



# Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

Kobuk Public Scoping Meeting

## MEETING NOTES

December 8, 2017

Kobuk School, Kobuk, Alaska

## Project Team Participants

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Laurie Thorpe

HDR: John McPherson, Katherine Wood

National Park Service (NPS): Joe Durrenberger

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Melissa Riordan

## Public Participants

Approximately 22 people attended the meeting.

## Meeting Purpose

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

## Meeting Topics

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and prayer by Kobuk resident Rosa Harner, followed by introductions.

### 2. Presentation by Laurie Thorpe (BLM)

We are here today to talk about a right-of-way permit request received by BLM to build a road across BLM lands from the Dalton Highway over to the Ambler mineral belt.

#### ***Other Cooperating Agencies:***

- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB)
- National Park Service (NPS)

- Allakaket wants to join as a Cooperating Agency
- Alatna wants to join as a Cooperating Agency

### ***Background***

The purpose of today's meeting is 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 the 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. However, there is no mention of BLM, and the effort to evaluate the road in this area. That's why we are here today to address it with you as we respond to the application for the right-of-way. 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. 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 right-of-way for the road. In 2016, AIDEA spent the first half of the year responding to requests for additional information from the application recipients (BLM, NPS, US Coast Guard [USCG], and the USACE). The application was completed by June 30, 2016, which triggered a timeline for BLM action on the application. BLM filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) 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 through 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. That road must connect to other lands managed by BLM, the State, and Native corporation land to reach the Ambler Mining District.

### ***Proposed Project***

The right-of-way 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. AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway Milepost 161 and extends 211 miles 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 (61percent), 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 be designed to accommodate two-way traffic for large semi-trailer trucks.

The proposed project area 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 (see handout). Additional maps were presented that showed a close-up of each section of the route.

## ***Agency Roles***

BLM is the lead federal agency, and is required to prepare the EIS with the authority to grant permits across BLM lands. BLM must also comply with ANILCA Section 810, and hold subsistence hearings as well as the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 to address cultural and historic 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.

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.

DNR is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for state permits. DNR would make land management decisions for right-of-way access across state-managed lands.

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 Northwest Arctic Borough regulations.

Allakaket and Alatna will also be able to provide input on those subjects once they are added as Cooperating Agencies. After scoping meetings have finished, a Memorandum of Understanding will be developed to add Allakaket and Alatna as Cooperating Agencies.

NPS, US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all Participating Agencies.

### ***What is an EIS?***

This EIS is about whether or not BLM should issue a right-of-way 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 includes the following:

- Project Purpose and Need
- Issues raised during scoping (internal/external)
- Project alternatives
- Description of potentially affected environment, which would be impacted by this project
- Environmental consequences of all the alternatives
- Proposed mitigation

BLM must also include a no-action alternative under which a permit for right-of-way would not be issued. It gives a good baseline to compare all the other alternatives.

### ***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.

### ***Draft Purpose and Need***

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

The 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 a right-of-way shall be granted, and if so, the terms and conditions that will be included in the right-of-way.

### ***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 many issues (see handout), and we want your input about them

### ***ANILCA Section 810***

ANILCA Section 810 addresses subsistence issues and impacts.

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.

### ***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.

A cultural resources management plan is developed to help resolve adverse effects that were identified during the consultation process.

### ***NPS EEA***

NPS EEA Process focuses only on the NPS-managed lands. 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 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 NPS 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***

The Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on February 28, 2017. Scoping concludes January 31, 2018. A Draft EIS will be developed by March 29, 2019, followed by public review. We

would also be holding subsistence hearings during this time. 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. You are not limited to commenting once. You can submit comments throughout the scoping period. BLM 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.
- 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](mailto:blm_ak_akso_amblerroad_comments@blm.gov)
- Mail to: 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513

## **3. Comments**

***Below are verbal comments received after the presentation concluded.***

### **Comment from Beatrice Barr**

How does the people of Tanana feel about the road built from Tanana to Fairbanks?

### **Comment and Question from Agnes Bernhardt**

My question is for AIDEA. When they submitted the proposal, I'm just curious as to whether you could elaborate. It says on there, only for commercial use. I forgot the wording. I looked it up the other day, and I forgot exactly what it said. How it was written originally when they submitted the proposal?

