.

3 And I want to bring up, you guys are talking about  
4 drilling on our land. If you destroy our land, imagine  
5 what we get at store when we go shopping for meat.  
6 Antibiotics. There is people getting sick from all that.  
7 If you eat caribou, I don't worry about that because I  
8 know where it came from. And if I go to the store and  
9 my -- you know, sometimes we go to the store and get meat,  
10 we get sick off it. Our kids get sick off it. That's not  
11 our way of life.

12 Our way of life is go up to the mountain, kill that  
13 caribou, skin it and bring it back. And you clean the  
14 whole area. You don't just leave it like that. And Sarah  
15 talked about all these bones you guys see. The caribou.  
16 The whole body, you could use it as a tool. That's what  
17 my dad taught me. You could use anything for a tool on  
18 that caribou, the animal; all the bones, everything. They  
19 don't waste nothing.

20 And they talk about this caribou fence where caribou  
21 go in. As soon as they kill that caribou, they come out.  
22 My grandma said it worked so fast, they turn around, all  
23 that blood and everything is gone because that's how much  
24 respect we have for that land, for that animal. So it's  
25 very important, you guys. (Speaking in Alaskan Native



1 language.) I don't need that. I grew up here. I don't  
2 need paper to read what in my heart -- my heart is I got  
3 eight grandkids and I want them to survive like I did.  
4 You know, exercise is going, walking up there to get that  
5 caribou. It's not you go up with a plane and shoot it.  
6 That's not us. We got to walk and do it.

7 And you guys need to talk and talk from your heart.  
8 These are for our kids. Like someone said, caribou can't  
9 speak for themselves. We have to do it because God put us  
10 here, and he gave us animals to protect. If I see an  
11 animal wounded, I got to kill it because I don't want to  
12 see it suffer. That's the way I grew up.

13 So we all grew up different way. But guess what? We  
14 all got hearts in the same place. We got blood flowing  
15 the same way. And I want you to understand that if  
16 caribou was taken away, I cannot live on that store meat  
17 over there. That would make me sick. I got to have my  
18 Native food. A lot of these elders are like that.

19 And it's very important that you guys talk for your  
20 kids. Do it for your kids and your grandkids because they  
21 are important. They are the future. And right now  
22 everything is happening. A lot of bad things are  
23 happening. But guess what? Thank God he take care of us,  
24 every one of us. Every day, even though no matter what we  
25 do, he forgive us. That's the way we grew up as a Native.

1 Number one first is God. You got to trust him with  
2 everything you got because you see, I lost a brother, too.  
3 He was only 18. But God showed me you can be stronger  
4 than that. That's where he gave me that strength.

5 Like I said, please talk for caribou because it can't  
6 speak for itself.

7 So God bless every one of you, and thank you for  
8 being here.

9 MS. SARAH JAMES: We got 20 people on the  
10 list, and we don't have very much time. 1:30 they have to  
11 leave, and some of our visitors may not even get to speak,  
12 so we'd like to have people speak in three minutes, if you  
13 could. And line -- and get ready to come on. So even  
14 walking from over here take a while. So be here right on  
15 the button.

16 MR. ERNEST D. ERICK: We need more time.  
17 We need more time. You got the time to be here. We need  
18 more time.

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Give us more  
20 time.

21 MR. ERNEST D. ERICK: That's what we need  
22 here. Thank you.

23 MS. MARY BETH SOLOMON: My name is Mary  
24 Beth Solomon. I'm a Gwichyaa Gwich'in from Fort Yukon.  
25 I'm a council member down at Fort Yukon. And my chief

1 asked me to come up here and say a few words to you all.  
2 I was here yesterday during the consultation, government  
3 to government. I understand all that. I had a few notes  
4 here, but who knows if I'll look at it or not.

5 However, I want you people to know that there are  
6 other tribes up there supporting this issue of protecting  
7 the calving grounds that we call 1002 at this time. I  
8 listened to the elders. I listened to the leadership. I  
9 understand some of the process. I have been to college.  
10 That helped a little bit.

11 I've never really stood up and spoke to people on  
12 this issue. I talk to people in the background. We visit  
13 our friends and all that. And I really support the issue  
14 of no development, no drilling in 1002 area. It's a  
15 sacred ground. You hear that over and over, and you will  
16 hear that. I'm as I stand here as a Gwichyaa Gwich'in, I  
17 want you to know there are other indigenous people in  
18 Alaska that support our efforts to protect this sacred  
19 ground.

20 And the other thing I want to talk about was the EIS.  
21 We talk about it over and over. You have to understand  
22 that once it's a written document, you better look at it  
23 and have a say. We can still change that document. Even  
24 from what we say might not all go in there, but if you  
25 read it, you could make sure it gets in there. And that's

1 a message I want to bring to our young people now, that we  
2 have to stand up.

3 I'm glad the way that Venetie/Arctic trained their  
4 young people, try to get our young people away from drugs  
5 and alcohol. It's a hard job, but it can be done. We  
6 need to learn the tools and use it for the protection of  
7 what we hold so dear to our heart that we depend on.

8 You know, I come from small people. My great  
9 grandfather is Johnny Frank, and Sarah Frank is my great  
10 grandmother. That's my mother's grandparents. I'm the  
11 father of Jonathan Solomon, Sr., and my mother is still  
12 alive down there in Fort Yukon. Her name is Hannah J.  
13 Solomon.

14 So I just want you to know that, that I watch and  
15 I've learned. And I would really like to speak up on a  
16 lot of issues, but with a heart of our people it can be  
17 done. And that's the message I bring from other  
18 indigenous tribes to this village. This is my home. I  
19 love this place. I have been to Arctic. I have been all  
20 the places. I brought my daughter when she was little.  
21 You see that little girl walking around earlier, that's my  
22 granddaughter. I want them to get the feeling of my  
23 community here.

24 This is where my mother is from. She was born up  
25 there in Arctic Village area, Smoke Creek. She was raised

1 up there. She lost her mother when she was little. So  
2 she was allowed to live with certain people in the  
3 villages sometimes. But the main one that really raised  
4 her was Christian. And I got to meet all these elders  
5 that we talk about. I even met Myra Roberts. That's way  
6 back.

7 So anyhow, I did know all the elders. I learned  
8 lots. That's the message that I believe from my heart and  
9 from my tribe and all other indigenous people of the  
10 world.

11 Mahsi'.

12 MR. BOBBY TRITT: Good morning or  
13 afternoon. Or morning yet. My name is Bobby Tritt, for  
14 the record. I'm a council member of Venetie Village  
15 Council and born and raised in Arctic Village. My late --  
16 my parents were Christian Tritt, Sr., traditional chief.  
17 Lily Tritt was my mother, both passed.

18 Anyway, I'd like to talk -- say and talk about 1002,  
19 caribou, et cetera, the only place caribou herd --  
20 Porcupine caribou herd born and survive. We need to -- we  
21 need to stop. Exploration we need to protect this area  
22 1002 from exploration.

23 Here in Venetie we pay \$9 a gallon. In Arctic  
24 Village they probably pay about \$10. Hardly any of my  
25 people work up north. Let's save 1002 for future

1 generation. Maybe 100 years, 200 years, maybe forever we  
2 need to save this place.

3 Me, I speak for the animals. I speak for Porcupine  
4 caribou herd. It's home to -- it's home to 250 animal  
5 species up there, and millions of migration birds. And  
6 there is 180 different kind of birds that goes there, and  
7 birds from as far away as Antarctica, Africa and all 50  
8 states. However, Porcupine caribou herd is our bread and  
9 butter and our food.

10 So I would say stop exploration on 1002. I'd like to  
11 thank everybody here in Venetie, Arctic Village, all our  
12 visitors. You guys are welcome to our town, including all  
13 of you. And I'd like -- that's all I've got to say for  
14 now.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. WILL MAYO: I have so much that's in  
17 my heart that I'm going to go ahead and use a few notes so  
18 I don't miss some important things. So with that, my name  
19 is Will Mayo. I'm here today for the Tanana Chiefs  
20 Conference. That's officially. But in my heart, I'm here  
21 to support the Gwich'in Nation. All of the tribes in this  
22 region, 42, they all support Gwich'in Nation in their  
23 fight to protect the 1002 area from development. But  
24 Congress has made their decision, and this thing is on a  
25 downward slope that we are not going to be able to stop.

