



Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

Allakaket Public Scoping Meeting

MEETING NOTES

November 13, 2017
Allakaket Community Hall

Project Team Participants

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Laurie Thorpe
HDR: John McPherson, Katherine Wood
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Audra Brase
National Park Service (NPS): Linda Hasselbach

Public Participants

Approximately 31 people attended the meeting.

Meeting Purpose

To share information about the BLM's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, and to gather input from the public.

Meeting Topics

1. Welcome by Gordon Bergman and Introductions

Gordon Bergman introduces presenters.

2. Presentation by Laurie Thorpe (BLM)

Tim La Marr unable to attend today, but wanted to know if Allakaket received the April 20, 2017, letter inviting them to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the process. Allakaket can contact BLM if they are interested in becoming a Cooperating Agency. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) representative also intended to attend today but was injured, and is unable to be here. Noah Naylor with Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB) was also unable to attend today. The purpose of today's meeting is to share information about the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and to get input from the local communities. Without that input, the EIS process will not be effective. Public input about issues and concerns is very important.

Project Background

In the 1950s, mineral exploration efforts discovered significant mineral resources on the south side of the Brooks Range. In the 1980s, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was established. Congress passed that law recognizing the mineral potential in the Ambler Mining District and the need for transportation access. Section 201(4)(b) provides for surface transportation access through Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, but did not address access across BLM lands. That's why we are here today to address it with you as we respond to the application for the right-of-way (ROW). In 2009-2010 the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) began evaluating multiple road and rail routes that could provide access to the Ambler Mining District. Some of you were probably involved in those meetings, and participated in scouting out some of those routes. In 2013, project ownership was transferred from DOT&PF to Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). In 2015, AIDEA submitted an SF-299 application requesting ROW for the road. In 2016 AIDEA spent the first half of the year responding to requests for additional information from the application recipients, which include the BLM, National Park Service (NPS), United States Coast Guard (USCG), and USACE. The application was complete by June 30, 2016, which triggered a timeline for BLM action on the application. BLM filed a Notice of Intent on February 28, 2017, to prepare an EIS, initiating a 90-day public scoping period. We knew that would not allow enough time for public scoping with all the affected communities. BLM did not want to impact your subsistence activities during the summer months so extended the public scoping period through January 31, 2018. In 2017, NPS began a separate but parallel Environmental and Economic Impact Analysis (EEA) for the portion of the road on NPS land, as directed by ANILCA. That road must connect to other lands managed by BLM, the State, and other Native corporations to reach the Ambler Mining District.

Proposed Project

The ROW application from AIDEA proposes a road across public and private land to the Ambler Mining District to increase job opportunities and otherwise encourage the economic growth of the state, including the development of its natural resources.

According to AIDEA, without that access, the mineral assets associated with the Ambler Mining District would remain unused, and AIDEA would not be able to support economic development and increase job opportunities within a region known for high unemployment rates.

Road Elements

Maps are available to see the route. We encourage your participation by marking on the maps. We will also leave a set of maps here for your use.

AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway Milepost 161, and extends westward along the south side of the Brooks Range to the south bank of the Ambler River.

The type of land crossed by the road includes State lands (61 percent), Federal land managed by BLM and NPS (24 percent), and lands associated with two Alaska Native Corporations (15 percent).

The road would be 211 miles long, all-season, gravel two-lane road with industrial access only. It would not be open to the public. It includes bridges, material sites, maintenance stations, airstrips, and related infrastructure and utilities.

Vehicles using the road would include trucks hauling mineral exploration and development equipment, supplies, fuel, and ore concentrate. The road would be designed to accommodate large semi-trailer trucks.

Proposed Project Area

The project begins at Milepost 161 of the Dalton Highway. It is 211 miles long, and ends at the Ambler mineral belt area as shown on the Proposed Project Area Map provided at the meeting. The proposed alternative is shown in red, with an alternate route in green that reduces the number of miles that must cross the Gates of the Arctic National Park land. The two routes shown are proposed by AIDEA and the routes through the national park land will be analyzed by the NPS EEA. The BLM must look at other possible routes including the no-action alternative. Additional maps were presented that showed a close-up of each section of the route. According to the map of the Alatna/Allakaket Area, the closest point of the road would be about 40 miles away.

Agency Roles

BLM is the lead federal agency for preparing the EIS. BLM is coordinating with all the other agencies. BLM has authority to grant ROW across BLM-managed lands. BLM must also comply with ANILCA Section 810 and the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106. This is a good time to submit comments about issues relating to subsistence and cultural resources.

USACE is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for the wetlands permits that would be required. The USACE would evaluate the project application under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and use the EIS as the basis for its permit decisions.

NAB is a Cooperating Agency. NAB will provide traditional knowledge and input on subsistence, cultural resources, and coordination with Tribal members and affected communities. The NAB would also enforce local permitting requirements and advise the BLM on NAB's responsibilities under State law and NAB regulations.