### **Response from Jeff San Juan, AIDEA**

It will be a limited access, industrial road.

**Comment from Agnes Bernhardt**

Yeah, but there's wording in there that says in regard to—I forgot how it was written—but it was written as if it could change, and it's up to the State.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

It's my understanding that AIDEA would control access to the road for industrial purposes.

**Question from Agnes Bernhardt**

So then, I know that it would be years from now, but at that time would AIDEA come to the communities and ask at least and mention that so and so is requesting access to the road?

**Response from Jeff San Juan, AIDEA**

The way we anticipate it working out is that you would have to have a permit to use the road or a specialized license or certification to drive on the road. And it needs to be secured as well, and especially secured on the Dalton Highway side. And we will be monitoring the road for unauthorized use so that the road would be controlled. So we're not allowing hunters or fishermen to access the road. It's only for commercial and industrial use only.

**Question from Beatrice Barr**

How are you guys going to control it? Is there going to be a gate?

**Response from Jeff San Juan, AIDEA**

So a lot of the things that we've done is we've taken a lot of best practices from the Red Dog Mine port and how they've basically controlled the mining and transportation corridor. They have constant call-ins and standard operating procedures for the truckers that operate the road. We're kind of operating a similar procedure for the transportation corridor. We envision the truckers being one of the main sources of eyes and the ears of the road. Most trucks will have walkie-talkies. They'll be communicating, and if they see something that should not be on the road they will be required to call it in. For Red Dog, if they see caribou on the road or crossing the road they have to stop. There's a standard operating procedure that says they have to stop if they see caribou within 300 feet from the road. So that's the kind of similar type of similar procedures we are incorporating if the road does get committed.

**Comment and Question from Beatrice Barr**

And the reason I ask that is throughout all this time we've heard folks say we need this road because of the jobs and lack of industry in this area, but the other thing that is mentioned all the time is that we need access to cheaper oil, cheaper goods that we'll be able to receive through that way. If there's going to be restrictions, who would we work with? There's the tribe, NANA, different people that could probably help us in that area that could work.

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

We've had a lot of people asking questions on who can use the road and not use the road, and so you know the application right now says industrial access, commercial use. And I think originally when DOT was talking about the project they were talking about anybody being able to use the road.

But they also heard a lot about comments and concerns to opening up to outside hunters coming in and impacts to wildlife so they thought maybe if they make it just industrial access that would reduce some of those impacts to the wildlife. But we're still hearing lots of questions from people about who can use that road. So [those are] things we'll have to look at in the study. If we did public access we'll have to look at it this way. If it's industrial access as its proposed what would that mean differently.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

And since it's been brought up as an issue, it's the perfect issue or concern to be brought up and ask that question so in the EIS we can answer that, and we've heard that comment in several of the public meetings.

**Comment and Question from John Lincoln, NANA**

I guess my question is about the tribe and construction of the road, building materials, snowmachines, everything. I guess having no one use the road is one extreme, and opening it up to everybody in the country that's another extreme. But there is another opportunity and a place in the middle where that road is built using private money, private company owns the roadway. Could NANA potentially be a part of that? If the road goes, does NANA land—they could have a huge say on who can access that—and perhaps NANA could mandate that shareholders have access. Can the road be used for hunting, for example? There should be an option for access. You know if might have to be commercial and it might have to go through the tribe, but it would not make sense to have the road there and still be paying \$10 per gallon for fuel.

**Comment from Agnes Bernhardt**

I can understand if how it's opened up for our area here it's going to open up for everybody because that's the way it is, you know it's various for everybody within the state.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

It's exactly the kind of discussion we want to encourage to happen. To capture these comments so we can look at what are the opportunities or the challenges to overcome and realize this in the EIS. Thank you for sharing those comments. There could be a completely different mix of options here to look at. We're going to look at all those opportunities in the EIS.

**Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

You said that the road that is built is a Native road, right? It's now going to be opened up to the private or public now, is that right? Okay, now let's say the public goes to me and asks the relevance to the region. If it ever came down the river like you said where they open it up where anyone can use it.