1           So today we are scoping what they are going to look  
2 at as they make decisions that have already been made.  
3 They are scoping. I wish I could have confidence that the  
4 scoping will be real, but I'm not going to lie to you.  
5 I'll speak the truth. I don't see that. I see this as an  
6 exercise, checking off the next thing on the list. And my  
7 heart grieves.

8           Our people are suffering another trauma. They talk  
9 about cultural trauma of the people. And you are  
10 witnessing it happening right here. Our hearts are heavy,  
11 like they are tearing them out. Political decisions are  
12 made.

13           If I thought proposing a scope was really going to  
14 help, this is what I would say: Don't mess around with  
15 the calving ground. Stay away. Everybody knows caribou  
16 won't calve where people are. They like to say the  
17 caribou get along with the pipeline. Those aren't calving  
18 caribou. Those are migrating feeding caribou. They don't  
19 care. They can live with the pipeline. But when they  
20 calve, they go far away to a safe and secret place where  
21 they know from generations they won't be disturbed.

22           If I thought that proposing a scope would really make  
23 a difference here, I would propose that there would be  
24 established a balanced team of scientists -- some federal,  
25 some state, some from the Native community -- who would go

1 and do balanced, true scientific research. What does it  
2 mean to calving caribou behavior when trucks come in, when  
3 roads are built, when infrastructure is established? And  
4 where will those caribou go if they won't calve there?  
5 The only place they can go is east. The only other place.

6 Those caribou chose that place for a reason, and they  
7 are smart. They know what works to protect their young.  
8 They know they need the wind that's there. They need that  
9 wide open plain so they can see predators. They need the  
10 wind to blow away the mosquitoes because mosquitoes will  
11 exsanguinate calves to death. They know why they calve  
12 there. To the east is mountains. You go over more  
13 mountains, and finally you come to a coastal plain on the  
14 Canada side that's similar, and sometimes they calve  
15 there.

16 My fear is that they will go east because they will  
17 come back down the mountain, they will see out there, oh,  
18 there is roads, there is pumps, there is people, it stinks  
19 here, and they won't calve there. They will keep going.  
20 And the only way they can go is east.

21 And what will that do to the path that they take when  
22 they pass by your villages here? What will it do when  
23 their migratory routes possibly shift to the east? These  
24 people here, they will be left high and dry, more trauma.  
25 More trauma.



1 I'm sorry. I was going to do proper protocol. I  
2 wanted to speak in front of the Venetie Village Chief  
3 Dennis Erick, the Native Village of Venetie Chief Steve  
4 Frank, and Arctic Village Chief James John, traditional  
5 chiefs Abraham Henry, Sr. and Trimble Gilbert. I wanted  
6 to first ask your permission to address you on your land.  
7 I failed to do that because I'm not supposed to take too  
8 long.

9 And I really respect your leaders for your standing  
10 up and your past leaders who are chiefs, like Gideon  
11 James, Sarah who always spoke up. Ernest. I remember  
12 these chiefs from a long time ago.

13 So I just want to say my village is Tanana (speaking  
14 in Athabaskan). It's about 250 miles east of here. When  
15 they built the pipeline and the road to support it, no  
16 more caribou came behind our village. We would go behind  
17 our village 14 miles. We would go over the rise in the  
18 alpine country, and we would see caribou. We could bring  
19 it home. You can go up there any time now, you will never  
20 see them again. They never come back. It's a trauma.

21 I'll make a couple more points. I know I took too  
22 much time, Sarah. I think Sarah lost her watch, though.

23 So protect that ground. And I think a real balanced  
24 scientific study without political interference.

25 Political interference would be that if a true study was

1 given that would show the impacts on subsistence, truly  
2 show it, that that study, balanced study would get buried.  
3 That's my fear because I've seen that before. I have been  
4 around a long time in leadership. I've seen supportive  
5 documents suddenly disappear. They never get spoke of  
6 again.

7 And I want to say directly -- is it director? I'll  
8 call you Director Joe Balash. I thank you for coming and  
9 being here, and your team. And thank the Lieutenant  
10 Governor for being here, Byron Mallott. He knows what we  
11 are talking about. Just because he's Lieutenant Governor  
12 doesn't mean he doesn't know. He's been a voice for  
13 Native issues for a long time. Commissioner Cotten.

14 But that would be my heart, and I think such a  
15 balanced study would show that there would be an EIS  
16 finding and a decision of record that would show that  
17 there would be irreversible impacts on this subsistence  
18 living, this resource, and that the best recommendation is  
19 to drill somewhere else.

20 Thank you very much.

21 MR. TRIMBLE GILBERT: Mahsi' Choo. I'm  
22 glad you are all here and talk to the people here. The  
23 last meeting in Arctic I wasn't there because I'm busy in  
24 Fairbanks. I missed the whole thing. And I hear a lot of  
25 good things about it. So this time I was in Fort Yukon

1 busy for two weeks. And then I'm very lucky. The Tanana  
2 Chiefs brought me over here. Brought quite a few of us.

3 And I'm glad Willie is here with us. And I get to  
4 know him since many years and standing right in front of  
5 the TCC group all the time. So when I travel around and  
6 when Willie is with me, I'm really happy to have him all  
7 the time.

8 So support is very important. We all need some time  
9 where -- too far north. We live too far north, and we are  
10 isolated, cold. Even right now. Yesterday it was cold.  
11 But we still hang around up this way. We don't want to  
12 leave. And my wife should be here, but she was kind of  
13 slow, and she is in Fort Yukon now, so she is going to be  
14 home on Saturday.

15 You know, I remember it way back, 1935. I don't  
16 know -- I'm probably the oldest one. I don't know. 1935.  
17 And ever since there has been quite a change up this way.

18 You know that some people said who is your neighbor.  
19 Caribou. Caribou and all kind of animals. I grew up with  
20 lot of birds. This time of the year, middle of May,  
21 thousands, thousands of birds coming back. Noisy. Now  
22 you hardly hear any birds on this area. There is quite a  
23 few, but they don't make noise. Even wolf never howl  
24 again. They know what's going on. Everything is -- all  
25 the animals decrease now and slowly. What's going on? If

1 we don't say nothing, we going to end up nothing the next  
2 generation to come, like you see the animal and all the  
3 resource we have. That worries me.

4 About 30 years ago, that pipeline start. I felt -- I  
5 thought we -- everything going to be cheap and the oil,  
6 gas going to be cheap. You know how much we pay for it in  
7 Arctic is \$10 a gallon. The same time they don't  
8 [indiscernible]. That's what we have been using for many  
9 years. That's the one that don't burn too much gas. So  
10 that's the problem.

11 So the next thing is election times. Make sure all  
12 the Native people should remember that when you vote. The  
13 nation is kind of split now. More and more people on  
14 other side. And we lost last time. We have a problem.  
15 Before the election times, they ask for vote everywhere  
16 they travel. And then after they were elected, I tried to  
17 say hi to them, but they never say hi to me no more.

18 We have to do the right way next time, next election  
19 that's coming. We might -- I thought maybe the world is  
20 just split already. Communities are split, too,  
21 everywhere. We might lose again. Then we going to have  
22 more problem. Seems to me they don't care about up this  
23 way. Oh, they live up there. They got everything. So we  
24 always have problem during election times.

25 And the Porcupine herds are very healthy herd. They

1 cover the whole area, Arctic all the way to Canada. There  
2 is like -- Sarah -- Sarah Abel, old woman, talk it. It's  
3 like the food is like this. Okay. The next one will be  
4 Venetie. Next year going to be Arctic. Next year going  
5 to be Old Crow. So our people using this. And also  
6 sharing is the big word from the last 10,000 of year. We  
7 share one another with the caribou. Also that Yukon  
8 River. Also not only that, we sharing and look after each  
9 other with what we got. That's what I meant a little  
10 while ago. And we have been away from each other, but we  
11 are just like one family. Now we working on that. The  
12 whole Native of Alaska should be one unity people, and we  
13 can be strong. We can protect in what resource we have in  
14 our country.

15 Sure, that Porcupine herd is still healthy and they  
16 hang around more the last few years. And they don't go  
17 over very much. But with that Central herd has joined our  
18 caribou, but they are kind of separated and they are on  
19 this side of the mountain of Arctic Village. People knows  
20 it because Central is small, and they are kind of not very  
21 fat. But Porcupine herd this year it's healthy again, and  
22 the populations of the caribou has increased more and more  
23 caribou we got than before.

24 So we asking for help and help that our voices not  
25 reach further down to the D.C., but we got some people in

1 Juneau, and we need more and more educated people to fight  
2 for us. And this is not the only problem we are going to  
3 have. Like we are going to have more and more problems  
4 because we -- we should know better than that what we  
5 need.