USCG is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for bridge permits over navigable waters, and would also use the EIS as a basis for its decisions.

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for state permits. DNR would make land management decisions for ROW access across state-managed lands.

NPS, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all Participating Agencies.

What is an EIS?

This EIS is a site-specific EIS for the proposed Ambler Road. An EIS is a document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental consequences of their decisions. An EIS is required for actions by federal agencies that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Without your input, we cannot do a good EIS. An EIS includes the following:

- Project Purpose and Need.
- Issues raised during scoping (internal/external).
- Project alternatives.
- Description of potentially affected environment – Resources like wildlife, vegetation, hydrology, fisheries, cultural resources, and the human environment. We determine what we know about those resources now, and look at how they would be impacted by this project.
- Environmental consequences of all the alternatives.
- Proposed mitigation which can involve the design of the route, or best management practices that may be applied to minimize impacts.

So where are we now?

We published the Notice of Intent to produce an EIS in February 2017, and are now in the scoping process requesting public participation. The scoping period ends January 31, 2018. Should the project get funded further, then a draft EIS will be developed with draft alternatives by March 2019, depending on funding. Public review would be held on that draft EIS. Based on that feedback we would revise and issue a final EIS. After that the BLM would issue a Record of Decision. At this point we do not know what that decision will be. It could be one of the proposed routes, or it could be the no-action alternative. There are public involvement opportunities throughout the entire process. The target completion date for the final EIS would be end of December 2019. At least 30 days after the completion of the final EIS, the BLM would issue their final Record of Decision.

Draft Purpose and Need

Project need is based on the requirement for the BLM to respond to a ROW application from AIDEA for surface transportation access to currently inaccessible, economically valuable mineral deposits in the Ambler Mining District.

Project purpose of the BLM action is to provide AIDEA with: (1) technically and economically practical and feasible surface transportation access across BLM-managed lands for mining exploration and development in the Ambler Mining District, and (2) authorization to construct, operate, and maintain associated facilities for that access.

BLM Decisions to be made

The BLM must decide whether ROW shall be granted, and if so, the terms and conditions that will be included in the ROW. We are not required to grant ROW. We can issue a Record of Decision for a no-action alternative.

What is Scoping?

Scoping is the process used to get input on the issues, impacts, and potential alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS. The intent of scoping is to:

- Inform agencies and public about AIDEA's application and the proposed project.
- Identify resources, impacts, and issues of concern to be addressed in the EIS.
- Obtain input to help refine the purpose and need and the alternatives to study.
- Identify potential mitigation measures that may be needed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for project impacts.
- Obtain information to help evaluate the project with applicable laws.

The EIS document will cover these kinds of issues:

- Air Quality
- Special status species
- Subsistence use and access
- Climate change effects
- Fish and aquatic species
- Critical minerals
- Invasive Species
- Water
- Travel management
- Mining
- Wetlands and riparian
- Demand for gravel resources
- Recreational activities
- Wilderness characteristics
- Public access
- Social and economic impacts
- Cultural resources
- Wildlife and biological resources
- Impacts to rural and traditional lifestyles
- Geology and soils
- Reasonably foreseeable future activities

ANILCA Section 810

Under Section 810 of ANILCA, the BLM must determine whether the project “may significantly restrict subsistence uses.” This analysis will be included in the EIS.

If alternatives may significantly restrict subsistence uses (either abundance, access, or availability), then this will be identified in the analysis, and ANILCA Section 810 hearings will be held at the same time as public meetings upon release of the Draft EIS. They are a separate but concurrent process.

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and places of religious and cultural significance.

Tribal entities, the State Historic Preservation Officer (Judy Bittner), and other interested parties are consulted to identify significant places and ways to reduce or mitigate potential effects.

NPS EEA Process

AIDEA’s proposal includes two alternative routes across NPS lands (North and South).

Under ANILCA, NPS is legally required to permit access across NPS lands, and requires that they prepare an EEA to evaluate which route is preferable based on environmental, social, and economic effects, and develop permit terms and conditions.

EEA Public Input

NPS seeks comments on route selection and permit terms and conditions. Comment Period is open through January 31, 2018. To comment go to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Ambler>

Schedule

Scoping concludes January 31, 2018. A draft EIS will be developed by March 29, 2019, followed by public review. A final EIS based on public and agency review of the draft will be produced by December 30, 2019, and the Record of Decision is targeted to be completed by January 30, 2020.

What’s Next?

BLM is collecting comments and feedback. We will consider input received to potentially refine the Purpose and Need, determine issues and impacts to be studied, determine alternatives to be studied, and potentially identify mitigation measures to apply to the project.

Substantive Comments

Writing substantive comments assists BLM to make good decisions

- Be as specific as possible about what you are concerned about.
- Refer to a section or page number of a particular referenced document.
- Present new information.
- Share issues relevant to the environmental analysis.
- Suggest alternatives to the proposed project and the reason(s) why they should be considered.
- “I don’t like this” or “I do like this” is not useful. Explain why.

