

AMBLER ROAD ACCESS
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SECTION 810
PUBLIC HEARING

Location:
Z.J. Loussac Library
Anchorage, Alaska
Wednesday, December 13, 2023
5:00 p.m. - 7:08 p.m.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP TEAM:
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ANCHORAGE, ALASKA; WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023

5:00 P.M.

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SARAH LUPIS: Welcome, everyone. I'm noting that it's 5:00, so we're going to go ahead and get started. So if you're in the room I'll need you to take a seat.

All right. Thanks so much. And as -- as folks join, please, just go ahead and find a seat. But it's 5:00, so we're going to go ahead and get started.

So good evening. Thank you all for coming tonight, and welcome to the public meeting for the Ambler Road Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS.

My name is Sarah Lupis, and I will be the facilitator tonight.

The first thing that we would like to do this evening is introduce the BLM project team.

Geoff?

STEVE COHN: Good evening, everyone. I'm Steve Cohn, the state director for the Bureau of Land Management here in Alaska.

And I'll introduce my -- my colleague, Geoff Beyersdorf. He's our district manager from Fairbanks.

Thank you for coming tonight. We really appreciate you all taking the time out of your evening

to -- to join us and to be here and to discuss the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Ambler Road.

As I'm sure many of you know, currently the draft is out for public comment through December 22nd. So whether you're able to provide or want to provide comments tonight, or at any point, either by mail or e-mail or through our website, please, we welcome those comments and encourage you to do that. Again, the comment period's open through December 22nd.

And the -- the -- the draft that we're going to be talking about tonight is a result of a lot of hard work of BLM staff, partners, and, of course, the many Alaska Native tribes, corporations, and stakeholders who we've engaged with in this updated process to date.

And so, again, I want to thank you for being here. This is a public process, and so having these meetings and public participation and input is critical to making this a good process and to help and shape the outcome.

And so with that I'll -- I'll turn it back over to Geoff. Again, Geoff Beyersdorf, he's our district manager for the Fairbanks district.

And welcome, and thank you again for coming.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thanks, Steve.

And I'll probably turn it right back over to you, Sarah, and then we can start the presentation.

Thanks.

SARAH LUPIS: Thanks, Geoff. Thank you, Geoff and Steve.

Just want to give you all a sense for our -- how things are going to go here tonight.

So first, before I give you kind of a rundown on things, I also just want to acknowledge, as Steve said, the many folks that have worked really hard on all of this, and so just to acknowledge the BLM and SWCA, who are not here tonight, but who were also instrumental in preparing this Draft EIS and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act Section 810.

So, folks, following the presentation by BLM we will invite the public who wish to speak and provide comments to do so. And in Alaska we recognize and respect our elders, and to put that value into practice we are letting elders speak first and without a time limit.

Following elders, speakers will be selected at random until the meeting ends at 8:45. We are not able to extend the meeting time because the library closes shortly after that. Each speaker will be allotted two minutes to speak, and so we ask that you please prepare your comments accordingly. There will be a countdown

timer on the stage, and I will also let speakers know when time is up.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to take comments on both the Ambler Road Draft Supplemental EIS and the ANILCA Section 810 evaluation, which is Appendix M of the Supplemental EIS. And so any comments that you give tonight will be considered under both laws and processes.

Finally, please remember that there are many ways to comment as Geoff will explain during the presentation.

Thank you.

And now I will hand it over to Geoff for the presentation.

[Presentation by Geoff Beyersdorf; see separate Ambler Road PowerPoint Presentation]

SARAH LUPIS: Okay. Can you all hear me back there? Awesome. We can only have one microphone on at a time, so I'm not going to use my stage mic, just my voice.

I'm going to start choosing speaker tickets at random from the box. Please listen for your number. I'm going to choose three at a time, so if you hear your number come on down. There's some seats down here in the front. We'll go in order, and you can kind of wait down here in the front.

All right so the first three I've got are Ticket No. 27, Ticket No. 19, and Ticket No. 5.

Ticket No. 27, John?

Hello. Give us just a moment here.

Whenever you're ready.

JOHN GAEDEKE: All right. Good evening. My name is John Gaedeke. That's G-A-E-D-E-K-E. And I was born and raised in Fairbanks on Iniakuk Lake just a few miles from the Ambler Industrial Road proposal.

I attend my first scoping meeting in 2012 when the Alaska Department of Transportation proposed the project and visited Bettles and Evansville. They proposed using State funds to visit the region and they found out that absolutely no one wanted public access. That was unanimous. So they kicked this hornet's nest to AIDEA.

The Ambler Road is supposed to be industrial access only, but also promised by AIDEA to connect the villages and lower fuel costs. We consistently hear them speaking out of both sides of their mouth. The Ambler Road is supposed to remain closed to the public, but millions of dollars have already been spent by Alaska Department of Transportation and AIDEA with funding appropriated by the Alaska Legislature leaving public access wide open to litigation, exactly like the Dalton

Highway.

The Ambler Road is supposed to promote energy independence for America, but the mining companies are Canadian and Australian with plans to ship all the ore to Asia for processing. That puts into direct question the purpose and need of this whole thing.

Foreign mining companies insist that mining must be done in Alaska because foreign mining companies are terrible to the people and environment of foreign countries. Take a few minutes to vet these companies, and you realize they're actually talking about themselves. AIDEA insists Alaska's ruralness and environmental policy makes it the right place to mine, but complain endlessly when we go through these environmental situations.

I think it would be a great improvement to this process for the applicant, in this case, AIDEA, to be more prepared through federal requirement. It's taken 10 years to get to this point, and AIDEA still hasn't articulated how their magic will provide all the magic things that are missing from road-connected communities like Minto, Manley, Circle, and Tanana.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, John.

Hey, folks, I'm going to ask that you kind of

hold off on the applause or any kind of stuff in between the -- the speakers so we can give speakers the time to speak and we get as many folks in here as possible.

Ticket No. 19, Andy, you're up next.

ANDY JOSEPHSON: Thank you. Andy Josephson, last name is J-O-S-E-P-H-S-O-N, speaking as a citizen and an individual without affiliation.

So I've toured part of the area, there's so much more I want to see, but I've mostly been in the area southeast of the proposed road in the Allakaket and the Alatna area, in the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.

My preference is that if it's defensible and the administration and the department feels that it's defensible, that there be a no action alternative. And I say this out of concern with subsistence for sure, and certainly habitat and patterns of migration of caribou and other animals, but also a -- a real belief sort of inherent in me since birth I guess that we need untrampled spaces in abundance. I know that may not be a criteria that the department can specifically consider.

I've never heard why there can't be an alternatives, and I know ANILCA doesn't speak to this, but an alternative road from the west. That might present, certainly shorter, possibly, from the Red Dog area, and it might present an alternative that could

be -- that could be less of a concern.

I also have concerns with what the legislature has created in AIDEA. I don't think that the legislatures at this time really understand what authority they've given it. This dates back to the late '60s, and how to rein it in. I -- it's an issue I've studied, and I think AIDEA has run afoul of its mission in some respects.

I also don't trust the regulators in full. I cite to the Illinois Creek Mine, the mine north of Nome, which had to be mothballed. I can't remember its name.

SARAH LUPIS: I'm sorry, Andy, your time is up.

ANDY JOSEPHSON: Okay. Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Andy.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 5, Alex.

