AMBLER ROAD ACCESS

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SECTION 810

PUBLIC HEARING

Location:
BLM District Office
Fairbanks, Alaska
Thursday, December 14, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 12:10 a.m.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP TEAM:
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FAIRBANKS, ALASKA; THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023

10:00 A.M.

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CHAD RICKLEFS: All right. Well, thanks for joining. We're going to get started here. As Rob was saying, we're going to do some introductions. We've got some folks in the room here, as well as you in Alatna.

We're here today to have the public -- public comment period for the Ambler Road Draft Supplemental EIS, as well as the Section 810 hearing for the ANILCA 810.

Before we get started we wanted to go through some introductions. We're going to start with those of you that are -- that are calling in. We'll start with you for introductions before we go around the room here and do introductions. We've got several folks here in the room.

So if -- if -- Chief, if you want to go ahead and introduce yourself first, and then we can have anyone else that's in the room with you, or anyone else that's on the line, introduce themselves.

ROB ROSENFELD: Chief Harding, can you hear us?

CHIEF HARDING: What -- what was that now?

ROB ROSENFELD: Can -- can you introduce

yourself, Chief?

CHIEF HARDING: Okay. Thank you. I am Harding Sam, First Chief from Alatna.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Chief. Is there anyone else in the room?

CHIEF HARDING: Dawn, she -- she'll be here shortly.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Okay. Dawn, she'll be back shortly.

ROB ROSENFELD: And that will be Dawn David the tribal --

CHIEF HARDING: Yes.

ROB ROSENFELD: -- administrator.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Okay.

CHIEF HARDING: Dawn's the one --

ROB ROSENFELD: Is anyone else from Alatna in the room? Just checking.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Here?

CHIEF HARDING: No.

ROB ROSENFELD: Just checking. I don't know everybody here.

CHAD RICKLEFS: No. Okay. We'll go around the room and introduce ourselves here.

My name is Chad Ricklefs. I am with SWCA. I'm the project manager for the Draft Supplemental EIS. My

responsibility is to work with the BLM to help prepare this document as well as help facilitate the public meetings and the public involvement and will be coordinating with the BLM on the next steps to prepare the final Supplemental EIS.

I'll pass it over to Bill to introduce himself.

BILL HEDMAN: Yeah. Good morning, Chief Sam. This is Bill Hedman, and I'm the assistant field manager for the Central Yukon Field Office, BLM, and I am the BLM representative today.

THE COURT REPORTER: I'm Louisa, and I'm the court reporter.

CHIEF HARDING: Nice to meet you.

BILL HEDMAN: Nice to meet you, sir.

JOE WELCH: Good morning, Chief Sam. My name is Joe Welch. I'm a wildlife biologist. I work for a company called ABR, which is Alaska Biological Research, and we worked on the wildlife and vegetation portions of this document.

TERI BALSER: Good morning. I'm Teri Balser. I'm the BLM public affairs specialist designing the project.

DOUGLASS SKINNER: Hi, it's Douglass Skinner, the archeologist for the project. I'm so sad you're not here, Harding. I printed off some pictures from our trip

up the river this summer, but we'll see you soon. I'll send them to you.

DAVE ESSE: Good morning. I'm Dave Esse from the BLM. I'm a fish biologist on the project.

CHRISTI HEUN: Good morning, Chief Harding. And I'm Christi --

CHIEF HARDING: Oh --

CHRISTI HEUN: What's that? This is Christi Heun, caribou biologist.

RAENA SCHRAER: Good morning. My name's Raena Schraer. I work for a company called Stephen R. Braund & Associates. We do subsistence research all around Alaska and authored part of this report.

JULIE AARONSON: Good morning. I'm Julie Aaronson, and I also work at SWCA, environmental consultants, helping with project coordination.

MELISSA HEAD: Good morning, I'm Melissa Head. I'm a reality specialist for the Central Yukon Field Office at the BLM.

CHAD RICKLEFS: We have a couple more in the room here. Just hang on.

ERIN JULIANUS: Hey, good morning. This is Erin Julianus. I'm a wildlife biologist for BLM.

NEL BISHOP: Hi, Harding. It's Nel Bishop. I'm the archeologist. I work with Douglas here at BLM.

CHIEF HARDING: So Dawn David is back.