You are welcome to comment on the proposed project. You can submit comments in the following ways:

- Submit a comment form in the box
- Submit comments via the website: <http://www.blm.gov/AmblerRoadEIS>
- Fax to: (907) 271-5479
- Email to: blm_ak_akso_amblerroad_comments@blm.gov
- Mail to: 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513

3. Tribal Council Presentation

Allakaket Village Council Presentation – History of the People

Presented by Alyssa, Tribal Administrator

- Allakaket is a federally recognized Tribe.
- Population Estimate: 178 people, 330 tribal members.
- Students – Over 30.
- Unemployment Percentage: 71 percent.

We are people of this area who have harvested wildlife and natural resources as a way of sustaining our life. This is supplemented by employment for those 29 percent who are employed. The rest of the 71 percent continue to live a subsistence lifestyle. We still rely on dog mushing. Up to the 1940’s people roamed nomadically, and settled into Allakaket and Alatna in 1906. In 1906, there was a St. John’s in the Wilderness Episcopal Church established with a church building constructed in 1907. In 1919, an epidemic of the bird flu wiped out whole families and more than half the population. Our community established a post office in 1925. We flooded in 1937. People had lived in underground houses and in cabins afterwards. In 1950 to 1960, infrastructure started and we began to rely on monetary values instead of subsistence and the nomadic living. It was a dollar for a gallon for gas. In those years there was oil found on the North Slope.

In the following decade the first airline arrived, Wien Airline. In those years we started losing our native language because of public school attendance. We flooded in 1964, again. In those years there

were still gas lamps and candle lamps being used. We had a public school that opened in 1957. We remained nomadic people even then. People spent entire summers at fish camps. Some people still do today. We had wood for heat. There was no oil. Homes were built with local logs and moss, and windows that were available. People hauled wood with dogs, and cut wood with Swede saws. Gas went up to \$2.50 for five gallons. We had chiefs and a council prior to explorers coming here.

In the 1970s, Western influence came. People lost their sense of self-reliance. Alyeska Pipeline brought money, and also along with the development came alcohol. A barge came in the lake and got stuck. They didn't make it all the way up the river. Corporations were introduced into the community with ANCSA (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act), and it divided the community because some were for and some were against it. Food assistance was provided from the State. The first school was built in 1957 and burned down in 1975. It took until 1979 to build a new school.

Allakaket Tribe was incorporated in 1971 as a federally recognized tribe. We shifted from hauling wood with dogs to hauling with snow machines within a four-year timeframe. First TVs arrived. Wood was \$10 a load, \$20 a cord. In 1975, our community was established as a city. In 1978, a clinic and an airport were built. Traditional food became less abundant because of the pipeline impacts. In 1980, the adaptation of Western life and ways came to the community, phones, water pipes for drinking water, TVs, funding for log homes. In 1990s, everyone lost everything, homes, food, property, identity, and the long struggle began that continues today for the well-being of everyone.

Because of the flood in 1994, we had a new airport built in 1998. There were 1,500 people hired to rebuild the community. In 1991, there were 16 HUD [*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*] homes built, and moved to the new site. Toyo monitor stoves came in 1995. No more wood cutting. Nintendo and satellite TVs came. The whole community relocated to Fairbanks after the flood. There was minus 70 degree weather for three weeks in January in 1989. Up until that year that was the closest we got to 70 below because of climate change.

Still in the 2000s, we are recovering from the floods. Everyone had limited supplies. It was \$150 round trip to fly into Fairbanks. Now it's \$340. People were scared of Y2K [*Year 2000*], hearing it all over the media. Now we get all kinds of weather from climate change. It's hard to get funding for anything. Public internet was provided in the 2000s. Alatna moved south to higher ground. There was less community activity by 2005. More spread out and low attendance at local events. Dependence on well-being relied more on technology away from a cultural and subsistence way of life. No homes were built for over 10 years. There was deep snow. Our Washateria opened. Potlucks and other events are becoming less important. Government cutbacks make it hard to get funding.

Alatna got solar panels in 2005 for the washateria facility. Continued technology dependence in 2010. Propane costs range from \$90 to \$255 for a 100-pound tank. Solar power, TVs, refrigerators. In 2014, the school paid \$120,000 for one school year of electricity, which is similar to our laundromat facility. Prior to 2015, the tribe paid up to \$100,000 a year for electricity for one facility. Food stamps that pay 50 percent were introduced.