And, Alex, give me just one moment here.

Next up after Alex we're going to have Ticket 24, 17, and 26.

Whenever your ready, Alex.

ALEX JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Alex Johnson, A-L-E-X, J-O-H-N-S-O-N, and I am speaking to you today as an Alaskan who has had the great honor and privilege of traveling to many of the communities in northwest Alaska, including in the Upper Kobuk and

Koyukuk, closest to the proposed project.

I've also been able to travel and recreate in the western Brooks Range, and I have also had the opportunity to learn from tribal leaders and community members about their concerns about the proposed Ambler Road.

I am also speaking to you today as the Arctic and Interior Alaska campaign director for the National Parks Conservation Association representing 1.6 million members and supporters across the country.

For over a century NPCA has worked to protect and enhance America's national park system for present and future generations. In Alaska that currently means advocated for one of the last great intact and wild landscapes left on earth, the lands encompassed by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd in northwest Alaska, which includes the entire western Brooks Range and over 20 million acres of National Park lands, including Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

This also means advocating for the continuation of traditional ways of life in solidarity with the people of Northwest and Interior Alaska including the 66 affected tribes dependent on the herd as well as the fisheries of the Kobuk, Koyukuk, and Yukon Rivers.

The people of Alaska, and indeed Americans across the country, are being asked to accept truly unacceptable risks to their lives, to their communities, and this landscape, one of the last great wild landscapes on earth, all for a destructive road with no guarantees of profit or even benefit to the people.

For those reasons and many others we strongly urge the BLM to choose the no action alternative in order to safeguard this region for generations to come.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Alex.

ALEX JOHNSON: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Alex.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Alex.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 24, Michaela.

MICHAELA STITH: Hello, my name is Michaela Stith. I'm a lifelong Alaskan born and raised here in Anchorage, and I'm very concerned about the climate impacts on this road that -- the climate impacts that this road will cause as well.

So we know that this road is going to go through areas that have large amounts of permafrost, large amounts of Yedoma deposits, which are going to increase the amount of methane going into the atmosphere. And if we build a road over these permafrost deposits it's going to cause those permafrost to thaw even more quickly than

they already will. We know that it's projected to thaw in this region, and that's going to mean that the road itself is going to need lots of repairs and lots of maintenance.

And I agree with what other folks have said about foreign companies coming here not leaving any benefits for folks who live in the region. We, as Alaskans, are often saying that we need to depend on these extractive economies like mining, like oil and gas, that that's the only way for our economy, and that is strongly incorrect.

We can have economies that are more regenerative that live in support of subsistence, and that aren't causing impacts to it like we know this Ambler Road is going to do.

So I strongly urge for a no action alternative for this Ambler Road. We need to have other types of economic development in the state, and we cannot just keep falling back on mining as our only option moving forward.

Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Michaela.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Michaela.

Ticket No. 17, Judy.

JUDY CAMINER: Before you start the timer I would like to introduce myself and then start my

testimony.

SARAH LUPIS: We're going to start the timer when you start speaking. That's what we've done. We're going to be fair.

JUDY CAMINER: The EIS provides considerable documentation of detrimental impacts on virtually only responsibilities the National Park Service has. Documenting those and then holding 810 hearings does not merit this project to proceed. BLM resources that -- the same assessment of the National Park land, that it is to be a deliberate recognition that the park is not equal to BLM lands.

The SEIS details many impacts that conflict with the responsibilities of your laws, regulations, and policies Park Service must follow. The preserve is to be managed for the protected -- protected purposes stated in ANILCA.

Congress identified the need for surface transportation to the Ambler area for the purposes of mining activity. Period. Not for other reasons that are stated in the EIS.

Until a permit for actual mining has been issued there's no need to proceed. Doyon announced they will not allow access for this road across their lands. That should be the end of this discussion.

Restoration and agency monitoring of the road is critical. No permit should be valid without guaranteed bonds or revenue streaming. Without a management fund to support project-dedicated staff, adverse impacts to resources cannot be monitored, mitigated, or avoided.

One more promise to -- by the United States to Native peoples will be broken. The promise to continue the opportunity for subsistence in the four National Park units. ANILCA authorized access and promise subsistence opportunities would continue. D-O-Y cannot permit the road as planned without breaking that law and promise. The road and mines will destroy the Western heritage, sheefish, white fish, and that is the same as destroying any future for subsistence.

The no action alternative is the only option.
Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Okay. Next up we have
Ticket No. 26, Mary.

Mary, before you begin I'm just going to call the next three so that those folks are ready to go.

MARY GLAVES: Sure.

SARAH LUPIS: All right. So after Mary I have

Ticket 30, Ticket 38, and Ticket 11.

Whenever you're ready.

MARY GLAVES: Okay. I'm Mary Graves,
G-L-A-V-E-S, with Backcountry Hunters & Anglers in the
Alaska Chapter.

BHA works to preserve public lands, waters and
wildlife so that hunting and fishing traditions can be
enjoyed for generations. Our stakeholders are hunters
and anglers including sportsmen and sports hunting. BHA
opposes the Ambler Road and encourages the BLM to select
the no action alternative.

The evidence of the effects of the impacts of
this road could and will likely have an impact on the
Western Arctic Caribou Herd migration. This will only
increase current conflicts between user groups. The
effects of over 2,900 proposed culverts without any
stated culvert standards or an adequate estimate for
culvert maintenance is unacceptable.

AIDEA has a known track record of failure in
their projects, and BHA maintains that the risks of this
project are unacceptable. Alaska BHA has additional
concerns that we'll be submitting in writing to be
conscious of everyone's time this evening.

Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

Ticket 30?

EVA BURK: Did you state -- you said state your name?

SARAH LUPIS: Yes, please. Your name and spell it for -- for Louisa so she can get it.

EVA BURK: Eva Burk, E-V-A, B-U-R-K.

SARAH LUPIS: You're Ticket 30?

EVA BURK: Yes.

SARAH LUPIS: Okay.

EVA BURK: This Supplemental EIS is an appropriate step, but it's definitely not enough time to fully research and understand impacts to subsistence. Relationship building necessary to properly include indigenous knowledge and analyze subsistence impacts takes a lot longer than a year.

The social/economic impacts of a road on Alaska Natives and their ways of life cannot be fully understood because the real data and the real stories are not readily found in research paper, but we see them daily. Disproportionate rates of our people in jails, foster care, and houseless often due to mental health issues. Our health is directly tied to the land and our traditional foods.

We are way too quick to forget the history of

the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. We are still fighting for our subsistence rights as Alaskan Natives. To this day we are still fighting. So any analysis of subsistence now is already through an outdated lens.

Anyone who believes that jobs and money will lift your community, please remember that TAPS still struggles to meet the 20 percent Alaska Native hire. The guys in charge will make room for their buddies and leave the scraps for locals.

The \$50,000 community investments that seem huge now will become meaningless when you see the real price paid for them -- culture, language, Native foods, individual health, and most importantly, community wellness.

Even Doyon will not co-sign this project any further due to quote/unquote "poor treatment." You cannot take a road out. Even the commissioner lines from early statehood can still be seen and used.

There -- there should be no Ambler Road. Not now. Not ever.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Okay. Ticket 38, you're up next. Just -- and, folks, just when I call your ticket number if you wouldn't mind grabbing seats down here in

the front. If you all can come down and have a seat down in the front when you hear your ticket number called it will go a lot faster one speaker to the next.