6 Now we talk about Yukon River. Water. Water is very  
7 important. They keep saying that next ten years, maybe  
8 more than that we can drink water from the Yukon River.  
9 Also the Brooks Range. That's good water. It's coming  
10 this way. There is clear water in this river. Down other  
11 side is good water, too. So caribou -- animal is kind of  
12 looking for that birth, breeding place.

13 So all the birds -- I don't know. Some of the ducks  
14 we never see them no more. Birds are same thing. That  
15 worries me. And we don't -- we don't say nothing, then we  
16 going to have more problems than 30 years ago. I thought  
17 we going to have better life, but in the last 30 years,  
18 you should see the graveyard in every community. It's  
19 bigger and bigger because of the alcohol, drugs and  
20 alcohol, something that's not good for the Athabascan  
21 people, not only here, but all over Alaska, Native people,  
22 more crimes and all that. A lot of them been lost with  
23 alcohol. Some of the village we losing that populations  
24 near the pipeline, like down Stevens Village and all that.  
25 I hope they come home someday to have a good life.

1           So I'm the elder, so I could say anything I want to  
2 because I got to say something for the future generations  
3 to come. So I'm glad you are here for the support, and we  
4 would like to welcome you so we -- we do need the help and  
5 the voice. More and more rich people, and those are the  
6 ones, they don't -- I know they don't want to hear our  
7 voice. Even in election time I talk about it. We never  
8 see them around here. Before election time they come  
9 around for vote, and then after they have been elected, I  
10 never see them for the next four or five years.

11           So thank you very much for invite us. So we are  
12 leaving this afternoon. And I hope you have more -- you  
13 meet more people, Native people and talk about this  
14 caribou. And God bless you, all of you.

15           Thank you.

16                   DR. CHARLEEN FISHER: (Speaking in Alaskan  
17 Native language.) My name is Dr. Charleen Fisher. I'm  
18 from Beaver, Alaska. I'm the Executive Director of the  
19 Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments. Thank you very  
20 much to the people of Venetie for allowing me to speak  
21 today.

22           The Council of Athabascan tribal governments is a  
23 tribal consortium founded in September of 1985 with the  
24 vision of self-sufficient communities and a shared  
25 commitment to promoting common goals. The ten remote

1 Gwich'in and Koyukon Athabascan tribes that form CATG are  
2 Arctic Village, Beaver, Birch Creek, Circle, Canyon  
3 Village, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Rampart, Stevens Village  
4 and Venetie. The CATG tribal consortium strongly opposes  
5 oil and gas leasing and development in the coastal plain  
6 as one.

7 The Gwich'in and upper Koyukon traditional land use  
8 areas of the upper Yukon Flats encompass what is now the  
9 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and part of the  
10 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Council of  
11 Athabascan Tribal Governments has a standing resolution  
12 titled the Resolution to Permanently Protect the  
13 Birthplace and Nursery Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou  
14 Herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and it  
15 asserts and affirms the Gwich'in peoples' rights, inherent  
16 right to continue their way of life as recognized by the  
17 U.S. Senate. The Gwich'in have consistently advocated for  
18 the Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit, the Sacred Place  
19 Where Life Begins, to protect their natural environment  
20 and cultural practices. Since time immemorial CATG tribes  
21 and their tribal membership have lived in reciprocity with  
22 these lands and the resources therein and have a spiritual  
23 relationship to the Porcupine caribou herd.

24 Government-to-government consultation should always  
25 be meaningful, productive and measurable for tribes and



1 their governments and should be adequately involved in all  
2 aspects, as it directly affects their lives and  
3 well-being.

4 This scoping period is much too short to properly  
5 solicit comments from Alaskans, Native and nonNative,  
6 rural and urban, young and old, rich and poor, and the  
7 greater American citizenry. This process does not allow  
8 for the proper inclusion of Alaska Native knowledge  
9 systems and traditional use patterns and the impacts of  
10 development in a thorough and thoughtful way. My own  
11 tribe, Beaver, the Beaver Village Council, and Fort Yukon  
12 requested to have scopings in their communities and were  
13 denied, and this excluded their tribal membership and many  
14 people.

15 This process also is very divisive. Many of us have  
16 much more in common than this process is going to  
17 represent in the comments solicited. Many of the Alaska  
18 Natives throughout the state live a subsistence way of  
19 life, have a spiritual relationship to the animals and the  
20 natural environment. The Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii  
21 Goodlit, the Sacred Place Where Life Begins, or the  
22 coastal plain or the 1002 area is a significant birthing  
23 ground to many species of migratory birds, fish and  
24 nonmigrating mammals, as well as the Porcupine caribou  
25 herd.

1           In the 50-plus years the Arctic National Wildlife  
2 Refuge has existed, the Porcupine caribou herd has  
3 maintained stable numbers. No other caribou herd has  
4 development in their birthing grounds. And the  
5 possibility that significant damage to the health of the  
6 Porcupine caribou herd as well as the population is a  
7 serious possibility. The Porcupine caribou herd is a  
8 vital part of the Gwich'in people's way of life and diet.  
9 The remote communities of CATG depend heavily on the  
10 Porcupine caribou herd for sustenance and to teach our  
11 children the way of how to live in Alaska's Arctic  
12 climate.

13           The eastern part of the 1002 areas are critical to  
14 calving caribou. But considering some of the areas, the  
15 distance between the mountains and the coast are only 20  
16 miles, the entire 1002 areas is critical habitat to the  
17 Porcupine caribou herd and will the -- the impacts of  
18 harming the herd will affect social, economic and  
19 spiritual connections of our Gwich'in people.

20           CATG stands firm in their resolution to protect the  
21 Porcupine caribou herd birthplace as a sacred place. We  
22 are very disappointed that the scoping wasn't extended and  
23 feel that this process is unjust. The CATG support a  
24 no-action alternative, encourage meaningful discussion  
25 regarding management, research and stewardship of the

1 Porcupine caribou herd.

2 (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.) We will live  
3 off the animals. This water -- this land and water is  
4 special to us and we hold it for the future generations  
5 with God's help.

6 Mahsi' Choh Shalak maii.

7 MR. SAM ALEXANDER: (Speaking in Alaskan  
8 Native language.) I want to thank the community of Venetie  
9 for allowing me this opportunity to speak. I know you  
10 have a lot of tribal members, so giving me this  
11 opportunity, I appreciate it a lot.

12 I was invited by CATG and I was directed by our  
13 elders to come up here and speak a little bit.

14 So I grew up in Fort Yukon, but I live in Fairbanks.  
15 Several years ago I got a master's degree in business from  
16 Dartmouth. So when we think about the decisions in front  
17 of us and what we see from our government, it's good to  
18 think about the business aspect of it.

19 And so how do businesses make decisions? Well, they  
20 make decisions based on data. And so they create these  
21 predictive models. These predictive models tell them  
22 should we invest or should we not invest. Well, that data  
23 that's being used for decisions in ANWR is very new data  
24 and very incomplete data, if we think about it. Gwich'in  
25 people have been here for tens of thousands of years, and

1 that's tens of thousands of years of data that we have.

2 Now, not all data is equal. Some data is good data  
3 and has actually produced results. Some data is faulty  
4 data. We know that our data is good because we are still  
5 here. We survived. Congratulations.

6 So I understand that it can be difficult for people  
7 from the west to understand what we are talking about and  
8 really respect the data that we have. I understand that  
9 because I've fallen into this trap myself. Last year I  
10 was out hunting moose with my father. And we were out on  
11 the land. And my father is an older guy. And I have been  
12 gone from Alaska for a long time and just moved back  
13 within the past several years. So we went out hunting.  
14 And I used to be a Special Forces officer in the Army, so  
15 I know how to be on the land. I know what I'm doing. I'm  
16 a Green Beret here.

17 So we go out and we are hunting. And he's in the  
18 front of the boat, and I'm sitting in the back. I'm  
19 driving the boat. And he sees a real fat black bear just  
20 right there on the shore. I thought, boy, he's going to  
21 shoot that black bear. And he pulled up his gun. And he  
22 looked at it for a bit, and he put his gun down, dropped  
23 his gun down. And we were -- I slowed down a little bit,  
24 and the bear ran off.

25 And I said, hey, how come you didn't shoot that bear?

1 He said, you know, I was thinking about it, but the bear  
2 is always in front of the moose. And I was thinking to  
3 myself, talking to him is like reading a fortune cookie.  
4 What the hell does that mean, the bear is in front of the  
5 moose? I don't understand that. And then we turned the  
6 corner and there was a moose there.