In 2015, we are starting to look at our capacity to take care of ourselves. We are searching for options and opportunities, grants, agency support, continuing to help preserve our culture and history. Our culture was present in every decade and sustained our people no matter what else was happening in our communities. Development brings benefits but it also brings impacts. Those impacts don't supersede the desire of having our culture and subsistence present. We have culture camps. We rely heavily on our elders to guide us. We want to know where we plan to be in 30 years. What resources do we have? Are there more or less? Are the people self-reliant? Our people have suffered the effects of the pipeline. Are we going to suffer the effects of this road? People are more concerned about the cultural and environmental impacts, social impacts, and health impacts. Those are some of our concerns.

4. Comments

Below are a compilation of verbal comments received at this meeting.

Comment from Steven Bergman Sr., Allakaket Tribal Council

Hard to comment when we are opposed to the road already. We're already close to the Dalton Highway, about 40 miles up there. Our people go up South Fork. That's where my mom is from. Now the road will cut us off from the north. We've already had enough trouble with that one (Dalton Hwy) since that one opened up. We stay in fish camp summer time too. We have three spawning areas up from us. If anything happened to those places like contamination, it would really affect us negatively. That's why we're opposed to it right from the start. Our hunters and trappers and fishermen are getting cut off by outside sport hunters. My dad was from Kanuti, but it goes up there Kanuti River, Old Man Crossing. That Haul Road goes right over it. That's another way it's cutting us off, and that's why I am concerned. They walked and canoed and portaged until they caught something to cook to survive on. There is too much pressure on the game that we depend on, on the traditional food that we depend on to survive. We never get caribou no more either, maybe twice since 2000. When I was a kid we used to get caribou every year, big herds come down. When they built the Haul Road they killed the big ones off, and the rest start milling around. They don't know how to come back down here anymore. We don't get the Western Arctic Herd either. It's getting tougher all the time. That's why I'm opposed to it. That's why I'm concerned all the time about this Ambler Road.

Comment from P.J. Simon, Secretary/Treasurer Tanana Chiefs Conference and Vice Chairman, Doyon Ltd.

I did not hear about the life of the mine. Once the mine road gets used and the life of the mine ends, then it's a public road. Federal and state dollars will probably build this road so just like the Haul Road, it's going to be open. And I hear BLM, State, Fish and Wildlife, NPS, but I also want to say this is our traditional homeland. Bear Claw Clan up north, South Fork people, Caribou Clan, our Inupiat brothers and sisters at Alatna River, and so on. It's been our traditional homeland. One thing I heard on the PowerPoint is the trail of the ore all the way along that 211 miles, but then its 212 miles to Fairbanks, and 250 miles to the Port of Nikiski or Valdez. I think if it goes that way it doesn't prove feasible. Why haul ore 770 miles? There's no profit margin in there. One of the issues I have is noise

pollution, fugitive dust, invasive species. Also who is going to maintain the road? The State of Alaska? That's going to be year-round use. How many trucks per day hauling how much ore? There has been a study on the proposed road by UAA [*University of Alaska Anchorage*]. It said for every 1 percent increase in hunters around here there is an 8 percent decrease in the moose population. I heard Board Member Steven talk about no caribou comes around here. In 26A and 26B on the Haul Road the caribou season is open July 1. You can shoot five per day. And it's targeted at the military. God bless them, but there's limited resources. Also, 3,500-5,000 will go to the F35 program. That's a lot more hunting pressure. And if they ever build this gas line, 200,000-400,000 people will move to Alaska. Also, 360,000 chum, a third of the Yukon River chum run spawn on the Koyukuk River, and a big portion of that is 20 miles upriver on the Henshaw. This proposed road is not feasible. To AIDEA Board, why isn't there an Alaska Native on the AIDEA Board? Corporations are 30 percent of the State economy in Alaska. We're good business people. Got the Record of Decision goal on 2020. And 810 of ANILCA. Will this proposed road significantly restrict our use? I believe so. We got 7,000-10,000 sheep in the Gates [*of the Arctic National Park and Preserve*] that we use. That's our precious food, and then we got four caribou herds coming down the central Arctic. The last three or four years we've been going back to the Ray Mountains hunting the mountain caribou. We're feeling the effects of climate change but also potential congestion, hunting pressure. We're still trying to live. There's cuts in subsidies, state and federal. What do we have left? We got sheefish and whitefish up the Alatna River. That's our precious food. We don't get salmon so shee fish and white fish that's our food up there. What will that road bring? To me it will bring thousands of recreational miners, anything under 6-inch suction dredge is recreational. In 2014, there were 14,085 resident hunters. Last year there was over 20,000 non-resident hunters. Once that road is built, you'll see hunters. Talk to Michelle Anderson over in Ahtna country. It's a zoo. You're dodging bullets. You go anywhere in Denali Park, that's a zoo too. Do we want that? Is it worth the risk? I don't think so. If this road goes all the way across the south side of the Brooks Range that's one of the last pristine places in the whole United States of America. We don't mind the air taxi operators, guides, or recreationalists. We get along. We talk to them. They don't take too much so there is enough for everybody. End of July we had a meeting here with Ed Fogles, DNR, and Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott, President Victor Joseph, Doyon people, Chiefs of Kaltag, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Nulato, Rampart, and environmental groups also. They all opposed this road because of their fish. Thirty percent of the fish spawn in the Koyukuk River. I'm on the Doyon Board. I see the revenue sharing from NANA [*Regional Corporation*] and ASRC [*Arctic Slope Regional Corporation*], 70/30 profit sharing. One of the things we look at Doyon is, "is it worth it?" I don't think this road is feasible. Maybe AIDEA should look at other alternatives. Barging it down the Kobuk River or going west. Is it worth it? It's no different from the Donlin Creek Gold Mine on the south side of the Tanana Chiefs region. There's 33 million ounces of gold trapped. There's no way to get to it. We have rare elements in the Bokan Mountains. I don't think it's worth it.