Go ahead.

ROBYN REYES: Hi. My name is Robin Reyes. That's R-O-B-Y-N, Reyes, R-E-Y-E-S, and I stand before you today as a concerned Alaskan.

I want to express my full-hearted support for the Ambler Access Project and to urge BLM to swiftly complete the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and reissue the right-of-way to the road without delay.

I'm a proud Alaskan. I'm a mother of four. One of my kids has a job working for a local Native corporation in the region, and that's because of responsible development opportunities that are provided to him. One paramount -- one of the paramount benefits of the Ambler Access Project is the creation of much-needed jobs just like the one that he's got.

In a region that has faced economic challenges, the project will be catalyst -- a catalyst for new employment opportunities, injecting vitality into the local economies. And this not only secures livelihoods, but it also conserves a sense of the community and pride.

The economic base provided by the Ambler Access Project will lay the foundation for diverse, economic

faculties ensuring that local communities can thrive. It will lead to a reduction of the cost of living, and the Ambler Access Project is not just a road. It represents a lifeline for the communities in this region, and its completion is crucial for the prosperity of Alaska.

Equally significant is the project's will in reducing our nation's dependence on foreign mineral sources. The Ambler Access Project contributes to the national security and economic resilience. It's a strategic move towards self-reliance aligning with imperative -- aligning with the imperative to secure our critical supply chains.

The critical minerals in the area are crucial --

SARAH LUPIS: Sorry, Amelia. Your time is up. Thank you.

ROBYN REYES: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Robyn.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 11.

Or, I'm sorry, Robyn.

Ticket No. 11, Molly.

MOLLY MCCAMMON: My name is Molly McCammon, M-C-C-A-M-M-O-N.

I've been a property owner on the Ambler River

for the past 45 years and have spent extensive time hiking, boating, and exploring the region that the proposed Ambler Road would bisect. I am opposed to the Ambler Road and support the no action alternative.

I'll be submitting more detailed comments about the SEIS in writing, but I wanted to mention a few tonight.

First, I don't believe that the road will ever remain closed, and that it will -- that it will remain closed to the public. You just look at the Dalton Highway and the history there, and there is just no way that the Alaska public would stand for keeping this road private once state resources have been used to build it.

And a public road might mean, and probably -- and could mean, cheaper goods going to the upper villages, but it also means more access for additional sport hunters and fishers, and a lot of competition for all the very limited subsistence resources now.

Secondly, I just want to say that this is not another Red Dog. This has been compared a lot to building a Red Dog in this region, but AIDEA itself had said that this is not a road to a mine, but a road to a mining district. So far the proposed mining deposits have not shown themselves to be economically viable.

I worked as a camp cook at WGM's Bornite site back in the 1970s. That deposit then was not viable. It's not viable now. I don't think it will ever be viable.

And lastly, I just want to mention that the Upper Koyukuk, Shungnak, and Ambler Rivers are some of the most amazing places in the state of Alaska, and the proposed road would really fragment really valuable wildlife habitat impacting the critical resources there such as salmon and caribou. These are already at risk for -- with climate change, and they would be just increasingly at risk in the future.

So in my view the risks of the Ambler Road far outweigh its potential benefits.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Molly.

SARAH LUPIS: Next up -- I'm going to call the next three tickets. I've got No. 37, No. 18, and No. 31. So Ticket 37, Sasha, 18, and 31, if you all want to come and have a seat down in the front that would be great.

If you're No. 37 you can go ahead and come up to the microphone.

SASHA KRAMER: My name is Sasha Kramer, K-R-A-M-E-R. I'm from Pilot Point, Alaska, where my

ancestors were raised also.

The people who are going to come in -- if this road is approved the people who come in aren't going to care about the community. It's not going to make the cost of food any cheaper, and it's not going to make the living any easier for the people who live in this community, have lived in this community -- the surrounding communities for generations.

But they will bring in man camps, which is harmful to women and people of various genders, and it's just going to create a lot of unwell dissidence.

That -- I just -- I oppose this road and in support for the generations to come I think we all should su- -- not support the road.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Sasha.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Sasha.

SARAH LUPIS: Next up I've got Ticket 18.

PRINCESS JOHNSON: Hi, Princess Johnson,
J-O-H-N-S-O-N.

I just simply don't believe that (speaking Native language), our Creator, created these lands just for us as human beings. We share these lands with the chum, with the grayling, with the sheefish, with the caribou, with the moose, with the hundreds of migratory birds that come out here.

It took thousands of years to carve these waterways, and in a blip of time, in just a couple of years, we can ruin all of that, and for what? At such a critical tipping point in the history of our Mother Earth when we're already up against climate change, what are -- what are we risking here? The contamination of these waterways when we're already seeing our salmon struggling? We're already struggling as human beings trying to continue to exist and live on Mother Earth.

I am obviously opposed to this Ambler Road. If you've ever been up to the Fortymile caribou hunt you see the wanton waste. You see the way people disrespect the spirit of our animals. I don't want to see this up here. I don't want to see it anywhere on our lands any more. I'm tired of it.

Mahsi'choo. Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

Next up is Ticket 31, Marta.

MARTA DITZLER: Hi, everyone. My name is Marta Ditzler, D-I-T-Z-L-E-R.

I was born in Anchorage, and Denana- -- Dena'ina lands. I grew up in Eagle River, graduated from Chugiak High School.

And I graduated with a degree in environmental

studies. And a lot of that degree taught me things I already knew. That extraction is tied to violence. That we always see extraction taking away sisters and brothers and causing trauma that will only be left behind. Extraction means to take something away, sometimes with force.

And we wouldn't let someone come into our home and steal pictures of our family, and that's exactly what this mine will do. That would -- why would you let someone steal photos of your family for a dollar? You would never do that.

I've also only lived a short 23 years, and in my time here I have watched the lands change. I have seen the impacts of climate change. I see them every day. I see them every winter, and each day and each year my heart breaks a little bit more to watch the glaciers that I've known my whole life recede.

This road will only continue to cause the harm that I have known in a short time, and I'm sure many of you have known your lives as well.

I am in support of a no action alternative because I care about my future, people's futures here today, and potentially my children and my children's children's future. And this mine is exactly the thing that will take that away from myself standing here today

and people who aren't here to stand.

Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Marta.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Marta.

Next up we have Ticket 29, Ticket 1, and Ticket 10. Ticket 29, Brandon; Ticket No. 1, Jeff; Ticket 20, Eva.

Brandon, are you here?

BRANDON HILL: Oh, I'm here. Sorry. Yes.

SARAH LUPIS: It's your turn.

BRANDON HILL: Hi, my name is Brandon Hill,
B-R-A-N-D-O-N, H-I-L-L.

I live in Palmer.

I'm for a no action alternative. There's no evidence that industrial development is going to directly able communities. I grew up on the East Coast in the coal fields of Appalachia. After centuries of mining promises for abundance in those communities they're still looking for it. And so the evidence around the world is that these places only have a net loss of impact for the communities.

We're talking about a state plan to shell out \$1.4 billion of public money to a private company without public consent. Sound like they're getting a really good deal. If the state really cared to bring access to

resources and wellness to these communities they could do it without sacrificing the land and the water they depend on.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Brandon.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 1, Jeff.