ROB ROSENFELD: That's great, Chief. This is Rob Rosenfeld.

DAWN DAVID: My name is Dawn David from Alatna.

THE COURT REPORTER: Can you repeat that, please?

DAWN DAVID: I'm Dawn David. I'm a tribal member and tribal council member here in Alatna, and I'm also the tribal administer.

THE COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

ROB ROSENFELD: Thank you, Dawn. This is Rob Rosenfeld.

So we have two elected leaders in the room, and then we just had one of the elders from Alatna walk into the room who can introduce himself.

Roy?

ROY NICTUNE: Hi, I'm Roy Nictune.

CHIEF HARDING: What about --

ROB ROSENFELD: Chief, Roy --

CHIEF HARDING: I really don't expect that.

ROB ROSENFELD: You don't expect what, Chief?

CHIEF HARDING: No, but -- but we're going to have staff call and get some written comments.

ROB ROSENFELD: That's great.

Chief, I want to let you know that Roy just

walked in the room and he's about to introduce himself, okay?

CHIEF HARDING: Oh, okay.

ROB ROSENFELD: Okay. Here's Roy.

ROY NICTUNE: Is that Harding?

ROB ROSENFELD: Yeah, that's Harding.

ROY NICTUNE: Yeah, Harding, this is Roy -- Roy Nictune. I live here in the North Pole, but I originated from Alatna and Evansville.

ROB ROSENFELD: Thank you -- thank you, Roy.

Chief, they're -- the folks at BLM are going to -- and some of their contractors -- are going to do a presentation.

Dawn, can you see now the video screen?

DAWN DAVID: Yeah. I'm setting it up for Harding here.

ROB ROSENFELD: Oh, good. Okay. Before we get going -- before we get going I just want to, you know, kind of tell everybody in the room that Chief Harding was just in Washington, D.C., and he got a chance to speak to some of the -- he got to meet with the -- Tracy Stone-Manning, the head of Bureau Land Management. He also met with the head of Fish & Wildlife, Martha Williams. He also met with the deputy security that oversees Park Service, and he met with -- at the White

House with CEQ, and met with legislatures as well. And he's just been working really hard and on the road.

And now, you know, Chief, I just want to let you know as -- as your consultant, that, you know, you've been heard loud and clear, and, you know, BLM has really spared no expense on this meeting. They've got their team here, and they've got their contractors here, and they're definitely all ears.

As we discussed last night we have two of your -- in addition to me as your consultant, we also have two of your advis- -- folks that will be advisors today, particularly for the subsistence portion. You met Christi Heun, and also -- and she's a caribou expert as we discussed last night.

And also there'll be a fishery expert that will help today. And Evansville put him on contract, and he's loaning him to you today, and that's Chris Stark (phonetic), and he's from the university system. Just making sure that folks know that they're here as your advisors.

I'm going to pass it back to Chad, and we'll -- we'll get started.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thanks, Rob. Thank you all for the introductions.

Before we get started with the presentation,

just want to kind of go through the agenda for today so you have an idea of what we've got on tap for today's meeting.

After the introductions we're going to, as Rob indicated, and on the screen if you can see that, we're going to run through probably a short 15-minute presentation that Bill Hedman's going to provide that gives an overview of the Draft Supplemental EIS as well as the -- an overview of the -- results of the ANILCA 810.

Then, really, what's most important, is we're going to have an opportunity for you all that want to provide a public comment as part of the public comment period for the Draft Supplemental EIS. We're going to do that right after the -- a comment -- the presentation, so that way you all can get your comments recorded by Louisa, our court reporter.

And then once we finish that we're going to take a lunch break. For those of you that are here in the room we'll have lunch being catered here.

Then we'll come back online this afternoon around 1:00 for those of you that can join again, and then we're going to go through what we've been calling an 810, kind of, working group meeting, where that's an opportunity to -- to work with the folks that helped develop the 810 to kind of provide any feedback on

mitigation or strategies to reduce impacts or minimize impacts kind of as a working group discussion so that folks from our team can capture some of the information that you provide related to the resources or any concerns that you have with the impacts in the 810. We can capture those as part of the summary report that we've been creating through similar sessions in the other communities that we've been visiting.

So that's really -- and then we'll conclude around 3:00 today. If we need to go that long we'll be here to be able to facilitate discussions with that working group.