Comment from Harold David Sr, Second Chief, Allakaket

My mom is from Alatna so I have both sides of the country to depend on for food. Our background comes mostly from subsistence. We were nomadic people and now we're starting to do that again because of shortage of work here. I got questions. If the road does go through, how will our

traditional hunting ground be affected? The mine would end sometime. What kind of jobs can we benefit from this? How do we start getting ready for our youngsters? Got to be in school to keep up nowadays. My parents are in their 80s now. They left good life, subsistence. My dad worked upriver mining, downriver for years. They got unemployment in the winter time. That really helped them out. I'm wondering if we don't take care of our land right now and our hunting, what will our children be like in 20-30 years? They're talking about another mineral road south of Allakaket and now north of Allakaket. One thing that came up 2009-2010 was the railroad. Is railroad coming through here too? Why don't they go that route (on map)? We still got 1980s equipment we're trying to work on here because of the high cost of bringing them in. Airlines cost maybe \$30-40,000 to bring in the huge equipment. We need more equipment to help develop our community. The flood that wiped us out completely in 1990s, now we're standing on 100 year floodplain. We put pilings and make higher above the water level. We've got lots on the table for our children. Welcome to our visitors up north. Don't be offended by this.

Comment from Julia Simon, Allakaket

The majority of people oppose the development because of our subsistence way of life. We live off the land. That's our way of life. I grew up like that, living in the camps away from the village. Didn't speak English till I was seven years old. There was a change. The State took over the school so we were forced to attend school. I'm used to the subsistence lifestyle. If there was food from the restaurant or native food, I'd choose the native food because that's how we grew up. Last year I retired. I'm glad to be back in the village. We don't get very many jobs around here. It's hard to get work. If you learned how to live off the land and practice it all the time, it's daily living for us. It helps us a lot. Without our native food we would be lost. I heard that as a child from the elders. Everyone has their specialty food. For us it's moose and sheefish and whitefish. Other areas they have different animals and live off the ocean. Lots of us have relatives living in other areas, and we trade with them. That's how it is. If the proposed road is going to go through, it will affect all of us in many ways. We want to teach our kids and our grandkids how to live off the land. Sometimes it's not easy. Right now my husband and I have nine grandkids, but none of them live here. They visit us, but all our grandkids are raised someplace else. It's hard for us to teach them our way of life. We try to teach them because someday if they have to, they can survive off the land with whatever they have. When the pipeline was being built, the different agencies came to the village. I was a young adult at that time, and was listening to everyone talk about how good it would be. They said it (Haul Road) would never be open to the public. It would be just for the oil. Our residents argued with the different agencies saying they didn't want the pipeline because of our subsistence way of life. And that was 48-49 years ago. And now this road, it's going to be destructive for us. Our neighbor villages want development for the natural resources, but we have to think about our future. That's one of the reason why I oppose the road. We have to survive somehow. We're isolated out here trying to make the best of what we have. It's my first year in tribal council so I'm a little bit nervous. Thank you.

Comment from Dinah Vent, Chairman, Allakaket Sports Association

My concern is this road. We already know it's coming. But how are you going to help us. You're cutting off our food supply. Prices are going to go up for store food. It's going to be really complicated. The road is coming. Our food is going to be cut off. I just want to know how our food is going to be coming, if the animals are going to be cut off, and the store is going to jack up their prices. That's my concern, and I would appreciate it if you guys could look into that for all the communities that are going to be cut off from the food sources. I haven't heard anything about the jobs on the road. I'd like to find out more about that. On the first meeting you said you guys would come to us with jobs. We still didn't hear anything about that. The jobs could help with our food supply getting cut off and prices going up. A lot of people we don't know will be coming around hunting our food. I'd appreciate it if you could look into that. How are we going to eat? How are my future kids going to eat?

Comment from Delores Saunders, Mayor

I'm also concerned about the fish spawning area and the public access. I wonder if you could consider another route, near the coast.