JEFF SAN JUAN: Good evening. My name is Jeff San Juan.

I am the project manager -- manager at Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, or AIDEA.

I appreciate the chance to express concerns about the SEIS and share with you a different perspective. The SEIS suggests that the presence of the road will potentially impact subsistence use by altering caribou behavior. However, as anyone who has spent much time around migrating caribou knows, they are not easily deterred from where they are going. Caribou are not easily deterred from mountains, vast distances, lakes, rivers, or roads. Particularly once the migration begins.

Here are a few photos of -- showing examples of caribou being completely unaffected by the presence of roads in Alaska. The positive economic impact would benefit from this project is already happening, and the

SEIS, as currently written, will undermine the potential for continually investing in Alaska.

The -- the Ambler Road in the Kobuk region, the top four largest mining claim holders have invested over 26 million this past year alone. This does not include the 9 million from AIDEA or 9 million from Ambler Metals. The state is investing in this project to allot the promise by the federal government and statehood and the ANILCA. By doing so it is AIDEA's goal to assist in developing communities that are self-sustaining and growing.

At AIDEA we hope to achieve this for all communities and persons within Alaska Mining District [as spoken], similar to the village of Noatak, which is the closest community to the Red Dog Mine and the road/port.

Noatak currently has four general stores, a water and sewage distribution system capable of serving 90 percent of the homes in the village, a new landfill, and a poverty rate of only 5.7 percent.

AIDEA is investing in Alaska's future going off the minerals, our --

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Jeff. Your time is up.

Ticket No. 10 -- Ticket No. 10.

One second. After Ticket No. 10 we're going

to hear from Ticket 14, Ticket 22, and Ticket 23.

JESSICA GIRARD: Hello, my name is Jessica Girard, G-I-R-A-R-D, and this is Kyla. And we are here to support the no action alternative for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, every single tribe that will be impacted by this development has said they do not want this, and so that alone is enough reason to not do this, requiring informed consent.

Secondly, not only do the tribes not want it, the corporation of Doyon does not want it.

Second -- third -- do you want to say anything about why you don't want this? You don't have to if you don't want to.

KYLA HUNTINGTON: I don't want it.

JESSICA GIRARD: Okay. She doesn't want it.

And also for young people to have access to their subsistence rights.

And so in the future I want people to be able to have the caribou, the salmon -- anything there that can remain intact for future generations.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 14.

And just a reminder Ticket 22 and Ticket 23, you are next.

DILOOLA ERICKSON: Hi. (Speaking Native language.) My people say that they don't want this Ambler Road. My name is Diloola and my family comes from Kaltag out on the Yukon River, and I'm here to testify in support of a no action alternative.

This road would further create -- limit the access our people have to their subsistence resources. It would also put in further danger and stress on the resources that we already have. It is in no way preserving a sustainable future for our generations to come.

The young girl that was up here was my daughter, Kyla Huntington, and in her lifetime she has only been able to go out and be at home and process fish once. One year she was able to go out and help because our salmon are in crisis. Our caribou are in crisis and our moose are in crisis. This -- resources we depend on are dwindling at rapid rates and at scary rates.

I support BLM in choosing a no action alternative to preserve the long-term sustainability for the -- our future generations instead of selling out and allowing this corporation to make short-term monetary gains.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 22, Lois.

LOIS EPSTEIN: Good evening. Thank you for holding this hearing in Anchorage on the proposed Ambler Road.

My name is Lois Epstein, and I am a licensed engineer in Alaska with my own consulting firm. I am providing this testimony on my own behalf. As background I have been analyzing and weighing in on the proposed road since it was first planned by Alaska DOT prior to AIDEA's involvement. I often raised its extremely high cost and questionable benefits to the state in public comments. For many reasons, especially the impacts on subsistence and wildlife, BLM needs to select a no action alternative.

To begin I would like to challenge the premise of the road and associated mining projects. Copper is available from numerous countries that the U.S. does not find troubling, with Chile, Australia, and Peru having the greatest copper reserves.

It's true that much of the world's copper smelting is in China, and that would also be where copper produced in the Ambler Mining District would be smelted. It's false to say that the U.S. needs metals from the

Ambler Mining District to ensure a cleaner energy economy.

The drafted SEIS is greatly improved from the EIS produced by the Trump Administration. Draft SEIS is much more realistic about the adverse impacts the proposed road and associated mines are likely to have on caribou, fish, and the communities and people that rely on these resources for subsistence.

Just today at the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting participants heard that there is more and more evidence that the Red Dog Road delays caribou from crossing the road a substantial period of time, i.e. about weeks. Caribou are arriving late to subsistence communities already en route, and late to their winter habitat. Caribou have to cross the Ambler Road twice each year rather than the single crossing the herd makes of the Red Dog Road.

The draft SEIS is deficient in analyzing two reasonably foreseeable actions. I'll just mention them because I'm running out of time. The first action, not analyzing details of the Roosevelt Project, and the second is the potential listing in a few years of the Yukon River salmon as threatened or endangered.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Lois.

LOIS EPSTEIN: Thank you for

your -- considering these comments.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Lois.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 23.

After this we'll hear from Ticket 13, 41, and 32. Thirteen, 41, and 32, if you want to start making your way to the front that would be helpful. Thank you.

Go ahead whenever you're ready.

AUSTIN TAGABAN: (Speaking Native language.)
I'm Austin Tagaban, and I'm here to speak in favor of the no action alternative.

The -- this proposed mining road would cost the state of Alaska more than \$1.4 billion, and that -- that is not -- there is no guarantee that we would ever see any return on that. And there's also no guarantee that this road would remain private as many other people have said. And we can look at the history of Alaska to show that that might -- that would be -- very likely be true.

And the impact of a lot of traffic on such a road would be extremely detrimental to people's access to their traditional resources, and they would have to compete with many other hunters from outside of the region.

Yeah. That's all. (Speaking Native language.)

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 13, Adam. Whenever you're ready.

ADAM BABCOCK: Hey, my name is Adam Babcock, and I'm here to speak in opposition --

SARAH LUPIS: Can you step a little closer to the microphone to make sure Louisa can hear you?

ADAM BABCOCK: My name's Adam Babcock. I'm here to speak in opposition to the road in favor of a no action alternative.

Folks have brought up some great points here. I'd also like to just remind everybody that there's a lot more impacts than -- it's very difficult to capture them all in an EIS. Trucks will inevitably, you know, go off the road, there will be mechanical failures. There's all sorts of impacts -- cumulative impacts over time that are going to be difficult to measure here in any EIS.

Those impacts are going to be tremendously expensive to clean up if the BLM does move forward with this and this road does get constructed I would urge the BLM to look at bonding requirements and I -- I -- it's hard to put a number to it, but tens of billions perhaps. It's hard to imagine cleaning this stuff up in this remote country.

And too often these companies have a history of not being there to clean up after themselves. They create the impact, they generate the generational wealth for a few of their corporate executives, not for the local communities, not in a sustainable manner, and then they move on. And they'll often change their name and operate under a different name so they can do the same thing to a different location.

So that's why I oppose the road, and I think we just need to start looking very seriously as a nation at the management decisions we make, the policy decisions we make, to try to avoid these long-term impacts that, make no mistake, this will be a profound trampling of one of the last true wildernesses in the -- in the world, really.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Adam.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Adam.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 41, Kimberly.