With that, I want to turn it over to Bill to make sure that he can go through the presentation, and that way we can then, most importantly, move into the public comment period.

[Presentation by Bill Hedman; see separate Ambler Road PowerPoint Presentation]

CHAD RICKLEFS: Okay. Thanks, Bill.

I think before we move into the -- the public testimony here, the public comment period, Rob wanted to say a few things to -- to the folks on the line as well as to the folks in the room here as well.

ROB ROSENFELD: Yeah. Thank you so much, Chad.

Chief Harding, and -- and council member Dawn David, and Elder Roy, we know we'll have other Alatna folks coming by today. It's a great opportunity. We have a court reporter here typing everything that's being said.

And, you know, just for context, Chief, last night there was a hearing in Fairbanks and there was about forty --

CHAD RICKLEFS: Anchorage.

ROB ROSENFELD: I'm sorry. In Anchorage. And there was about 43 people that testified and each only had about two minutes to testify. And today they're not putting a time limit on -- on folks -- on you folks today which is really good. You can give as long a testimony as -- as you would like.

And certainly, Chief, you've had a lot of opportunity to -- to talk to folks in power back in D.C. They asked you many questions. This is a good time to restate your position, and this is definitely a good time to talk about your concerns and worries for the project. And as Bill mentioned, anything -- any suggestions you have to improve the report.

You might even also want to talk about the question that Senator Murkowski asked you. She thought the road would help you by reducing the cost of -- of food

and whatnot, and you had a strong response to her that -- you might want to even consider talking about that.

I'm going to re- -- turn it over to Chad at this stage.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thanks, Rob.

As -- as Rob mentioned, we do have a court reporter in the room here. So she is busily typing everything down that we're speaking in the room here, as well as over the line, so we'll do the best that we can with the speaker system that we've got set up here to -- to hopefully hear you and any others that want to provide a public comment.

So, Chief Harding, is -- do -- we want to provide you both -- anyone that's in Alatna the opportunity first to speak and provide a public comment.

Are -- are you or Dawn or anyone else on the line ready to -- to give your public testimony at this time?

CHIEF HARDING: All right. Thank you for this opportunity. You know -- you know, when -- when the first EIS came out there was no study done in Alatna River. I thought that regarding the whitefish, sheefish and the spawning areas for salmon -- and we still don't know if -- and I welcome the fish biologist from Evansville.

And also, one last thing you know, I -- I think we should put -- put another alternative. Kobuk land -- Kobuk land, because they have all the way in support for the road. So we should give them the opportunity.

When we first got settled in Alatna by the missionaries and school teachers, they had a meeting with our village across the river -- Alatna River to Alatna's tribe harvest area. So that -- that's the reason it -- it cuts that harvest area in half because we go up past the road when there's a lot of sheep. We harvest sheep and -- and -- sheep and caribou going over to Kobuk lands. And, you know, it was abundant.

In regards to the fish study, I don't -- sheefish and whitefish to be a test area for -- for other entities, you know? Look what happens with the salmon.

And I -- I have a little more, but I -- I think those -- those are keys to what -- keys that what I want done.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Chief Harding. Any other -- any other words that you would like to say?

CHIEF HARDING: Maybe I'll pass it to Dawn.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Great. You can pass it to Dawn then.

DAWN DAVID: Hello. Is it the part where we make our statements on Alatna --

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yes, it is.

DAWN DAVID: -- River?

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yes, it is.

DAWN DAVID: Okay. Yeah, I don't think the road should go through because we have hard enough time keeping alcohol and drugs out of here with one plane a day, few days a week. And if that road opens it's going to bring all kinds of people down here, and it's going to totally ruin our way of life.

And I don't think we'll ever be the same if there's a road through. And all of our hunting, fishing, camping, and our whole, like, our youth will be growing up in a very dangerous place.

ROB ROSENFELD: Dawn, there's no time limit, so if you want to add to your testimony you're more than welcome.

DAWN DAVID: That's all I have to say. More people are trying to make it there from what I hear. So how long is this going to go on, the taking the statements?

CHAD RICKLEFS: Until 12:00.

ROB ROSENFELD: And then, Dawn, we're going to have a workshop this afternoon. So if folks can't make

it here by 12 there'll be a valuable opportunity for them to participate this afternoon. So please do encourage them to come whenever they're available.