7 Of course -- of course he was able to determine that  
8 before I was because he has better data than I do. He was  
9 listening to that 30,000 years of data.

10 So I think that's what we are here to tell you. At  
11 least that's what I'm here to tell you is that you need to  
12 respect the data. You need to respect the traditional  
13 knowledge that's 30,000 years accumulated. And we know  
14 it's good data because we are still here.

15 So listen to the data. Listen to our elders.  
16 Respect our land. Respect our knowledge. And don't  
17 drill.

18 Mahsi'.

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (Speaking in  
20 Alaskan Native language.)

21 MR. ROBBIE MARTIN: Hi. My name is Robbie  
22 Martin. I'm from Venetie. My parents are Shayna Tritt  
23 and James Martin of Arctic Village and Venetie. My dad  
24 taught me how to cook over a campfire out in the woods.  
25 And I learned how to cook ducks and cut the caribou and

1 use some of the parts to cook over the fire. And I'm 13  
2 years old.

3 It's a blessing to have. I don't want to throw that  
4 away. It's hurting us to think that the oil companies are  
5 trying to take over what we have, such as our land,  
6 animals, what we rely on, most importantly, the caribou.

7 Mahsi' Choo.

8 MR. JAMES JOHN: Hello. James John.

9 (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.) Hello. My name is  
10 Jimmy. James, better known as Jimmy. My story, when I  
11 was young, I hunt a lot. Yeah. I hunt from a little boy.  
12 My forefathers, they teach me how to hunt. I never give  
13 up. So like right now, I don't have no kind of stuff to  
14 hunt with. I just go out in my Indian way. I got no bow  
15 and arrow, you know. I go out and hunt, and I come home I  
16 make sure I got everything, from waterfowl to moose,  
17 sheep. All those animals, I hunt them, I eat them, I  
18 never give up.

19 These people here are the same. They hunt. They  
20 fish. They build camp. They do everything they want.  
21 But if you go to the Lower 48, you can't do that. My  
22 country, my land you could. Even right now, you go out  
23 there, you go fishing. You go fishing down there, you got  
24 to have a permit. You don't do that around here. Hunt  
25 the same way. We do that.

1           And right now, all these kids around here, I want  
2 them to get up, stand up and go on. I tell them who they  
3 are. They have to because when they grow up now, I want  
4 them to hunt everything in front of them. And when I grew  
5 up, I don't have it. It's not there for me. I have to  
6 [indiscernible] for them to -- for the next generation.  
7 And we have to do that.

8           And the caribou, we take care of it just like we take  
9 care of ourselves. We use every part of it. Every part  
10 of the animal we get, we got a name for it. Yeah. Every  
11 little part we got, we eat them, down to the hooves.  
12 Yeah, we boil the hooves. We eat it. Every part, eyeball  
13 and all. Yeah.

14           And the water, when we get water, we just go down the  
15 bank right there in the water. You can jump in the boat,  
16 get a cup and drink it like that. We go on the land and  
17 see a puddle of water, you are so thirsty, we just bend  
18 over and just take a shot of water. It's unheard of. You  
19 get going. That's the way we are. But I know some of the  
20 animals, like those ground squirrels, it's like a long  
21 time ago if you go up our land [indiscernible], you might  
22 get -- maybe from here to maybe my village all those  
23 little animals will be gone from that -- [indiscernible]  
24 underground. They will all go. There won't be nothing.

25           The caribou they go up many miles. They go down to

1 Beaver Mountain. They travel. They come home and go home  
2 to have their calves. That's many miles, rugged area.  
3 And when they make it, they make sure they have their calf  
4 very good and they come home and they come back to our  
5 village where we can be, you know, happy people.

6 And these caribou, they are having a hard time right  
7 now with the mosquitoes and all that bother them. It's  
8 hard for them to keep up. And they can't speak. The  
9 caribou don't speak. So we got to fight for them. And  
10 many years from now it will be hard for these people to  
11 get up. They have to be educated to speak to you people  
12 as we are today.

13 Like those little children I was speaking to you,  
14 when they grow up, hey, what happened, you know. They  
15 will speak up again. Maybe they will be in front of you,  
16 you know. It's like that to us. And they are pretty  
17 smart. They never give up on what they do. --

18 Being a chief, it's hard. Yeah, pretty hard to be a  
19 chief, yeah. You got to take care of your people, a lot  
20 of respect and all that. You can't be mean and all that.  
21 You know the game. Being an Indian, it's pretty hard.  
22 Everyday life as Indians, like what you see today, you  
23 can't -- it's pretty hard.

24 Our fuel costs many dollars. When we go hunting,  
25 I spend as little as I can to save money. I come home



1 with maybe one moose. Probably I'll spend about \$1,800  
2 just to get one moose. That's good for me so my people  
3 will eat. I don't ask for it. You know, that's the way  
4 life is. And you continue on. The people -- you should  
5 understand it pretty good. You know, we love each other  
6 pretty good and we respect each other. I hope you guys  
7 can understand what we are talking about and make sure you  
8 hear what we are saying.

9 Mahsi' Choo.

10 MR. KYLE ALEXANDER: My name is Kyle  
11 Alexander. I am 16 years old, and I will one day shoot my  
12 first caribou. But if you drill, I am afraid I won't  
13 shoot my first caribou or ever see them again. Being a  
14 young man, I want to grow up and provide for my family. I  
15 want to one day teach the younger kids how to hunt  
16 caribou. This is our life. Please don't drill oil on the  
17 calving grounds.

18 Mahsi' Choo.

19 MR. RAYDAN TRITT: My name is Raydan  
20 Tritt. My parents are Shayna Tritt and James Martin.

21 And I want to say that everybody knows their first  
22 experience hunting. Like your first caribou, you are  
23 being nervous at first. When we take that shot, you are  
24 excited after you took that shot. And your dad or your  
25 mom will celebrate you, and your elders, too. You like to

1 see your family so excited, you get too excited once in a  
2 while. For me, I shot three caribou my first time. I got  
3 too excited, and my dad told me to calm down. So I want  
4 to go hunting again, but I know that won't happen again  
5 next time. I was hoping I go hunting next winter.

6 And -- sorry I forgot -- if you guys drill, I'm  
7 afraid the next generation won't get their first  
8 experience of hunting and they won't see their family  
9 excited. And actually, that's it. Sorry.

10 MR. STEVE FRANK: Steve Frank, Native  
11 Village of Venetie Tribal Government, tribal chief. I  
12 just want to tell Joe -- I try to tell Joe a little story  
13 every day about all the wrong things that have been done  
14 to Native Americans throughout history. Joe, I want you  
15 to know we are people just like you. We have our dreams  
16 and grandkids.

17 Albert served in Vietnam, and Jerry was in the Army.  
18 But I kind of want to tell you a little story about my  
19 father, Albert's father and Jerry's father. When they  
20 were growing up, they had one gun, one steel ball.  
21 Jerry's father was the shooter. Whenever he missed, my  
22 father or Nathaniel had to go and dig up that bullet. So  
23 I'm just -- I want you to know we are people just like  
24 you, you know. We all grew up. Think about that, you  
25 know.

1 I was going to say something more, but that's just a  
2 little story I wanted to tell you just so you make the  
3 connection that we are people just like anybody else.  
4 Okay.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. GIDEON JAMES: Thank you for  
7 giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Gideon  
8 James. I live in Arctic Village, and I'm one of the  
9 elders. And I grew up with Trimble. My name is Gideon  
10 James. I'm 78 years old now. And I -- what I'm talking  
11 about is pretty much my experience or my reading or my --  
12 my experience in a lot of things. I worked for the tribe  
13 30 years, and I have been to Washington, D.C. about five  
14 times. And I have been across the country addressing  
15 self-government and the rule-making process for a couple  
16 years.

17 And it gives me the opportunity to speak with other  
18 tribes that were on -- that were on the negotiating  
19 committee. And I have -- I was lucky to come to  
20 communicate with a lot of different tribes, a lot of  
21 different leaders. And I see some pretty well-known  
22 leaders here in the village right now, you know. And I  
23 know a lot of them for 20, 30 years. I see some --

24 There is somebody that mentioned knowledge. We have  
25 knowledge. We have people that are educated. We are a

1 people that are educated and in a position to make  
2 decisions. And we have computers. We have a very  
3 advanced technology that are in place today. We have our  
4 people in office use it.