Comment from Doug Bergman

Once this road is built, it will be a door that can't be closed, and it will be for the life of everybody here. If everybody in this room passes away that road will still be there. The Northwest Arctic Caribou Herd, it's just like drawing a line. It's never going to come here again. You have no idea what that caribou herd provides us. It provides us with food, caginqraq, pants, ski pants. It's just a very valuable resource. That mine will end up closing in a long time. How about the caribou? The trucks go through every day, back and forth. That caribou is very important for us way down here. Up at Alatna, the shee fish and white fish spawn up there. That's a very valuable resource. We survive on that. We won't get nothing out of this mine. It's a bad situation for us because we're going to be so close to it. Same thing with Evansville. You're opening up the Alatna River corridor and the John River. The sheep up there, we rely on that too. That's a hard enough resource to get to. It's a valuable food source for our people here. We have survived on it for a very long time, and that door will never be closed.

Comment from Sandra McCafferty, City Council Member

I oppose the road because of the social changes it's going to have on the people of Allakaket, Alatna, and all the surrounding villages. I think the pipeline did enough to the village. There were a lot of suicides. There was a lot of alcohol. This road is just going to open up the land. People wouldn't respect the land and private property. The State took away enough things from our people. As it is, they require us to pass standard testing. The State is looking for ways to get money, and I don't think this should be it. They should find another route. I oppose it because of what happened to my family in the past. We have to look down the road for our kids and grandkids. I have five grandkids. Everything is competitive enough for us. We have to keep up with for the standards for the school. We have to apply for grants for jobs, and it's really competitive, federal and state. And now we're competing for our land, and I don't think it's worth it.

Comment from Linda Lee, NANA Regional Corporation

NANA Regional Corporation does not have a stance for or against the road; however, we do support the environmental impact scoping, research on that. We do share the same concerns that you have, our subsistence, our way of life, our language, our culture. Where would that go 50-100 years from now should that road open? The exploration that's happening in the Bornite mining district is just exploration. It's not development yet. I just wanted to share that we have the same concerns. This fall we didn't get the caribou migration. We are concerned about the way of life, the caribou migration, the fish in the water, the dust in the air. They are very concerning. We came to listen to our brothers and sisters in this area to see how you feel so we can bring that message back home also. We are on an information gathering tour with this group. I want to assure you that we are not pro-development at this time.

Comment from Chuck Edwards, Alatna

I hear what others say, it's all about subsistence. Not only that, there are historical sites. People used to just come to town twice a year, fourth of July and Christmas. There are gravesites. People stay there year around. They live off the land.

Comment from PJ Simon

We recognize how tough a life we live. We want to live here, it's been our way of life. We have war veterans. We have a lot of people who served our country and this great state. But also we don't want to romanticize our way of life, we just live it. We know it's hard, but we all work together. It takes cooperation and understanding. Like our slide said, early 1900s over half our people died. So we have been through worse. We will always be here to work together. We love each other. We're a community. We've got Alatna across there. We've been living together for over 100 years. Doyon Limited works hard to provide jobs in other parts of the state to our business subsidiaries. K Corp got some jobs. Not that much, but they gave us a good dividend. So it's not all doom and gloom. There's a lot of projects like the Hog River Gold Mine. My dad went there when he was a kid. I don't know what he was making, \$2.50 an hour. He went down with a second grade education to 302 Operators. He did what he could with his limited education. He worked and provided us with some sort of income. We're not always against all kinds of development, but I'm definitely against this road.

Comment from Irene Henry, Allakaket

I've been an Allakaket resident all my life, born and raised here. I want to say something else about the caribou crossing. Not only did we eat good every year, we had clothing. Since 1970s we didn't get caribou any more. All the spawning areas up the river. I make my own map, because I don't understand those big ones over there. And that's where they're proposing the Ambler Road be built, right above us. And all our rivers, South Fork River, Koyukuk River, Henshaw River, Alatna River, John River, plus all the lakes between. You know it's going to be contaminated. Not only that but all our berries. Long ago we never had canned food. We sure ate good right from the land. All the food we eat is not processed, it's healthy. Influx of people coming in, we don't want either. They build around us, and it's too late to say we don't want that road again. We don't want it. Saying the road will only be

for the miners is B.S. We see that from the gas pipeline road. Right off the bat they have people from outside coming up there. Now they come all the way to the Yukon River Bridge. They bring their boats and go all over. There's people from Nulato and Kaltag who can't go to their best place for hunting because there's over 400 hunters there who just go there and get the horn and leave. When we see a big bull moose in fall time we are really happy because that's our food. When the sports hunters see it they say, "Oh boy, the horn." In the end when we're eating really good and they're hungry, they won't be able to eat that horn, let their kids survive. Another thing, it's also in the Bible, Leviticus 19:9, "When you reap the harvest of the land, you shall not reap to the very edges or take all the gleanings." It could be translated in every part of our tradition, our culture. Like the blueberries. Every year we pick berries, for hundreds and thousands of years. And once you build that road, it's just destroyed. No turning back. When my dad was passing away 47 years ago, he told us, "They're going to start trying to move in on our country." That's where he lived and my grandmas and grandpas, strong people. They didn't speak English, but they said, "Don't let them move into our country, they're too greedy." Maybe they won't like that 70 below, but in the meantime they'll be destroying our country.