KIMBERLY FRY: Hello, my name is Kimberly Fry. I'm -- I'm an Alaskan -- I'm Alaska Native. I was born and raised in Alaska.

I'm also -- my undergraduate is engineering. I've worked in the region in the mining industry, and I'm -- fully, wholeheartedly support the Ambler Access

Road. It should go. We have a right as Alaskans to bring natural resources to market. It's in the Alaskan Constitution. It's good for Alaska's GEP. We need more roads. We are one of the only states in the 50 states of the whole United States of America to not have roads.

We -- any infrastructure, any mining, any roads we need to support. We need to better our life in Alaska. We need to create jobs, we need to bring our minerals to re- -- to resource, to market.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 32. Ticket 32. All right. Last call for Ticket 32 -- is that you?

CRAIG JONES: (Speaking Native language.) My name is Craig Jones. I'm from Ambler. I'm the deputy program manager of this project.

I -- I would like to, just for the record, state that we'd like to move forward with Option A. I think that this project is going to be very beneficial, not only for the people of my region, but also the state of Alaska.

I think it's important to remember that without community -- without opportunity we're probably not going to have much of a community.

100 percent of my graduating class is no longer living in Ambler. That's the case for many classes before and many classes after. Doesn't seem like a big deal, but our knowledge barriers are starting to move on and pass away, and then there's those of us that not only capture what we were taught but have hopes of someday teaching it to our children. Without opportunity that's not going to have to -- that's not going to happen, and I think there'll be more focus on revitalization projects for something like that, you know, as far as that culture goes.

So, again, Option A, Craig Jones, Ambler, Alaska. Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Craig.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 15, 12 and 35, you all are next.

So Ticket 15, I think Chuck. Are you here?

Okay. Thanks for waving. Feel like it's the Price is Right. Come on down. Whenever you're ready.

CHUCK KOPP: Thank you. Thank you members of this panel for what you're doing. My name is Chuck Kopp, born and raised here in Alaska. My village didn't have a hospital. Came in, was born, went right back out to Newhalen where I was raised. And then after that moved

into the big town Naknek, Bristol Bay, and back to Anchorage.

My whole life here, did a whole career of public safety. The most significant men in my life were Native elders. I hope you weigh heavily the voice of those elders you heard.

When I was in the Alaska Legislature in 2020 I passed landmark legislation. It was the first State Tribal Recognition Act; March 3rd it passed the House of Representatives. Unfortunately COVID ran us out of the legislature, and my colleague, Tiffany Zulkosky of Bethel, finished the job in 2022.

Why was a white guy from South Anchorage carrying legislation for the Alaska Native people? Because I was taught that every relationship is about balance. And if one side wins, somebody's losing, and that's never good.

I am for the Ambler Access Project. And I'm going to tell you why.

The -- too often we hear policy positions that don't have balance, and when you have balance you will always have tension, because balance is always found between the extremes. You know that when you serve in public service. You know that with values and you know that with policy outcomes. And when there's

misstatements or inaccuracies by either side that are acted on preferentially they will always lead to a lack of balance, to broken relationships, and policy outcomes that will shift with every election cycle, and a deterioration of trust and respect in the democratic processes of governments.

I see that I'm just about out, so I'm going to wrap it up. We have these resources here at home. Our government needs them, and that's one reason why we're so concerned about the war in Ukraine, because 25 percent of the world's critical --

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

CHUCK KOPP: -- are under siege and --

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you for your comment.

CHUCK KOPP: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Chuck.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 12, Matt.

MATT NARUS: Good evening. My name's Matt Narus. That's N, as in Nancy, A-R-U-S.

I'm a licensed engineer in Alaska and have worked for a variety of companies over my career. I currently am employed by Kuna Engineering, the NANA-owned engineering firm.

Kuna provides a large amount of the engineering support to the Red Dog Mine in northwest Alaska, and to

many other mines across the state. We at Kuna are proud in our support to mining and very proud of how Teck operates the Red Dog Mine. They have a specific focus on stewardship, constantly striving to minimize the environmental impacts upon the region.

Through my 10 years of -- through my 10 years of constantly -- sorry, I should have written this bigger -- through my 10 years of support in various ways to Red Dog I have seen how the mine has produced a multitude of positive impacts for individuals in the region, the general economy, and for NANA, and even for other ANCs throughout Alaska through the 7(i) and 7(j) payments.

Many do not know that Red Dog actually is paying upwards of 40 percent royalties to the ANCs. It's actually nearly impossible to count all the ways that the Red Dog has improved the lives in northwest Alaska and across -- and across the state.

The Ambler Access Project will provide these same opportunities. Helping communities in the region continue their subsistence lifestyle and reverse the out-migration trends. That is one area that is not analyzed in the SEIS is the current out-migration. None of this would be possible without this road and the looming closure of the Red Dog Mine makes these

opportunities even more critical.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

Ticket 35, Austin.

After this we're going to hear from Ticket 42, 39 and 4.

Go ahead, Austin.

AUSTIN AHMASUK: Thank you. For the record Austin, A-U-S-T-I-N, last name A-H-M-A-S-U-K. I am absolutely for the no action alternative for three reasons -- for three reasons I think BLM has not investigated very well.

The first reason being that the -- the promise of jobs is not very well interpreted by BLM. BLM says it looks at speculative reasons for job opportunities or job benefits, but with -- throughout the entire SEIS none of those jobs are guaranteed by anybody, and BLM doesn't even advocate for hiring job guarantee by anyone for any reason.

Number two, Alaska has some of the worst environmental regulations in the nation. They are implied in Alaska whether they're on state lands or federal lands are some of the worst I noticed because I'm

originally from Nome.

Nome is a community that's ravaged by mining, and ability to force environmental laws and the ability to oversee environmental laws are some of the worst in the nation.

And thirdly, there are going to be significant impacts because of this road. And in one area that BLM has not investigated very well is how Fish & Game laws are crafted in Alaska. The way Fish & Game laws are crafted in Alaska is some of the worst in the nation. The Alaska Boards of Fisheries, the Alaska Boards of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board do not make very good decisions. They don't make scientific decisions. They make, in fact, what are political decisions.

The Alaska Board of Game is -- its membership is driven by a -- by the currency in governor. The currency of governor has appointed the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game that is very slanted to one political party, and thusly impacts will be great and they'll be felt across --

SARAH LUPIS: Thanks --

AUSTIN AHMASUK: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 42 and then 39 and 4.

Go ahead, Jen.

JEN LEAHY: Hi, good evening. I'm Jen Leahy.

I'm the Alaska program manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and work to ensure quality hunting and fishing opportunities for all Americans.

I want to thank the commissioner for being here this evening. I know there's a lot of other places folks could be.

I've been fortunate to live in several different regions of Alaska, and my favorite place, which I've never lived in but only visited, is the Brooks Range, and I think that's because it reminds me of how small I am and how just like the kind of place that really puts things in perspective and helps remind me what matters. It's a really special place I know for a lot of Alaskans, especially local people.

The TRCP's position is that our mineral resources should be developed closer to existing infrastructure where the impacts to fish and wildlife and people can be minimized. It's really rare that we would even weigh in on a development issue like this, but we've studied the project extensively.