5 So whatever -- whatever their knowledge or their  
6 speak, you know, I hope that these are being respected and  
7 considered because what I hear yesterday, what happened to  
8 the point of today or yesterday that even we had the  
9 hearing and people came forward to address their concerns,  
10 those things were not well considered and decision was  
11 made already. And we come to find out last night.

12 Anyway, I just wanted to tell you that we are talking  
13 about animals that are very intelligent, very intelligent  
14 and in a fragile and sensitive environment that they  
15 exist. They use clean water. They use clean air. And  
16 most of all, they have got to have clean vegetation. They  
17 have got to have it in order to be healthy, in order to  
18 be -- somebody mentioned that the shape of caribou was  
19 pretty well today, and that's true. And that's true. And  
20 it's never been like that for -- you know, for some time.

21 And I -- we have noticed these animals found the  
22 different -- different feeding area, which is right  
23 directly north of this village. A lot of people -- a lot  
24 of our hunters know exactly where -- where we are talking  
25 about. So the animals that we're talking about is they

1 know where to go. A lot of times, you know, when it's  
2 difficult to travel like on snow, they use mountain ridge  
3 where there is no snow. The wind blows.

4 I want to bring a couple stories. When I was a  
5 little boy around six or seven years old, I went with my  
6 -- I spent a lot of time with my grandfather Albert E.  
7 Tritt. I spent lots and lots of time. I just barely  
8 remember sometimes. But one time that we were behind the  
9 mountain, and we had tents. And then there was another  
10 mountain right above it. And one day him and I, we  
11 climbed that mountain, and the other side is steep like  
12 this [indicating]. And the valley, it was five miles of  
13 valley behind there with a creek. And when we got behind  
14 it, all the valley opened up. And I tell you the truth,  
15 the farthest we could see, it's covered with caribou  
16 moving, moving like this. I remember that.

17 And my grandfather would sit on a big rock, big  
18 boulder, you know, and look. And my grandfather, he's a  
19 really spiritual man. And he would sing, you know. We  
20 saw the -- we played the drums a while ago, and that was  
21 part of it. I remember over and over I hear when he sing  
22 it. And when he look for animals he sing it, you know.

23 I say that because we are real people. These people  
24 that are the little ones, they come forward and say what's  
25 important to them. It's true. I don't want to take that

1 much time, but I -- but I -- I want to tell you again that  
2 the geese and waterfowl and ducks, they have a resting  
3 place on the Yukon. And people that lives on the Yukon  
4 River, they know -- they know where the resting place are  
5 for the ducks. They all go up that coastal plain. They  
6 all go up there to nest, to nest.

7 And I was talking to one of my friends last night,  
8 [indiscernible] and Jerry that testified earlier. I asked  
9 them, I said, how long does it -- when they come through,  
10 the ducks come through, how long does it last? He said  
11 sometimes it lasts a whole week. Lasts a whole week.  
12 Several thousand a day. And you can imagine how many --  
13 how many ducks in this little area down there, but cover  
14 the whole Yukon River. It's -- it's -- it's really  
15 massive, geese that go to the north.

16 And fish do the same thing. And fish, they come up  
17 the river. They come up the river from the -- where the  
18 mouth of the Yukon is. And they spawn in the clean water,  
19 clean -- clean -- clean water they spawn. And they do  
20 that year after year. They do that year after year. We  
21 all know that. The people that lives on the Yukon, they  
22 share fish. They share fish that comes up to the clean  
23 water to spawn. So like when spawning happens this year,  
24 it will come back in four to five years from now.

25 Same thing happens with the caribou when they -- when

1 they travel, they use only one route. And any caribou  
2 don't lead. There is a leader in that herd. There is a  
3 leader in the herd that does it. They call that the  
4 (Alaskan Native word.) That means leader. They lead the  
5 herd. And you can tell by the calluses on their arm right  
6 here. Yeah, thick calluses. Those are the leader.

7 And I was talking about the fish. Not only king  
8 salmon or chum salmon does that. Whitefish does that,  
9 too. They winter in the lakes and then they come out in  
10 the springtime and then they spawn. They spawn. They  
11 spawn during the summer. And then in July the little fish  
12 like this come up the creek, bunch of them. And we all  
13 know there is millions of creeks in Alaska. It happens  
14 the same way.

15 So I'm talking about our way of life. It's really a  
16 way of life. We are guarding the fish, the animals that  
17 use the area up there. I don't know how much time I got,  
18 but I have -- give me about another five minutes? No?

19 One of the things that I wanted to tell you is that  
20 on your schedule, you said alternative -- you said  
21 alternative development. There is -- in your -- in your  
22 plan, there is no alternative development. These things  
23 have already been decided by executive order. There is no  
24 alternative system that we would go to. And I know that  
25 because I read -- a bunch of executive orders address

1 that. So if you want any more information, come to me and  
2 ask me.

3 One of the things I really wanted to say is that I  
4 see the ANILCA -- okay. ANILCA is -- is a law that  
5 Senator Stevens addressed because there was a lack of  
6 subsistence protection in the land claims bill. And he  
7 wants to try to correct it. So he put it in the  
8 national -- what's that called, national interest land.  
9 And national interest land is where our -- national  
10 interest land is across the street -- across the river.  
11 But a lot of coastal village, they don't have -- they  
12 don't have natural interest land. That's where the  
13 problem is. The problem is there. So ANILCA is  
14 unconstitutional. So putting stuff like ANILCA in your  
15 schedule, I think there is a big question about it.

16 Okay. I don't have no more five minutes, so I guess  
17 I'll quit.

18 MS. RAEANN GARNETT: I'll tell you my name  
19 in a minute. I'm not speaking to my -- I'm not speaking  
20 to my people. I'm -- I want to stand up here and speak  
21 for my people but I'm speaking to all of you. Welcome.  
22 (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.) My name is RayAnn  
23 Garnett. My parents are Mike and Michelle Garnett. My  
24 grandparents are Lillian and Jerry Garnett and Andy and  
25 Caroline Haley. I am from Arctic Village and Venetie,



1 Alaska. I'm Neets'aii Gwich'in Dene Navajo.

2 Our people have lived on these lands along with the  
3 caribou for thousands of years. Our way of life is at  
4 stake. The caribou is at stake. Our land, our culture,  
5 our language, our animals are very important to every one  
6 of us. I've always been taught the important of our land,  
7 animals and culture. I ask that you advocate for us to  
8 help protect our way of life. Don't drill in the birthing  
9 grounds of our caribou.

10 Mahsi'.

11 MS. MARY ROSE GAMBOA: (Speaking in  
12 Gwich'in.) My name is Mary Rose Gamboa. I'm a Neets'aii  
13 Gwich'in from Arctic Village, and I live in Venetie. And  
14 I'm here today to speak for the vadzaih. Vadzaih is our  
15 main food. I grew up with vadzaih. I eat vadzaih all my  
16 life and still today I still eat vadzaih. I don't like  
17 beef.

18 So vadzaih is for dinner every night in my house.  
19 Vadzaih has done a lot of good in our lives. Keep us  
20 healthy. Help us grow strong. Vadzaih is very important  
21 to us. I don't know how my grandkids and their grandkids  
22 are going to do without vadzaih.

23 Right now everything I say is for the future of my  
24 grandkids and their kids, that they matter more in the  
25 future of their life.

1           And vadzaih is only way they will survive by feeding  
2 on it. I strongly say I stand against drilling where the  
3 life begins. What's going to happen if they drill?  
4 What's going to happen to those calves? I know for sure  
5 that they will not survive. And if they don't survive,  
6 then how are my grandkids and their kids going to survive  
7 without that?

8           Thank you very much for coming and listening to us.  
9 I appreciate that. But the time to speak is not enough.  
10 Got a lot more to say, a lot more to pray for.

11           Mahsi' Choo.

12                           MS. FAITH GEMMILL: Good afternoon. My  
13 name is Faith Gemmill. Neets'aii Gwich'in, Pit River,  
14 Wintu. I'm from Vashraii K'oo, Arctic Village. I spoke  
15 before before the panel, and I'm registering those  
16 comments. So since we only have three minutes, I'm going  
17 to switch it up and talk about what we learned in our  
18 government-to-government meeting yesterday where we were  
19 told that all our -- pretty much all our requests were  
20 denied. And that, to me, shows that this is already a  
21 flawed process.