DAWN DAVID: Okay. That sounds good.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Is there -- Dawn, is there anyone else there, or is it just you and Chief Harding in the room right now?

DAWN DAVID: Just me and Harding is here.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Okay.

CHIEF HARDING: I'd -- I'd like to request -- impude [as spoken] Roy there to --

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yep. We'll pass it over to Roy.

THE COURT REPORTER: Can you just take my phone with you --

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yep.

THE COURT REPORTER: -- because if mine's not getting it that will be an extra --

BILL HEDMAN: Yep.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Just say your name first before we get started. Thank you. I'll hold it.

ROY NICTUNE: You're going to hold it?

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yep. I can hold it.

ROY NICTUNE: Yeah. My name is Roy Nictune.

ROB ROSENFELD: Roy, would it be easier if you

came closer to the --

ROY NICTUNE: I'm originally from --

CHAD RICKLEFS: Do -- do -- can -- you want to come up front here? Does that -- are you okay?

ROB ROSENFELD: It will be easier on the court reporter here.

CHAD RICKLEFS: There you go.

ROY NICTUNE: Probably hear some words I said before.

CHAD RICKLEFS: You get your -- you get your private testimony.

ROB ROSENFELD: Right there you can have a seat.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yeah. Have a seat.

ROY NICTUNE: I'm a little bit nervous so bear with me.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Take your time.

ROY NICTUNE: I'm more comfortable facing a charging grizzly than speaking in public.

So my name is Roy Nictune. I'm originally from Alatna. I was born, not in the village, but outside in spring camp. We were -- that's how we lived in those days. We were nomadic. We lived in different camps at certain parts of the year. And we moved up to Evansville when I was four because my dad got a job up there. They

were building that new runway in Bettles and the CAA was putting up housing, and that's how we ended up in Evansville.

But my people from both sides of my family use that whole country from not -- from the village all the way up to the mountains, up to the headwaters of the John River and Alatna Rivers. We needed that country to get our food. That's -- that's how important that country is to us. We use that whole country. Not just hunting, but fishing and trapping.

Yeah. Like I said, I was born out in camp, and my grandmother delivered me, so I'm from the country.

I'm speaking today in opposition of the road for the following reasons. It will bring a lot of changes to that part of the country. The road will bring more people, drugs, and more alcohol, which is already a problem. We -- just an example of what the alcohol does to people, you know, and I'm -- I'm a recovered alcoholic. I've been sober for 30 years now, but there -- we had a rash of suicides back in the '70s. That was all alcohol and drugs that brought that in.

The changes that I've seen -- this is when the pipeline went through -- the caribou used to cross above our -- our house up in Evansville. Right -- right above there there's a place called Wild River. That's where

the caribou used to cross. It's just maybe a mile from the village. And after the pipeline went through the crossing went to couple hundred miles upriver. So that made it hard for our people to get to the caribou.

And not only that, any kind of pollutants getting into the rivers will damage our fish populations. We rely on whitefish and sheefish, because when the salmon gets up to where we come from they're not in very good shape. So we use different fish.

And caribou and the moose -- moose is one of the most important animals to feed our people, and in the years that population has gone down, and we've -- we've had a -- because of that pipeline road there are hunters everywhere.

They -- they put their boats in upriver and come down the river. I've seen their camps. You can tell where the people camp because there's a mess there.

Our people, when we camp, we -- we don't leave any trash. We clean up. We leave our country in as close as to the natural state as we can. That's -- that's how I grew up. We were always taught to respect -- respect the land and take care of it and that way the land will take care of us. That's -- that's how I was taught.

And I'm a hunter. My grandpa was a hunter. My great-grandpa was a hunter. And the way I was taught,

if you're going to be a good hunter, you have to become that animal, learn their habits and see what they're doing certain times of the year. And that's when I was a young man. I went out in the country by myself a lot. And I -- not -- not to hunt, but to watch the animals. That's -- that's how they -- you learn their habits. And that -- that's why I'm speaking today, because I believe I know a little bit about the animals.

If this road goes in there will be a big impact on the caribou mostly, and also the moose. When they built that pipeline road they said it was going to be an industrial access only, and now you can look at it today. It's -- that has a lot of impact on our wildlife.