I've read the SEIS, I've read Trilogy's feasibility study, and we concluded that for this particular project the potential risk, especially considering the -- there would be over 2,900 new culverts and the impacts to the Western Arctic Herd, simply

outweigh the potential benefits, especially considering, on that end, that the markets for these minerals have been identified by the industry as being markets in East Asia.

So I came here tonight directly from the Western Arctic Herd meeting, and that working group has issued multiple resolutions against the road because of the likely impacts of habitat fragmentation to that declining herd.

And my vision for the Western Arctic Herd is that it will rebound to levels that can support adequate harvest for all user groups. And while we can't do things to impact factors like icing we can decipher these type -- these types of projects.

So I urge the BLM to adopt the no action alternative. Thank you so much.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Jen.

Ticket 39, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH FREEMAN: Good evening. Elizabeth Freeman, F-R-E-E-M-A-N.

I come to you all today as a humble geologist. I really don't have any skin in this fight except for the fact that I'm still in awe of the deposits that were laid down years and years ago before any of us were here, right? Because of those things, that's what will allow Alaska and its people to be prosperous. The history of this

state begins with copper. The indigenous people are professionals at milling copper. They traded copper with the Ahtna people all over the state and had a beautiful trade network.

I would love to stand on that legacy today and talk about how we can continue the extractions of these minerals responsibly. I think that it's beautiful. You know, people hear that all of Alaska, we all believe in the economy of Alaska, but I think we should be able to come together. It's 2023. It's no us and them. We're never going to get ahead if we stay that wait.

So I just urge people to kind of pull back a minute. I've actually worked up in the Brooks Range. I've worked at the project. I've worked along my indigenous brothers and sisters, many of which want to become environmental scientists. Why? So they could be the overseers of the project.

A lot of people I knew from Kobuk and Shungnak were in support of this project. And as far as getting young people -- the suicide rate is astronomical in that region, primarily because there's no opportunity or perceived lack of opportunity. So this, I believe, could improve resources to that -- to that region which desperately needs them. I saw firsthand how people are getting water.

So it's easy to sit in Anchorage when we have our cell phones, we have our cars, but there's a reality in other parts of the state where those things are not accessible and a project like this could definitely enhance some of the opportunities given.

And I also want us to take pause. Most of us didn't walk here. Your catalytic converter in your car needs copper. Your cell phone needs copper. So when you think of anything electrical, that's copper.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Elizabeth.

Ticket No. 4. Ticket No. 4.

After this we're going to hear from Ticket 43, Ticket No. 8, and Ticket No. 16.

Ticket No. 4, are you here? No? Going once. Okay. We're going to move on to Ticket 43.

MARIE MOTSCHMAN: Good afternoon, good evening.

SARAH LUPIS: I'm going to ask that you turn the microphone back the way it was so you can direct your comments to the BLM up here on the stage. Thanks. And we need you to stand in front of it so that Louisa can hear you. Thanks.

MARIE MOTSCHMAN: Direct my comments --

SARAH LUPIS: To the BLM.

MARIE MOTSCHMAN: -- like this to the BLM?

SARAH LUPIS: Yep. Thank you, ma'am.

MARIE MOTSCHMAN: Okay. I want to thank you all for -- everyone who's playing a part in this community opportunity to give our opinion on this very important project. Thank you. And thanks for being here, guys.

I have a lot more than two minutes to say, and so I'm going to write and send you a love letter about not just you guys, but also my opinion on this very important issue.

I will give up my time to some of the other wonderful speakers that have been here today. Thank you for giving your comments. It's really important to show up, right? That's half the battle in life.

So thank you. I defer.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you. Ticket No. 8, Karlin.

KARLIN ITCHOAK: Good evening. My name is Karlin Itchoak, K-A-R-L-I-N, I-T-C-H-O-A-K. (Speaking Native language.) I am the Alaska senior regional director for The Wilderness Society.

We are opposed to the Ambler Road because this project would have major impacts on the Arctic, including to public health, sacred land, subsistence food access, special areas, wildlife, the climate crisis, and more. Including the fact that the road would cross the Gates

of the Arctic National Preserve and Koyukuk wild and scenic river.

In addition, we are concerned about the negative impacts of -- to the local indigenous people who live in these communities and rely on wildlife for their food and way of life. We need to further study and consider the negative impacts to subsistence use in these communities. The construction, maintenance, and use of the road and its river crossings will negatively impact vegetation, permafrost conditions, and waterways in an area already under tremendous stress from the climate change crisis.

We must fully consider the impacts this road will have if and when it becomes open to the public. The primary purpose of this road is to access a mining district. The agencies must consider the impacts of these -- these mines and the infrastructure related to the mines and spur roads.

We must consider the serious risk of harmful acid rock drainage, the potential environmental pollution from copper metallurgy, and the toxic chemicals, heavy metals associated -- airborne particulate matter that will be transported over long distances and will harm fish and its wildlife and cause extensive water pollution.

Because of the proposed Ambler Road's environmental impacts, the Wilderness Society believes the BLM should select the no action alternative.

Thank you for your time.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, sir.

Ticket No. 16.

And then after this we're going to hear from Ticket 21, 33, and 28.

Whenever you're ready.

JULIA TERRY: Go evening. My name is Julia Terry. That's T-E-R-R-Y. My parents live in Fairbanks. I am grateful to have grown up all throughout the state of Alaska and currently live here on unseated Dena'ina land. And I'm glad that I followed the person I followed, because I think that's pertinent to what I'm going to say.

I encourage you to -- strongly encourage a nonaction alternative on the Ambler Road. I'd like to speak to the ripple effect of every action we take that wounds the planet as we live through progressively intensifying climate change. I am deeply distressed by the eventuality of the disruption and devastation to people, waters, and animals throughout the southern Brooks Range and Alaska at large.

I grew up on the Niukluk River in a village on

the western coast of Alaska far away from the Brooks Range, but still experiencing climate change that we're all seeing today. I was raised by my family members in the traditional subsistence-based life.

I'm greatly fortunate to have been gifted indigenous knowledge through proximity and participation in indigenous ways of life. This has shaped my values deeply, especially with respect to the land of which we are an integral part.

I've seen firsthand the deep impact of climate change on my community and family as our village erodes and our family is separated due to relocation. My identity, nurtured by immersion in culture, becomes fractured.

Everything is connected. The animals that feed us, the people that support us, the land that sustains us. The cost to our communities would be immeasurable should the Ambler Road project move forward. The best way to minimize environmental and cultural impact is to say no to the Ambler Road.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 21, Nancy.

NANCY WAINWRIGHT: Good evening. My name is Nancy Wainwright, W-A-I-N-W-R-I-G-H-T.

I'm here on behalf of the Native Village of Ambler Traditional Council. First Chief Molly Brown unfortunately was not able to make it. She's ill tonight. And I'm just going to speak to a few things.

First of all, the proposed project and associated development of mining threatens the inherent human rights of the Native Village of Ambler, the tribal members, their ability to continue hunting, fishing, gathering, and practices that serves the foundation of their culture, spirituality, and way of life.

The true -- Ambler Traditional Council urges the no action alternative.

After hearing a -- the words tonight, I -- I do feel compelled to add a little something. I urge BLM to do due diligence in looking into AIDEA and its representations.