22           Even today we are rushed. We have to put 25,000  
23 years of our life to three minutes to tell our story. And  
24 that's not right. But our chiefs are even being limited.  
25 Elders are being limited as they come up here to speak for

1 our people. I just wanted to say that it's not right.

2 I was just reading a document that was published in  
3 one of the papers about the Trump Administration,  
4 promotion of -- what the Trump Administration is doing is  
5 deregulating policies and process just to further energy  
6 development within our territories and indigenous  
7 territories all over the U.S. right now.

8 The interest -- or his interest is deemphasizing  
9 climate change and conservation and reducing regulatory  
10 burdens of energy development just to fast-track harmful  
11 and devastating energy policies that are being imposed on  
12 our people.

13 The problem with that -- and it's not just in Indian  
14 Country and within our traditional territories, all over  
15 the United States, here in Alaska, but it's on federal  
16 lands everywhere, places that people have stood and fought  
17 to protect for years, just like the Arctic Refuge. 40  
18 years we have held off the oil companies.

19 The problem with this is that common sense dictates  
20 that if they rush the process as these development  
21 projects are moving forward, it opens the door and will  
22 lead to mistakes in the process. And once these mistakes  
23 happen, there will be irreversible harm and destruction of  
24 the areas that -- where these projects are.

25 That's why this process has to be slowed down.

1 Places that have stood for 40 years and been debated for  
2 40 years should not be opened within a year. It doesn't  
3 make sense, especially now when we are in climate crisis.  
4 That's a fact. It doesn't make sense to open up places  
5 for fossil fuel development while the world is debating  
6 the current climate crisis that we are all in.

7 I just hope and pray that in this process, tribes in  
8 Alaska and Natives across the nation would once again  
9 unite our voices and start pushing back because we need  
10 to. Our whole livelihood, everything we are as human  
11 beings is on the line. It's not just us. It's Native  
12 people everywhere this is happening to.

13 I was down in Standing Rock when the -- when Trump  
14 was elected. When we got up that morning after election,  
15 all the team that were camped there -- there was 10,000  
16 people there standing with the Dakota people against the  
17 Dakota access pipeline for water because it's going to  
18 pollute the Missouri River and impact all the tribes  
19 downstream. And when we got up that morning, you could  
20 feel the sadness in the camps. People were crying all  
21 around the camp. We had a ceremony. We had a delegation  
22 of women from Alaska. We all, our hearts were down. So  
23 we wanted to do a ceremony. We went to the river to do a  
24 ceremony.

25 And we -- in that ceremony I could see all this, and

1 we were crying. The land was crying. We could feel it as  
2 women. And now it's becoming reality. But there is  
3 something else. That Dakota access pipeline, they did  
4 that based on a spiritual foundation, just like Gwich'in  
5 when we stood to protect the calving grounds. It was a  
6 spiritual foundation. And that's more powerful than the  
7 powers that be in Washington, D.C. And that Dakota access  
8 pipeline, that was a wake-up call in a spiritual way. It  
9 was an awakening. And people are still waking up.

10 And I think and I believe all those prayers of our  
11 elders that were put down for us, it will [indiscernible].  
12 We have to do our part. But you, too, you have to do your  
13 part. This issue is about your children, too, your  
14 grandchildren. What are they going to have?

15 That place, we have a prophecy about it. It's called  
16 the voice from the north. Our prophecy says that the  
17 great war is going to be fought in the north. And when  
18 this great war is fought, it's going to be a wake-up, an  
19 alarm for the rest of humanity. This war is going to be a  
20 war of words and paper, not weapons. And when this  
21 happens, people are going to wake up. And our prophecy  
22 has said that the north is going to win. I believe we are  
23 going to win one way or another. And I stand on that  
24 today. But we have to do our part.

25 This prophecy is similar to all the other Native

1 prophecies all across the world. We have prophecies of  
2 this time and the earth right now and humanity. Just like  
3 our prophecy, there is two paths. One is a path of  
4 destruction. One is a path of life. And humanity is  
5 right there making that choice. So this issue is part of  
6 that. And which way we go determines what happens,  
7 whether we choose life or destruction for our children,  
8 all of our children and grandchildren.

9 And I just want you to think about that. Where do  
10 you go? I hope you guys fly over Prudhoe Bay and see that  
11 destruction. 30 years of destruction. It will never be  
12 repaired. They can never put that land back the way it  
13 was. And that's what my people are talking about. The  
14 calving grounds, once there is destruction there, you  
15 cannot fix it.

16 Once our food security is gone, it's gone forever.  
17 And our people depend on the caribou for our physical  
18 nourishment, our cultural needs, our social structure, our  
19 spirituality and our economic needs. We are talking about  
20 everything in our life. That's what this issue is about.

21 And I said it in Arctic Village, and I'll say it  
22 again. The U.S. has a chance to do it right this time,  
23 not repeat mistakes of the past with unjust policies like  
24 what happened with the buffalo and the plains tribes. We  
25 don't have to do that again. There is only six months

1 worth of oil there at the U.S. -- the current U.S.  
2 consumption rate.

3 And Jonathan Solomon, he's one of the elders from  
4 Fort Yukon that fought for our people all these years. He  
5 said why the Gwich'in people should not have to sacrifice  
6 our way of life for six months' worth of oil. And that's  
7 what this issue is about. We are being asked to sacrifice  
8 everything for six months' worth of oil. And that's not  
9 right.

10 So I just want to register again that I am opposed to  
11 any oil and gas development in the Arctic National  
12 Wildlife Refuge. And I would hope that a new alternative  
13 is put on the table, a no-action alternative. That would  
14 be most appropriate. This issue merits it. This is one  
15 of the most contentious issues in Congress, and it merits  
16 that.

17 Mahsi'.

18 MS. MILDRED TRITT HANSON KILBEAR: Thank  
19 you. My name is Mildred Tritt Hanson Kilbear. And my mom  
20 and dad is Christian Tritt, Sr. and Lily Tritt. And my  
21 mom Lily has had 14 children. Four pass away. And there  
22 is six girls, and one of my brothers is here, Bobby.  
23 That's my youngest brother.

24 And she raised a lot of children, but praise the  
25 Lord, you know, vadzaih (Gwichi'in word). I'm very happy.

1 We talk about caribou. That's the one we raise up in  
2 Arctic Village. I was raised in Arctic Village. And I  
3 remember my dad and all the elders, they all pass away.  
4 They all used to hunt vadzaih. (Gwich'in word),  
5 whitefish. (Gwich'in word), muskrats. That's all our  
6 delicacy. And I raise up with no lights, no TV, no -- no  
7 telephone. Praise the Lord. You know today we have  
8 phone. We have lights. We have -- they hired me as a  
9 cook, so I'm a cook, too, me and Jamie. Jamie Frank.  
10 She's one good cook. She knows how to cook and bake and  
11 fry. She makes good cake. Praise the Lord. Thank you,  
12 Jesus.

13 I'm so happy for this opportunity. Our Natives could  
14 speak and talk, you know, from their heart. That's good.  
15 My dad Christian Tritt, Sr., used to speak in a meeting,  
16 and I used to listen to him and I thank God that I gather  
17 wisdom and knowledge from all that growing, all that  
18 hunting. I went through a lot of hunting. He taught me  
19 how to do all that.

20 So you know, God give you guys strength to go on, the  
21 Native people. (Speaking in Gwich'in.) We need this  
22 opportunity to go forward for our children. You know, I  
23 have one great granddaughter, blue eyes, blonde hair, but  
24 she's a Gwich'in. Praise the Lord. And I thank God that  
25 she understand Gwich'in language. Even my children, they



1 understand Gwich'in because we speak to them when they are  
2 small. (Speaking in Gwich'in.)

3 So keep the good work up, and enjoy the food. Thank  
4 you. Thank you for coming to Venetie.

5 MR. ERNEST D. ERICK: Thank you, Mildred.  
6 That was a wonderful meal. The chief of Venetie and also  
7 the government body and Arctic Village, I'm honored to be  
8 here. My name is Ernest D. Erick. I'm with the Native  
9 Village of Venetie Tribal Government over the last 62  
10 years, but I was in the leadership for the last 40 years.  
11 And I'm (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.)

12 1988 I was a former chief with the Native Village of  
13 Venetie Tribal Government, and we done a lot of scope of  
14 process and everything all these years, you know, but they  
15 left that behind and they came back again. And this time  
16 here, it's just a short testimony on the behalf of our  
17 people and the land that we belong to. It's very  
18 important to have knowledge like each one of us has.