**Response from Jeff San Juan, AIDEA**

It really depends on what kind of agreements are in place. I want to say when they permitted the Red Dog Mine port they went through a public agreement and financing. Our road, we're not anticipating will be open to the public in the very beginning. So we're not competitive in using public financing or using federal funds to open it to the public. So John, it depends on the permits that we have to get

and the terms and conditions that will keep it as non-public. The permitting we're requesting is a non-public controlled-entry access.

**Question from Billy Berger**

How about the Dalton Highway? Was that initially an industrial road that that was not supposed to be open to the public?

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

So just to add to that. We've had a lot of questions about the Dalton Highway with that same question. What did it start as, because it ended as a public road. And we've honestly heard a lot of different answers from people in the communities so everybody thinks they know what it is. But we've had lots of different answers so that's something we're going to have to look into further and figure out. Is it the same, and if so, what are the pieces, because I don't know if we have a clear answer on that.

**Question from Billy Berger**

When you say commercial what do you mean by commercial, like Carlisle or something like that?

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

That's a great question. A lot of people have been asking by what you mean with commercial so we need to get better definition on that.

**Question from Beatrice Barr**

Who will monitor oil spills? Who will be responsible?

**Comment and Question from Agnes Bernhardt**

I know that the proposed road is only nine miles away from Kobuk. The other nearest one is Evansville. I'm just curious as to how many miles is that from the mouth of Maniilaq River? And in those areas there are turnaround areas where they clear off huge section of land just to, and there's a number of those in the road.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

There probably would be pullouts, and also material borrow sites. And that's a great question.

**Question and Comment from Agnes Bernhardt**

And how would that impact the Maniilaq River and the Kuklutuk River? I'm asking that because the waters flow into the Kobuk River, and would like to know how much it would affect the water.

**Comment and Question from Henry Harner**

I know we're looking at mainly two years where they will build, but then after that when they have constructed the road you have equipment and fuel hauling. I'm concerned about a spill in Koyukuk River. How fast would the response time be?

**Question from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

What I'm hearing is if there's any spill on the road, how fast is the spill response?

### **Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

Who is representing Bornite here? They set a bad example this summer with a spill they tried to cover up, but the Borough came in. And there was another one at the airport. This is just the beginning. There were no consequences for the environmental guy who tried to cover it up. Rivers and lakes, will the USCG have a say on bridge construction? Will there be guards on the bridges? The weather is changing. What if there are fuel tankers leaks on top of ice?

### **Question from Beatrice Barr**

How many jobs will there be?

### **Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

The information on jobs we have now is summarized inside the AIDEA handout. But we will look at that in the EIS also, and study how many jobs will come from the project, how many jobs are associated with that. So we'll look at that.

### **Comment from Miles Cleveland**

We need to set this up for our children and grandchildren. We need to prioritize our region for jobs. Once this road is going to be open there's going to be jobs available, and they will invite people from the south to come up here and work. That's why every IRA needs to write up a letter to keep yourself locked in, and then we'd be the first ones to land those jobs. That way the money stays in this region. We need to start thinking like that. If we don't put it in writing somewhere then we'll lose out like we've always done. This time let's think it through straight, and make the right decisions for our people.

### **Comment from Henry Harner**

In New Orleans, they have a 4-lane highway that turns into a 12-lane highway and toll bridge. They charge you for crossing. Maybe there will be tolls on the bridges.

### **Comment from Agnes Bernhardt**

As Miles mentioned on the jobs, currently the way it stands with Bornite the mine would only open up for a few years. In the beginning, there would be a high number of people that would work. But last year, it was just a low number. I'm just speaking on behalf of Kobuk. Very low numbers. And whatever jobs they did take, they were not the mid-level or higher level positions. With this road, I think our children need to be trained enough to take on positions not just the laborer positions. You know, our [son]? He struggled. He worked up and graduated from an electrician practice program. He's done that. But he struggled the whole time he was there because of these folks that came from the Lower 48. And I've heard that from other people. I'm happy for him right now because he's gone back to college, and he's going for his MBA [Master of Business Administration]. But when you do the Tribes and the city, they need to step up to the plate right now. Because our people are not doing well. We have to set good examples for them. Right now are drugs and alcohol. It's a problem in all the villages. One thing that we really need to address is to be ready for those jobs in the future.

**Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR**

If you don't want to talk during the meeting that's fine. Everything we get that's in writing or spoken here or written in an email receives the same weight and consideration so you don't have to talk if it's not your cup of tea.

**Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

Is this just a formality? The EIS, they're forced to do it. Is this the same way BLM land and state land and Native land, just a process?

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

The BLM is not required to issue a right-of-way. This process is giving us information right now to consider whether or not to grant the right-of-way. We have the discretion to not issue the right-of-way. That is what we need to hear from you, of what you think should or shouldn't and why.

**Question from Billy Berger**

But at the end of this process there will be access, right?

**Response from Joe Durrenberger, NPS**

Only across NPS lands is there a guarantee of access across Gates of the Arctic.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

Now in this process if someone has an idea for a different route, it is possible that a different route might get chosen that doesn't cross NPS lands at all.

**Question from Billy Berger**

Doesn't the Park Service want a road into the park so people can come and enjoy the land?

**Response from Joe Durrenberger, NPS**

We'll never have the opportunity to build the road ourselves.

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

So I think the other piece of your question is that there are also some private lands that need to be crossed. John Lincoln has mentioned in some other meetings that NANA and Doyon also have a decision to allow access across their lands. There hasn't been a decision yet from any of those land owners. We are still hearing some people say that it's a done deal and it doesn't matter what I think. That is not the case. It's not a done deal. We're still early in the permitting process.

**Question from Billy Berger**

When will Doyon and NANA have their say?

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

I don't know. The EIS process takes a couple years, and once that's finished there's still a lot of other things that have to happen like right-of-way where we still have to get permits.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

The decision has not been made whether there will be a road. There is a proposal for a road. And we're responding to that proposal and trying to determine if—IF—we were to issue the right-of-way grant for the road, what permits and conditions would be associated with that. What we also have to consider and look at are the effects in the EIS. What are we to do if we are not to issue the permit? That is a great comparison tool of what the effects would be if we were to not issue the permit or to issue the permit. The whole would be analyzed fully in the EIS. All the effects, the economic effect, the environmental effects, the social effects is looked at.

**Question from Billy Berger**

What if the private land owners say no?

**Response from Katherine Wood, HDR**

It would be up to AIDEA to decide what they want to do. We don't know what would happen then.

**Comment from Billy Berger**

So it sounds like we're a few years out from a road. But then like someone said earlier, there's very few locals that are put to work at Bornite. Very, very few. We've got a very bitter taste in our mouths.

**Question and Comment from Christopher (Last Name unknown)**

What are you guys doing about the proposed corridor that was studied [in the] early seventies through Kobuk National Park and Noatak Preserve to the port? I know it's a different proposed road. When it comes down it to it, it does it really matter whether I'm for it or against it? It's inevitable. Who's going to pay for this road? Are we using federal, public money? Because if we used federal, public money, the State's going to pay for it. And after the money life is done in 15, 20 years to close it, and after the life of this road, there are 11 deposits from the highway clear to Bornite and Red Dog. After this road is closed, what is it going to take to keep this road restricted? Because if [they] use federal money, all it's going to take is one lawsuit for the State to open this road. If we had another route to go to port, the product is going overseas. Why should we run the risk of transport to haul concentrate down the highway to Anchorage down to port to overseas? We could just have a road from the Ambler Mining District to the Red Dog Port to the Orient because that's where the ore is going.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

That's a great comment, and a great idea.

**Question and Comment from Christopher (Last Name unknown)**

Yeah, I'd like to hear more about corridors through Kobuk Valley National Park. Is that one big option? There's people you know that don't want to open up the area. The effect that's going to have on us 30 years down the road. Where I'm concerned I'm going to be 80, and I don't see myself living past 74, but once we start getting to road access and water rights access, if I had access to this road, I could take my boat and seven drums of gas, and with my water rights I can go moose hunting from Fairbanks to Huslia. That's scary. We don't have very much money, although money goes a long way. But when it comes to competing for fish or moose or caribou—those cultural aspects of my life—I

want to ensure that my kids and grandkids have what I have. And it's scary. But if we have more information about those corridors towards Red Dog, I'd like to hear about it.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

In this analysis, what I'm hearing is look at the route from the other direction and how could that possibly be a feasible option.