Just tonight AIDEA said that -- cited the Native village of Noatak as having many benefits, but Noatak is not in the same watershed as the Native village -- as the Red Dog Mine. It's the Native village Kivalina that's in the same watershed. Kivalina has no running water, no toilets, none of the amenities that are being promised by this road.

The second thing is that -- about the caribou. Caribou was represented they aren't disturbed by roads.

The Teck itself has documented that caribou stopped within eight miles of the road. So they have studies showing that.

The legislature independently evaluated the Red Dog Road, and they hired a consultant to do so. They have not done that for the Ambler Road. That should be done to make sure the financial declarations in -- in their claims are accurate.

Thank you, guys.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Nancy.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 33, Austin.

AUSTIN TODD: Hello. My name is Austin Todd. I live in Anchorage, and I grew up in Arkansas, and I'm here to support the no action alternative.

In Arkansas, ExxonMobil is starting a new lithium mine, and they say that this one is going to be more environmentally safe. But for ExxonMobil and other similar extractive corporations like the ones that are running Ambler, it's not in their interest to help the people that they're running these projects in, or the people in the communities where they're having these projects or the environment. So I'm concerned about the road.

I don't see balance here, because on the one

side I see large profits for a select group of people, and on the other side I see environmental degradation and no guarantee of jobs for communities.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Austin.

SARAH LUPIS: Up next I have Ticket 28, Jeff.

And following that we're going to hear from Ticket No. 2, 36, and 7.

Whenever you're ready.

JEFF CHEN: Hi. My name is Jeff Chen. I support the -- the no action alternative and oppose the Ambler mining road. After recently visiting Evansville and Bettles I stand with Chief Frank Thompson and the tribe there, and the 42 tribes that are unanimously against this road.

And, yeah, coming from an immigrant family I've learned a lot about indigenous peoples here in the U.S., and I think it's really important to listen to the First Peoples of this land, and -- especially where you don't have their consent to develop.

So, yeah, I firmly support the no action alternative.

And, also, after traveling through Lake Minto and Tanana and seeing how that road has impacted the

community there during hunting season -- I've heard multiple stories of numerous families not being able to find moose when -- when it's really needed, and also hearing stories about the impact -- the negative impact on women and children along these roads as -- as they've come to this conclusion as well.

So thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Jeff.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

Ticket No. 2, John.

And then after that we'll hear from Ticket 36 and 7.

JOHN DEMIENTIEFF: My name is John Demientieff, D-E-M-I-E-N-T-I-E-F-F.

I belong to the village of Evansville and strongly oppose this road construction.

You know, the BLM on one of their papers up in Fairbanks I photographed it says their mission sounds like what our families practice, and it says a sustained health, diversity and product- -- product- -- productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. This doesn't sound like it from a lot of testimonies.

And as it is, my Inupiaq name is Tutruq, T-U-T-R-U-Q. It is not do truck [as spoken], so I'm

totally against it. It doesn't go with my name.

And by all means, you know, there's -- there are a lot of different tribes that are against this project. There are, like, 88 indigenous governments opposed to the proposed Ambler Road which include the following 15 Native language groups, the Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Inupiaq, Gwich'in, Athabascan, inlet -- inland Tlingit, Hagwich'in (phonetic), Upper Tanana, Upper Kuskokwim, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Northern Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian, Dagchik (phonetic), and Kaska (phonetic) -- that's quite a variety of peoples.

Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, John.

Ticket 36.

THE COURT REPORTER: Sarah, can I get the spellings for those languages?

ENEI BEGAYE: Hello. I'm Enei Begaye.

SARAH LUPIS: Oh, I'm sorry. Just give me one second.

ENEI BEGAYE: Okay.

SARAH LUPIS: Say that again, Louisa?

THE COURT REPORTER: Those languages he listed, can I get the spellings for those?

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: I've got them.

THE COURT REPORTER: You've got them? Okay.
Sorry. Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Nope. You're fine.

I'm so sorry. Whenever you're ready. Thank
you.

ENEI BEGAYE: Enei Begaye. I'm a resident of
Fairbanks. I come to this with a strong encouragement
of no action on this road. I do not support this road.
I listened to a full room in Fairbanks of tribal chiefs,
of tribal community members of, of tribal elders talk
about the impacts that this road would have on their
communities.

I heard them talk about how this road would
bring in men from other places that would potentially be
harmful to their communities and we see this. We've seen
this in many places, how man camps increase the -- the
violence against our women, our girls, our other genders.

And we've also seen the suicide rates increase
in communities that are directly connected by these roads
or have these -- these mining industries and extractive
industries. That's why I listened to the tribes -- a
roomful of tribes in Fairbanks talk about the protection
of their territories, their lands, and the fact that this
is the last -- some of the last remaining
ecosystem -- intact ecosystem in the world that we must

protect like many, many speakers said.

In addition, this road makes no economic sense for Alaska. It is a dead end. It is a dead end for Alaska and spending on this dead end and this horrible project is irresponsible and idiotic.

No action. Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you. Ticket No. 7, Emily.

After this we're going to hear from Ticket 20, Ticket 6, and Ticket 9.

Whenever you're ready.

EMILY COHEN: My name is Emily Cohen, E-M-I-L-Y, C-O-H-E-N. I'm a resident of Anchorage, and I'm representing myself.

Thank you for having this opportunity to comment, and I strongly urge for a no action option.

The duty of the Bureau of Land Management is to conserve and steward our lands effectively, and we have excellent historical evidence like the Trans-Alaska Pipeline to show that a project of this magnitude would have detrimental, irreversible impacts. A heavily trafficked road cutting across our state is antithetical to what Alaska offers -- wild, beautiful lands.

Impacts from this project will be felt for centuries. I understand the need for a thriving economy

and for resources, but no amount of money can ever be worth destroying some of the last untouched wilderness the earth will ever have.

I am concerned about the exorbitant cost of this project with over a billion dollars, with limited to no guarantee of profit return. And I find it very questionable that foreign mining companies with dubious histories are the ones spearheading this road.

If we can invest a billion dollars in a resource that will run out, we can invest a billion dollars in a resource that will never run out -- our land and our people. I am confident that we, as Americans and human beings, can come up with a better solution to meet our financial and resource needs than something that will permanently damage our natural environment, animals, and cultures.

Please, choose a no action option until we can create a solution that all who will benefit and be affected by this road support. Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Emily.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Emily.

Ticket No. 20 -- Ticket No. 20, Jim.

JIM ADAMS: Jim Adams, A-D-A-M-S. I am the senior regional director for the National Parks Conservation Association. NPCA opposes the road.

Sixteen million acres of roadless National Park land, Western Arctic Caribou Herd, which is one of the great unsung wonders of the world, and so many regional tribal communities opposing it. We've heard a lot here tonight about the many reasons for that opposition, so I'm going to focus my testimony on the speculative nature of the benefits of this road.

AIDEA's assumptions about the economic impacts of this road are, at this point, the stuff of fantasy. They speculate that four mineral deposits will be exploited, when none of them have permits and only one has a plan of feasibility study. Lots of planned mines don't go forward in Alaska and elsewhere. We could all come up with examples, and none of these are planned.

They speculate that they will get a contract signed for payment on this road by four mines, a decade before two of those mineral deposits might come online. They speculate that the road will be supported for 50 years without being able to identify who or what will be mining for the last 20 years of their project.