19 And I believe my grandmother never went to school,  
20 but she raised up -- she delivered 77 children. And one  
21 of them is about 80 years old now. I raised up by Myra  
22 Roberts and James Roberts, the founder of reservation.  
23 They walked the land. They put it on black and white.  
24 They speak their tongue. They learn about their culture.  
25 They learn and they taught their culture to their

1 grandchildren.

2           And it's very important for us that we have that  
3 knowledge today to continue what these people from  
4 government and also the State of Alaska are approaching  
5 the Native tribe in the short-term, and that's not  
6 allowed. We've done it for the last 10,000 years. The  
7 data is sitting in our office, all those important paper,  
8 what these people up here has wrote in the Gwich'in way  
9 for the Native people within the state. There were a  
10 tribe that lead their country where other tribe will  
11 understand them, that it's very important for the sacred  
12 grounds and this refuge and all the BLM land. Those land  
13 each one of us was decided to protect inside of that  
14 environment, that we have to protect those values that  
15 Gwich'in and Athabascan had for a number of years. So we  
16 fought, we walked, we talked. We praised the land, we  
17 pray for the land. It was important for our grandchildren  
18 into the future.

19           So those are the things that we scoped out for a  
20 number of years. We have organization. Name it. We have  
21 it out there in the western culture to protect people  
22 that's indigenous for all their life, living the way that  
23 they used to live and continue living that way of life.

24           Yes, the calving ground is important. Yes, the  
25 migration of the land is important. The people inside

1 Alaska, nine different dialects. Nine different language.  
2 Athabascan, Yup'ik, the Eskimo people are the same. They  
3 have a lot of different language, and their way have been  
4 taught. It's not one voice. It's a lot of voice that we  
5 have for the Native people.

6 We all speak from our heart. We all speak from a  
7 good, clearly experienced professional people here today.  
8 But we need friends today. We need to continue, make it  
9 longer for this process that we are facing today. I hope  
10 the government listen to us.

11 North Korea is being listened to now today. So the  
12 Gwich'in should be listened to themselves. We are not  
13 dictators, but we are the people from the land, the voice  
14 of the land, the children of the land. We are going to  
15 continue doing what is the best interests for our people,  
16 no matter what kind of Native people we are. We are going  
17 to carry that voice into the world again.

18 This process is a BS deal for me because it's just a  
19 small term that Joe is coming here and also the State of  
20 Alaska. The State of Alaska, the federal government, they  
21 left a scar on Alaska just because of oil. A lot of spill  
22 happened in the Gulf. A lot of spill happened in Prince  
23 William Sound. A bullet went through that pipeline. A  
24 lot of animal was being destroyed, and we don't even know  
25 it because Alaska doesn't want to communicate with the

1 tribe in this country.

2 Today is the day. You guys, you guys need to listen  
3 to people up in this country more than North Korea because  
4 we are the government of the body here. We are going to  
5 live and live and live and live. The history of that is  
6 here with us today. Today my elder talked about  
7 technology. We have that technology in place here today.

8 But you cannot come here and make one-day decision  
9 because it ain't going to work for my grandchildren. I  
10 was married for 35 years, and I'm still on my land. I  
11 have Gwich'in kids. I have Koyukon children. I have to  
12 speak on tribe within the state of Alaska, what's the best  
13 interest for us to protect, protect the environment,  
14 protect the water, the living thing on the land.

15 You guys are in the wrong territory. Those lease,  
16 that's [indiscernible] as in one, the lease. We need to  
17 utilize that, not the sacred grounds. We released those  
18 leased land to the oil company before. You guys need to  
19 work on those. Don't bother that land up there, the  
20 sacred land. We cannot fight any more. We fought for the  
21 last 30 years when you brought up.

22 We were not part of the process that Murkowski or  
23 Sullivan made. We were not part of that. The tax bill  
24 was not -- we were not even part of it. I'm ashamed from  
25 you people out there from the government and the State of

1 Alaska. Dealing with tribal values isn't going to hurt  
2 us. It's going to hurt yourself.

3 But from my heart and your heart, there is a gift  
4 there that all of us, the Creator gave us to speak from,  
5 to listen to one another. If I explain this to you in  
6 Indian way, it's going to go time, time, time. You will  
7 never get it done.

8 But let's make it short. I forgive you. You forgive  
9 me. You don't bother the land that belongs to anybody.  
10 Those are the protection, just like that 300,000 acres  
11 down in Lower 48. How much dollar you spend on it for  
12 protection.

13 This is a sacred land. I love my land from the  
14 bottom of my heart, just like my grandmother Myra Roberts  
15 and Jimmy Roberts. I have 15 grandchildren, me and my  
16 wife. I have 11 brothers, four sisters. We all live this  
17 land. Each one of you are my blood, and the blood goes  
18 down to California, Washington, D.C. We have people in  
19 college today that's exercising their way of life as being  
20 determined so we don't want that to happen today.

21 So wake up, government. Don't deal with people  
22 because when you deal with the wrong kind of people up in  
23 this country, because (speaking in Alaskan Native  
24 language). Very important. Each one of you have  
25 education inside of your system that you already took

1 those values inside. Each one of you got that here. It's  
2 not the money-making business. It's the things we done on  
3 the land already that's hurting the Mother Earth.

4 So let's continue protecting. This is the Gwich'in  
5 Nation up here. It's not belong to the western world.  
6 There is a divide between us, but we still accept the  
7 Canadian people as one tribe; even the Eskimos, one tribe.

8 Thank you. Mahsi' Choo.

9 Remember in your heart -- remember in your heart. We  
10 don't want to get mad up here because it's no good for us.  
11 We are too thankful. Mahsi' Choo. Think about it, Joe.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. KATHY TRITT: Hello. My name is Kathy  
14 Tritt. And my mom is Elizabeth Cadzow, and my dad is Noah  
15 Peter. And I'm going to talk in my language. And I'll  
16 use a little bit of English because I can't say the  
17 Gwich'in coastal plain or term, stuff like that, so I'll  
18 use that in English. (Speaking in Gwich'in.)

19 That's what I'm asking. You know, you guys already  
20 authorized all this, everything. So what are we doing  
21 here? (Speaking in Gwich'in.) I hope there is something  
22 that you guys put down for us in there.

23 Now, this caribou it's really important to us. See  
24 how important this is? We are not playing jokes or  
25 playing games here. We are talking about our future, our

1 grandkids, our little ones that's out there. I am ashamed  
2 of you guys, too, the United States. We are the citizens.  
3 We are not some group of stupid little Natives that you  
4 could put somewhere. You know, we are the people of this  
5 land. And what we eat is -- this is our food. See how  
6 good the food smells?

7       Wake up a little bit. Let's wake up. Even our  
8 president, you know, all of you guys. Secretary of  
9 Interior, BLM, all I see is gas and oil. Paragraph, this  
10 and that. Clause. Yeah, the clause is to stop. A paper.  
11 You know, like something that is provided for the future.  
12 That's what the clause is. I looked at all this with a  
13 dictionary.

14       I was fairly unimaginative this morning. I could not  
15 even sleep last night. There is a -- I don't know. We  
16 have to do something. But thank God we have got a very  
17 strong God. God, you need to listen to us, us people  
18 here. We got a strong people. We are strong people. We  
19 got families. We are in reservations.

20       Thank you for listening to us. Thank you that you  
21 came here to listen to our concerns. I hope there is  
22 something you put there because at the end of all this,  
23 all I see is terrible just always big trucks moving back  
24 and forth, no caribou. You see that? It's horrible.  
25 That's what I see. And I smell it, too, the oil, the

1 crude oil. I heard that it's really bad smell. That's  
2 what we are going to smell up there.

3 And on top of that, they won't even let us go there.  
4 They will tell us go back. Go back, before you get hurt.  
5 Because you all ruined everything up there, and it's going  
6 to be ruined. All this is even authorized [sic]. So  
7 right now we are just rushing, rushing, so they could  
8 leave.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. MARGO SIMPLE: Hello. My name is  
11 Margo Simple. (Speaking in Alaskan Native language.) I'm  
12 really thankful to be here today. And I want to tell you  
13 something. Our kids grew up on caribou. Our son Gabriel  
14 traveled with a school trip up to Arctic Village old way  
15 wintertime, springtime when the snow was still there,  
16 coming back with people from our school, Gwich'in people  
17 from our school. And coming back, the caribou all around  
18 them, thousands of caribou all around them. The very  
19 same -- very same herd that our grandma -- we work with my  
20 grandma, my husband's grandma. We can sit with our  
21 grandma. We learn and watch her so we could learn and do  
22 it with our children. We learn from Grandma Maggie  
23 Roberts more. We are not just going to forget about doing  
24 those things. We want to get good at it, just like  
25 Grandma Alice Peter. She have big pile of caribou skin in



1 spring, but then pretty soon it's all hanging on the  
2 clothes line, all hanging and wonderful my husband tell  
3 me. And you know.