Comment from Gilbert Venta, Allakaket Tribal Member

I oppose this road because of the route. Why would you want to go through all the salmon spawn areas? It just goes down to the ocean. You've got to have a better idea than this. You can't go down the headwaters, salmon spawn areas. You have a very good chance of polluting. And it doesn't take much to do something to get rid of the salmon. Another reason I oppose the road, the Army Corps of Engineers that's whose going to be building the road. You get engineers from the lower 48, Albuquerque, what do they know here? One of the things they want to do is build this road with fiber so it doesn't erode so easily. That's something for BLM to think about. If you want to talk about impacts, if that stuff starts floating down the river you're going to wipe out the salmon. We've got a lot of traditional ways, but we've got to use our knowledge in ways for whatever we have. The Corps of Engineers always want to experiment. They always want to learn. We get interviews from people coming around. They want information, how you do this, how much is that, how much fish and moose, and how much in cache? Why don't they already know it? Try to use common sense, because you're going through the headwaters and there's a good chance you're going to get into the spawning areas. Route from Kobuk to Tanana, there's nothing wrong with that route. You've got to move away from the headwaters. I don't want to be against anybody, but that's just the wrong idea. You've got to try a different route. Too many people depend on the fish.

Comment from Alex Sheldon, NANA Board

I was here in '65 I guess. When they ask me to go to Allakaket for this meeting, I won't say no because I never come here for a long time. When I start coming here I remember what my cousin tell me about trap lines. Long time ago at Kobuk River and Alatna River maybe, from this side anyway. If this side trapping was kind of poor, they could go to the Kobuk area. And if Kobuk River is kind of poor too, they could come up this side. That was our agreement. Our ancestors lived that way. They worked together just like one. We've got to work together like them because we are. We are Native. We have to work together to be stronger. I still live on native food, from water, land, and ocean. And when I

hear this road is coming, my food won't be the same. Mostly the fish because there's a lot of creeks and rivers. And the mine right behind Kobuk, I worked there. I go down the shaft 1,000 feet. At 975 feet there's ore, copper ore, about 12 feet about 10 feet wide, nothing but copper ore. That's why they want to build this road. It's not the only thing they're going to find, what else? Our land used to be free, where we want to go, we always go. Where we want to hunt, we go. Not now. Down in NANA area we're cornered. Park Service, BLM, what else? You block up our river, what we live on? When somebody come to your land and make what they want, they're hurting us. They never really ask what we want. They won't stop. They building that road. They say it's just going to be a haul road. Just few years they'll move it to a public road. Then we're really damaged. So we have to work together. Or put Natives in a leader, like the governor. Could they listen to us really, cause we are Alaskan. We were born here.

Comment from Harding Sam, First Chief, Alatna

San thanked Allakaket for hosting the meeting. He thanked NANA Board members for coming to listen to our comments. He invited anyone who wishes to make more comments to attend the meeting at Alatna, for another opportunity to speak.

Comment from Don McDonald

I'm just worried. Are there any promises made to keep the waterways clean as a way to make people happy? In my experience no matter what you try to do it doesn't keep the water clean. I've experienced it in my life that it kills off the streams, and I would not like to see that happen out here. I love the people, I love the land, and please don't bring a road out here.

Comment from Jared Sam, Alatna Tribal Council Member

I oppose the road to Ambler because it's going to affect everybody here, our subsistence way of life. I oppose it.

Comment from John Gaedeke, Iniakuk Lake (just upriver from here about 100 river miles)

This is the first time I've seen how many gravel mines are proposed. An airstrip is proposed. There's talk about a gas station proposed, but I don't see it here. So we're being asked to comment on things we still don't even know about. I think that's a real problem. I also don't understand if there's no way to pay for the road still why are we being asked to comment on it if it's not going to go past scoping? I don't understand how it's gotten this far. These meetings are expensive for the people here. We could all be out working, doing other things. I've been to about 20 of these meetings, and it keeps getting told what's proposed, and the people keep saying, "No." If that's not "substantive" from the people who live here, I don't know what is. No means no. DOT [*Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities*] was told, "No." Other agencies were told, "No." The answer is still, "No," and yet the impact keeps getting larger and larger. My family appreciates living north of the people in Allakaket. When I was little I would see boats come up full of hunters. Why anyone would come up and hunt in our area any more with this many gravel pits and a proposed airstrip and two bridges, there's just no reason. It already costs \$800 to \$900 to get up into the park to hunt for sheep or caribou. Who can

afford to do that when they know there's going to be even less game up there. Thanks for the people of Allakaket and for the people who keep saying, "No." That's what we keep saying.