The outside hunters bring in airplanes, they bring in airboats, and four-wheelers. Where I hunt right now I hunt out in the flats. You can see where the four-wheelers are now. There's a big scar where they have take -- the four-wheelers have taken the topsoil off and the permafrost where there's a trail. Maybe it's about 10 or 12 feet wide now the permafrost is melting. That country is not going to come back. It's already scarred. That's what's going to happen when this road goes in.

There needs to be more study on things like permafrost. Denali Park, if you -- is a -- Denali Park

Road is a good example of that where a large section of that road has caved in now. And this -- this proposed road will go through the mountain range. There needs to be avalanche studies, and soil studies. More -- more of this done to see how it will further impact our land.

I lost my train of thought, so bear with me.

We talk about roads -- there's a village that I know of that moved -- moved because of flooding, and they -- there into the road system. After they moved it was -- brought in a lot of people that changed how the hunting is right now. They've taken over most of the camps.

And where I camp -- I camp with my brother-in-laws[sic]. Every year we get up to our moose camp we have to clean up a mess. There's beer bottles, whiskey bottles, trash, and my brother -- my brother-in-law cries as we clean up our camp. It's -- it's -- no respect. There's no respect for our land. After we get that done cleaned up then we [set up|setup] camp.

Excuse me. I need some water.

The reason I'm bringing this up is because I'm trying to paint a picture of how our people respect the land. That's -- that's what we are taught.

Anyway, this -- this past year we went back up

to the camp. We went up twice. Both times we had to clean up the camp. And everybody in the village knows that where we camp we leave two canoes. They're all welcome to use that canoe, just put it back in the place where we left it. One of the canoes was gone.

And we were coming back, and it's -- there's some people camped about 20 miles below us, and they stopped us to ask for gas. They were out of gas. So we gave them some of our gas, and while we're standing there talking we looked over and we seen that canoe. We didn't say nothing, because that's when -- it's pretty dangerous out there, and some of these people you can't trust. So I didn't say nothing until we got back to the village.

And that's -- that's one of the problems. It's -- no respect. That's one of the hardest thing for our people to handle. That's why I'm here today with -- try to -- try to make you understand how important this land is to us.

Like I've said, like my grandpa has said before, you take care of the land and it will take care of you. You'll hear these words over and over again. That's not only us, but all the Native groups in the whole state and the United States have that respect for the land. We are nothing without our land.

That's -- that's how we -- that's what we know.

I said this before that there are some dark sides of having a road. It will bring up some different people that don't understand how we live. And a good example is a friend of mine -- there was seven people in this community by the river. Every -- every one of those people that went down to the bank to check their boats that day got killed.

What happened was this man here in town was being investigated by the troopers, but there's someone out -- I don't really know where it was, but out by Fox I believe. But I'm not sure. But they were investigating a death out there, and the trooper was questioning this guy. And it was in the springtime and there's a pile of snow there. There was blood on the snow. And the trooper asked this guy, "What -- what's in there."

He said, "Oh, I got a -- some moose meat buried under the snow." Here it was a body. And this guy tried to escape from the troopers, and he went down the road. He ended up in Manley, and that's where this stuff happened. My friend I went to high school with was his last victim. And after he shot my friend he took -- took the boat and left Manley with his boat. And the troopers went after them. They caught him up in one of the rivers

up there. And they had to shoot this guy. He -- he took one more person with him. He took one trooper that was in the chopper that hovered.

The reason I'm saying this is when they got the boat back my friend's eyeballs were still in the boat. That's -- that's how brutal those killings were. That's -- is what this road is going to bring. It's not if, it's when will this happen.

These are hard words for me to speak, because I think about this all the time. It's -- you can't bring those people back, but we can try to prevent stuff like this from happening.

I'll get back to the road again. I think every inch of that road it's important to be looked at, you know. It's going to affect the whole area, multiple villages in the area. There needs to be more studies done. It's -- I -- I think right now the best thing to do is not to build this road.

Thank you so much.

BILL HEDMAN: Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Roy.

CHIEF HARDING: Thank you, Roy. And also I'll add couple more comments, and one of them is climate change. There's no -- I don't see any -- anything on -- on paper that says there was no climate change. But

really our saying affects right there in the village, and we're talk- -- the villages, probably about two wise [as spoken], and watching sink holes, and, you know, we're -- we're talking about how many river crossings, streams, and all of that, and that -- that has to be studied.