4 I'd like to say one thing. I went into the hospital,  
5 Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, and I went upstairs. I went  
6 by where the babies are. There was a soldier or a guard  
7 there with a gun. That's how seriously FMH thinks about  
8 where the babies are and how carefully they want to watch  
9 over them so they are going to be safe and they are going  
10 to go home with their own mom and dad. Nothing else is  
11 going to happen.

12 We really care about these caribou. We -- so many  
13 people said so much real, true, good things about why they  
14 know where they are going to calve. That's the place.  
15 There is the place where life begins. That's the place  
16 that they need. And we are caring about them just like  
17 those guards. They need that land, that good land that  
18 they have been using for thousands of years to have their  
19 young. That's a good place. It's a really good place.  
20 Are they going to find another good place? That's their  
21 place. That's a place that God gave them. And I just  
22 want to.

23 Thanks for listening. Mahsi' Choo.

24 MS. TONYA GARNETT: Hello. (Speaking in  
25 Gwich'in.) My name is Tonya Garnett. I'm from Arctic

1 Village. I'm the Executive Director of the Native Village  
2 of Venetie Tribal Government. So this concludes the two  
3 scoping hearings in the Gwich'in villages. But we left  
4 out many, many other Gwich'in villages, thousands of other  
5 Gwich'in people who did not get to have a say in this  
6 process. I'm not sure if you feel like you have heard  
7 enough, but we -- it's definitely an injustice leaving out  
8 a lot of the other villages and our Canadian brothers and  
9 sisters on the Canadian side. And I can guarantee you  
10 that this is not the last you will hear from us.

11 The United States government has a long history and  
12 it's a known fact of genocide and assimilation on Native  
13 people, and this is just another bill that's trying to --  
14 an attempt of genocide on the whole Native culture, our  
15 people, our tribe. And these are real people sitting out  
16 here. Every time we meet I tell you that. I remind you  
17 that. These are our hunters, our leaders, our mothers,  
18 our grandmas, our grandpas, our kids.

19 We are here. We are taking time away from our lives.  
20 Each time I'm with you, I'm away from my kid. I have  
21 elderly parents. My parents are in their -- my dad is 82.  
22 My mom is 77 -- 76. And I help -- I'm a caretaker for  
23 them. And I have a nine-year-old son. I take time away  
24 because this is important. The hunters here, they take  
25 time away from hunting. And all the mothers here, they

1 take time away from their kids because this is important  
2 to us. It's our way of life that's on the line. And it's  
3 another form of genocide being pushed on Native people.

4 And I want you to think about it. What side of  
5 history do you guys want to be on? What is the legacy  
6 that you want to leave behind? Look at the economic  
7 impacts that's it's going to have on our people. Is it  
8 right to take away from our people to give to just a small  
9 one percent, to benefit a small one percent of the people?  
10 Take a whole life from us, a culture that's thousands and  
11 thousands of years old? Like Sam said, we have proven  
12 data because we are still here. We are still living our  
13 culture. The things that we do today our great, great,  
14 great, great, great-grandparents did thousands and  
15 thousands of years ago. Is it right to take that away  
16 just to benefit a small percent of the population?

17 And why is there such a rush? The bill mandates a  
18 lease to be done in four years. Why -- why was all of our  
19 requests denied? Why is there a rush when we have four  
20 years for that first lease? There should -- this needs to  
21 be a thorough study. The impacts of our -- the economics  
22 of our communities need to be studied.

23 And like Will said, there needs to be a study on the  
24 caribou that's going to be impacted, the birthing grounds.  
25 This is a different case than all the other ones, all the

1 other -- the Arctic Central herd and whatnot, the other  
2 caribou herds.

3 This process is an injustice. It's being pushed fast  
4 and hard on our people. Our people are having to learn a  
5 foreign process to them, and we are having to move fast  
6 and hard. And why -- and we are being rushed at it,  
7 everything. Even this meeting right now we are being  
8 rushed. Couldn't have Kaktovik's meeting been scheduled  
9 for tomorrow?

10 Like I said before, our people are a simple, humble,  
11 but a happy people. Our way of life is at stake. Our  
12 livelihood is at stake. We speak for those that came  
13 before us, and we speak for those that will come after.  
14 Our culture is alive and strong. The Porcupine caribou  
15 herd and the Gwich'in people have lived together since  
16 time immemorial. It's our whole identity at stake, our  
17 traditions, our culture. It gets us through an  
18 everchanging world. Is it right to take away from us just  
19 to benefit a small one percent? Is it right -- is it  
20 right to take away a whole culture just to benefit a one  
21 percent?

22 Again, I want to remind you, what side of history do  
23 you want to stand on? What legacy do you want to leave  
24 behind?

25 Mahsi'.

1                   MR. JERRALD JOHN: I'm Jerrald, and I'm  
2 from Arctic, and I'm on the Arctic Village Council. And I  
3 want to say that I hear a lot of good, true stories from  
4 everyone here. And I want to say thank you to the people  
5 of Venetie for your hospitality. And I had a very great  
6 time sharing stories. And when we first got here, we  
7 handed out a lot of fish, and I hope you guys enjoyed  
8 that.

9                   And I'm going to be heading down to D.C. with friends  
10 and family this afternoon. We will be taking the fight to  
11 Joe Balash's front door this time. I'm staying with my  
12 Uncle Bobby. And we were looking over documents and --  
13 documents on caribou herd. And we go back ten years back  
14 to 2008. The Porcupine caribou herd was estimated 100  
15 and, I think, 57,000. And you fast forward it now to  
16 2018, the population is at least over 217,000. That's a  
17 roughly increase of 70,000 caribou in ten years. So that  
18 means all of us here are doing our job by protecting them.  
19 They are thriving.

20                   And what's going to happen when the oil companies go  
21 there? We are definitely going to see a decline. You  
22 know, like they said, think of the toxic air. They never  
23 smelt that before. So it's under threat, you know. Just  
24 for instance, me, David, Jr., my uncle Jimmy, we put out  
25 fish net and we are harvesting fish. I told you guys the

1 last time we were waiting for waterfowl, and that's gone.  
2 We already did that. Now we are moving on to fish. And  
3 right after fish where you guys are talking about your  
4 next meeting, that's when we are going to be moose hunting  
5 and caribou hunting. And like I said, we are taking --  
6 right now I'm supposed to be working on fish. I took time  
7 out of my life, my way of life to come here to speak to  
8 you guys.

9 And yeah, I just wanted to say that. And yeah, I  
10 hope you guys make the right decision. My life -- you  
11 know, I got no kids, but this guy here, he's been hanging  
12 out with me for the last past since I got here, five days.  
13 And yeah, I'm fighting for him. So all of us here, we are  
14 all doing a good job, and hopefully these people make the  
15 right choices for us.

16 And when I say we are Native American, the Native  
17 come first, then American. All of us here, we feel kind  
18 of mad, angry. When we see shootings going on in schools  
19 down states, you know, we feel mad, frustrated. We feel  
20 sorry for them. And we are really religious. We pray for  
21 people. We never even met that family. We pray for them.  
22 We may never meet them, but we still pray. So yeah, I  
23 pray you guys that all you here make the right decision on  
24 behalf of not us, but all Americans so they could go up  
25 there, enjoy walking on the land and not seeing a bunch of

1 oil rigs, you know.

2 That's all I have to say.

3 MR. JOE BALASH: I would just like to  
4 close by saying thank you again. This is not the only  
5 part of this conversation. It's one that will continue  
6 not just in Washington, D.C., but back here in Venetie and  
7 Arctic Village again. So I look forward to continuing to  
8 talk about the ways in which this program can progress and  
9 the ways in which we can shape the program, put conditions  
10 on leases and do everything we can to minimize any impact  
11 on caribou, on waterfowl, on fish. Those are all of the  
12 things that we are going to be working very hard to  
13 achieve in this process.

14 And words that you speak, the stories that you tell  
15 us all help and help us make the best decisions possible.  
16 And I look forward to returning before there is snow on  
17 the ground.

18 So thank you.

19 (Proceedings adjourned at 1:33 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