University of Alaska study that projects job numbers for the region justified its assumption about local hire rates with a one sentence footnote, and that's symbolic of the entire AIDEA operation in terms of actually doing the hard work to figure out what the

economic benefits of this project would be. And since AIDEA didn't do it, the SEIS needs to.

At this point, the DSEIS portrays this as a choice between four exploited mineral deposits and a road with a bunch of economic benefits and subsistence. But this is much more likely to be a road with one mine or no mines or two mines or three instead of four, and the SEIS needs to portray that so we can understand the choices in front of us.

Thanks.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you, Jim.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Jim.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 6.

And then after this we're going to hear from Ticket 9, 3, 34, 40, and 25.

Whenever you're ready.

JASMINE JEMEWOUK: Good evening. My name is Jasmine Jemewouk, J-E-M-E-W-O-U-K.

Water quality and community health protection coordinator, and I'm representing the Alaska Community Action on Toxics. We are a statewide nonprofit public interest environmental health, research, and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting public health.

ACAT has members that live and work in the area that would be affected by the proposed Ambler Mining

District and industrial access road. There are existing health disparities and the pollution from the road development and associated mining activities would exacerbate these conditions and have greater adverse health effects on people that already have chronic health -- health conditions.

The indigenous peoples of this region have been here for thousands of years relying on seasonal plants and migratory animals. Traditional food is the healthiest diet we can possibly consume.

I am worried about food security for families like mine in Elim, Alaska, that eat caribou meat year-round. We cannot survive without caribou. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd provides food for the entire northwest region of Alaska and will forever be changed by Ambler Road.

Gravel mining excavation and road construction activities will mobilize cancer-causing asbestos and the associated mining of metals threaten public health by exposing indigenous people to heavy metals and other toxic substances.

We do not support destroying the lands and wildlife in one of the most fragile and culturally rich places in the world, and we need to protect the health of the people, land, water, and wildlife that call this

place home.

Please opt for the no action alternative.

Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

Ticket No. 9, Danielle.

DANIELLE STICKMAN: All right. Good evening.

My name is Danielle Stickman, S-T-I-C-K-M-A-N. I'm Dena'ina and Koyukuk Athabascan. My parents are from Nome, Dalton, and Galena. I'm speaking today on behalf of the Wilderness Society as the Arctic Lands Gate director.

We urge the Bureau of Land Management to select the no action alternative. Dozens of communities along the Yukon River and connecting tributaries have experienced a severe salmon decline due to the climate crisis and other factors in recent years.

I was raised in one of the last remaining salmon cultures. The importance and value of a subsistence way of life cannot be reasonably quantified in the English language as written in the parameters laid out in the Dec- -- DSEIS.

At least 66 subsistence communities would have their subsistence way of life threatened if the Ambler Road is built. The road would result in disproportionately high and adverse health effects to

Alaska Native people, drive increases in trespass and violence against women, and cause serious pollution to the air and water necessary for a viable subsistence way of life.

It is vital to protect the natural environment which the cultural, economic, social, and spiritual needs and wellbeing of federally recognized Indian tribes depend.

The Wilderness Society urges the Bureau of Land Management to fulfill your sacred trust responsibility by supporting the no action alternative.

(Speaking Native language.) Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you, Danielle.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket No. 3, Alex. Ticket No. 3, Alex.

Ticket 34.

NASRUK NAY: Good evening. My name is Nasruk Nay, N, as in November, A-S, like Sierra, R-U-K. Last name, N like November, A-Y.

And I am Inupiaq Eskimo. I'm from the village of Noorvik on the Kobuk River. My wife is from the village of Kobuk closest to the Ambler Mining District, and my background is I grew up in Noorvik and in Kotzebue, and I spent a career as a police officer, an Alaska State

Trooper, having just retired a couple years ago.

So I've been all across rural Alaska over three decades and witnessed some of the causes and effects of hopelessness and lack of something to look forward to, something to prepare for, something to do with your life with -- that will expand horizons and allow you to do the things that we've talked about here.

Subsistence lifestyles -- subsistence lifestyles don't come free, and they don't come without the need for equipment and guns and fuel and provisions, shelter.

And in my life experience I've witnessed communities where projects like what is proposed with the Ambler Mining District and supported by the Ambler Road project have helped to allow people that live there and subsist there to take control of their own self-determination by the fact that they have the means to do it. They have something that they can strive for, look forward to in a career, and I think that has many positive effects socially and economically that we might definitely see in our area, which my grandchildren are going to be living in.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you for your comment.

NASRUK NAY: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 40, Robert.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Ticket 40 -- Ticket 40, Robert.
Ticket 25, Josie.

JOSIE WILSON: My name is Josie Wilson, and this is my son, Liam. He is a miracle baby. As a first-time mom I have a newfound perspective on the challenges faced in rural Alaska.

I stand before you today as a changed person shaped by the recent visit to Allakaket where I witnessed hardships by families who once traveled miles to access the only washateria in the community.

There is no running water, and if your son has a diaper blowout, not having running water is much, much difficult.

During my visit it became clear that access to reliable infrastructure is a pressing need in these remote communities. I saw a dad with his three kids doing his best in the washateria and using only -- the only tub with running water he had access to.

The Ambler Road Project is poised to address this issue by opening avenues for economic opportunities and job creation. Local villages could have spur roads for fuel and essential goods. Several communities in the region have run out of fuel due to a lack of access, while others pay \$18 a gallon. The success of the communities

in the NANA region and several within Doyon hinge on projects like these which are vital for sustaining quality of life for our children.

The Ambler Access Project holds significant -- significance not only for the residents in the area, but for all Alaskans. The authorization of access to chemical minerals under ANILCA underscores the project's importance in securing its natural resources.

I believe in responsible development and have observed how subsistence can coexist with roads. If you truly love the land and people as I do, you want to create an economy. These minerals are solo-powered and electric vehicle technology must come from somewhere, and it's better for Mother Earth that they come from Alaska where we steward the land better than other place in the world.

In my research I have been reading hundreds of articles underscoring the need for the United States to be self-reliant in the realm of mineral resources. China is controlling the mineral supply chain from investing in political and environmental groups to shut projects down.

I urge you to support the Ambler Access Project Alternative A, recognizing its significance in addressing the needs, and let us base our decisions on

accurate research information.

We need to ensure that this road project, much like those before it, stand as a beacon of progress for generations to come and for our children like my son, Liam.

Thank you.

GEOFF BEYERSDORF: Thank you.

SARAH LUPIS: Thank you so much.

So I'm out of tickets, and so I want to thank you all so much for your comments. I think we can give a round of applause to all of our commenters tonight. Thank you, everyone, for your comments.

And this will conclude the public meeting for the Draft Ambler Road SEIS and ANILCA Section 810 hearing. As Geoff mentioned in the presentation, comments can also be submitted by the comment cards at the sign in, ePlanning project website, or hard copy mailed or delivered to the BLM.

Thank you so much for attending. Have a safe evening.

(Proceedings concluded at 7:08 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, LOUISA DENNIS, Stenographic Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein set forth; that the testimony and proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later transcribed by computer transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of the testimony and 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 set my hand and affixed my seal this 7th day of January 2024.

LOUISA DENNIS
My Commission Expires 1/18/2027