Comment from Gordon Bergman, First Chief of Allakaket

I'm opposed to this road. In the summer time when you're driving through Bettles/Evansville, you're going up with the boat so this proposed road in the foothills of the Brooks is like a natural watershed in the Koyukuk River so if there is ever any spills, it would just naturally drain right into our water system. This road would cross the Alatna, the Henshaw, John River, Koyukuk River, South Fork, then Old Man, and they all come right into our hunting area, right into our village. So those are our major concerns. In the summer time, like July, you can go up the Alatna, right to the mouth. You can put your cup in the water and drink it. It's just like spring water that's how clear it is. So that's why we're really opposed to this road. We're not opposed to all development, but we don't see any kind of benefits to our side of the area. There's nothing inviting as far as jobs for us. We never got offered any training. Nothing. Six years ago they said there will be jobs. There will be dishwashing and laundry and security. I said I don't want those type of jobs for my people. We can't agree to something like that if that's all they're going to offer. It will be just industrial access. Someone will sue them for using State money, and then they will open it up to the public. With that will bring drugs and alcohol into our villages. I was late to this meeting because I have to deal with drugs and alcohol in our community. I had to run after one bootlegger this morning. Me and one lady. We had to take his alcohol, and put it back on the plane. We call the troopers, and nobody can help us. We have to do everything ourselves out here. Nobody is talking about those social impacts. If you want to work, you can go to training. My sister is an operator in the Local 302. My younger brother is training to be a heavy equipment mechanic. I can work in Anchorage or Fairbanks if I want to. I'm a journeyman in a carpenters union. But I love to live the way we are living out here. I have six kids, and I take my two oldest boys out hunting every year. This fall we went 115 miles out with a boat. We stay out there and hunt, and I teach them how to live off the land just like my dad right here taught me. Someday I'll live in Fairbanks or Anchorage and work, but right now I want to raise my kids to teach them to live off the land, and that's the way I always want it to be. What I can't understand is why they would haul all that ore around, and have all these impacts negatively on us here. We don't get no benefits, no guarantee, nothing on paper. So I'm really thankful to BLM, NPS, NANA Board of Directors to come over. To give us where you guys stand, where the corporation stands. All these years since we've been involved we said, where do NANA people stand? What are they saying? So very thankful for you guys to come over, and hopefully, we will be invited over to your area because I've never been over to that area. In 1999, we were firefighting in the foothills up here in the Brooks. You could see all these old camps in the hills. And when we're going to go sheep hunting, when our kids will go sheep hunting in the future they go up the Alatna 90 miles. They will have to go past that bridge. How are we going to pass that bridge? Are they going to make it high enough? We're going to hunt in the John River. There will be a bridge right there too. Those are concerns we have. How many water systems they have to cross that directly lead into Koyukuk River, right out here? We're thankful they came out here for this meeting. We'll be at the one in Fairbanks, also. It's very hard to follow all these meetings because they are back to back to back. We want to be at all of them, but we just can't be at them because it costs too much.

They say less in gas, oil, propane, groceries, but still they have to come from Fairbanks, go all the way around, then here. By that time, you'll just have damaged groceries. Gas is \$7.50 right now. So that's my concerns of why they want this road here. It will go right through our area with no benefits for us right now as we see it. Nothing in the agreement for Doyon shareholders. There's 19,000 Doyon shareholders. That's why we oppose it. We try to keep an open mind as how to get an agreement on this kind of stuff. We try to keep up-to-date for this process and this project. We're thankful for BLM, NANA, NPS to be here. NPS will have a meeting in Fairbanks tomorrow, but I can't be there. Harold (David Sr.) will be there. Luckily, we will have somebody who can travel and voice our concerns. Everybody has to understand this is our chance to speak up and have it logged that this is why we can't have a road here. With all the negative impacts that will be the one I'm most concerned with right now is the alcohol and drugs. Just having to deal with that bootlegger this morning is not very easy. It's not very easy running after your own people while they're running with that bag of alcohol. It's very hard. You put a road in, it's just that much more access because nobody will know that they're coming in. With the airlines at least you have a little control. Wright's Air Service, thank you for helping us. They check their bags. But we're not going to be able to check everybody if this proposed road is in, and it will go all the way down the Koyukuk River.

Comment from Harold (David Sr.)

Right now there is EPA Hazmat [*Hazardous Materials*] Training, a 40-hour class. The importance of what we're getting out [of] it. I'd like to see more training if this road is going to go through. Heavy equipment operating and continue studying on the subsistence. And this ANILCA Section 810, I really don't understand what this meant. Maybe we can sit down sometime and talk about that.

Comment from Shaun Bergman

I lived here all my life, and I'd like to say, "No," to the Ambler Road. I lost my sister this past fall. She would say, "No," too. She wouldn't want this Ambler Road open.