**Comment from Billy Berger**

A road to the west is a seasonal route because shipping only runs part of the year when the water is not frozen. Kotzebue runs into that problem now. They have to buy fuel at a higher price when the barge comes in and the fuel is available. If you want to get the ore out year-round that won't work. You're seasonal. The barge may or may not come in.

**Comment from Henry Harner**

It will have to be the corporation thinking about their resources. Bornite has resources. Teck will come in and use the Red Dog Road.

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

This is great discussion. Thank you for being here. I'm glad you can share your issues and concerns. This will help us do a better analysis to consider the decision.

**Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

You've been over the hill to the Athabaskan side. What was it like in those communities? What have you been hearing from them?

**Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

We're recording the comments tonight, and we've been doing that in other communities as well so all those notes will be available on the website so you can see what other communities have been saying.

**Question from Agnes Bernhardt**

I just have a comment for John Lincoln, are you with NANA now?

**Response from John Lincoln, NANA**

Yes, I left Manilaq in May.

**Question and Comment from Agnes Bernhardt**

I guess the other question I have, is this road going through NANA land so is there any way to sit down with NANA and hash out these things? The reason I ask that is it may be good for NANA too, because it's good for the NANA folks to come and have a discussion with us. Because I know there was an agreement with NANA and these folks that are working back here, but it would be good to know what they're thinking.

**Response from John Lincoln, NANA**

It's a major priority for NANA to get to the villages and hear from you regularly. We want to make sure we do a good job as we can to represent the community. We've had talks with AIDEA and Doyon and obviously consulting with BLM so we've had direct talks with them two weeks ago, a month ago, and another discussion in January. This is kind of the first step of the permitting process, and we'll be back again for another round of public meetings on the Draft EIS. I'm taking notes, and going to summarize what I've heard. At the Shungnak meeting, there was interest in a tri-villages meeting. The indigenous peoples all want to come together. I think there's going to be a lot of follow-up. This is just permitting, anything can happen. It's a massive project. It's really expensive. If our villages are united in opposition to it that would be problematic for the developer of the mines so that would be a lot of work to do. This is just the first step.

**Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

Another question for John Lincoln. What is going on at Bornite? Where is NANA? All that construction noise going on back there it's no good for the subsistence and all of this affects us. Why aren't they prioritizing Kobuk and Shungnak hire?

**Response from John Lincoln, NANA**

I think they do prioritize employment, but I know it gets at least reported. I do know that we track specifically the number of applications from Kobuk, Shungnak, and Ambler versus the rest of the rest of the region, and how many people are employed based on those applications so it's priority. I don't know if it's a formal hiring process like it is for Red Dog with Kivalina and Noatak, but it is something that we could report back and I could find out.

**Question and Comment from Billy Berger**

Well can't someone put the pressure on hiring more? They use the road through the village about three, four times a day. Rain or shine. That road is a pothole mess between here and Bornite. They're the only ones with a grader up there, but no, they can't put their digger up and down that road. They might wear it out or something. They're from Australia or something. They should go back there. It's just...ach...

**Response from John Lincoln, NANA**

Yeah, you know I'm glad you're expressing these things too because having everybody feel confident and feel good about the project is a prerequisite to it even happening, and a lot of similar concerns came up in Allakaket. There was a person who worked there, Carl David, and he shared some similar concerns.

**Comment from Billy Berger**

Yeah, he sees what's happening there.

**Comment from Henry Harner**

There's a road system coming in. There's already a survey for a new airstrip was surveyed in front of the Arctic deposit. Trilogy bought that Kennecott asset.

### **Comment from Billy Berger**

Let's just build the road, and let us all drive on it, and we won't argue on it.

### **Comment from Laurie Thorpe, BLM**

This has been a great dialogue to have. I really appreciate you sharing your thoughts, concerns on potential impacts to the road, and the challenges. We want to encourage you to think about it. Talk with your families and communities. We have about a month and a half to receive more comments. You are probably going to think of more things that you didn't talk about here tonight that you wish you have. In the handouts, please take a look at those. We're going to leave them all here. The address there, the email, you can do it on the website or the email address. There are many ways to submit the comment. We really want to thank you for taking the time to listening to our presentation, and sharing with us your thoughts and ideas and concerns. This is what the public involvement process is all about.

## **4. Closing**

The meeting was adjourned.