And another comment is who is in charge of public safety, you know? What -- what -- I've just been hearing this -- if there's a road close -- close to -- it -- there's no public safety for my tribal member who try to harvest food.

Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Chief. We're going to have Rob -- Rob now is going to provide a public comment. He'll be next.

ROB ROSENFELD: Okay with you, Chief?

CHIEF HARDING: Yes, please.

ROB ROSENFELD: Thank you.

My name is Rob Rosenfeld. Today I'm testifying as a consultant to Alatna Village Council.

I live in Homer, Alaska, and my last name is spelled R-O-S-E-N-F-E-L-D.

I want to mention that Chief Harding Sam has -- has just returned to -- from Washington, D.C., where he passed on tribal resolutions from tribes

throughout the state of Alaska and the Yukon Territory, and I'm going to reiterate and summarize tribal opposition at -- at this time.

But before I do, I just want to reflect on the last comments of Elder Roy, and also of Chief Harding Sam. And I think we all heard them loud and clear. They're asking for more in-depth, social and economic study -- economic impact studies in addition to many of their important comments. There isn't an adequate section in the EIS that studies social and economic impacts, nor is the environmental justice section strong enough.

I know Bill asked earlier what can be improved. Those three sections, environmental justice, and social and economic impacts definitely need to be improved.

Now, I'm going to summarize the tribal opposition. There is a resolution from Alatna Village Council that has been submitted online and -- and hard copies have been submitted on multiple occasions. Alatna is an Inupiaq and an Athabascan tribe. There is a resolution that -- it was submitted from Allakaket Village Council, an Athabascan tribe.

There is a resolution in opposition to the road -- all these are in opposition to the road -- Evansville Tribal Council, an Inupiaq and

Athabascan tribe. Huslia Tribal Council also has a resolution in opposition, an Athabis- -- Athabascan tribe. There is a resolution that has been submitted by Kotzebue Tribal Council, an Inupiaq tribe. Another resolution from Tanana Tribal Council in opposition, an Athabascan tribe.

There is also a resolution from Norton Bay Watershed Council. It was approved by consensus on behalf of seven Inupiaq tribes. The Native villages of Elim, E-L-I-M; Teller; Brevig Mission, B-R-E-V-I-G; Shaktoolik, S-H-A-K-T-O-O-L-I-K; Golovin, G-O-L-O-O-I-V-I-N [as spoken]; Shishmaref, S-C -- S-H-I-S-M-A-R-E-F [as spoken]; and St. Michaels [sic], all Inupiaq tribes in opposition.

Tanana Chiefs -- Tanana Chiefs Conference representing 37 tribal governments and 42 tribal entities passed a resolution by consensus -- consensus three times, and most recently passed in March of 2023 also in opposition.

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, an international treaty organization, representing 74 indigenous governments passed a resolution in nine- -- in 2019 here in Fairbanks. Fifty-five tribes in Alaska are a part of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council and oppose the road.

Nineteen First Nations in Yukon Territory and British Columbia. Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council includes approximately 19 Yup'ik and Cup'ik tribes. Nineteen First Nations, and approximately 46 Athabascan tribes.

Now, I'm going to read -- I'm going to summarize, in total, how many tribes oppose and First Nations oppose. I summarized the resolutions just a little while go.

Okay. Nineteen First Nations based in Canada, as I mentioned, on the Yukon River Watershed based in Yukon Territory and British Columbia oppose the road. Fifty-five tribes in Alaska within the Yukon River Watershed oppose the road.

Five tribes in the Upper Kuskokwim sub region of Tanana Chiefs Conference not -- not part of the Yukon River resolution. They are McGrath; Medfra, M-E-D-F-R-A; Nikolai, Takotna, Telida all oppose the road.

As mentioned, there's a tribe -- Tanana -- there's also another tribe in the Tanana Yukon sub region of the Yuk- -- of Tanana Chiefs Conference Lake M-I-N-C-H-U-M-I-N-A also opposes the road.

And as mentioned, the seven tribes within the

Norton Bay Watershed Council, and then Kotzebue Tribal Council.

In total, 88 indigenous governments oppose the proposed Ambler Road. That includes the following 15 Native language groups. Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Inupiaq, Gwich'in, Athabascan, Inland Tlingit, T-L-I-N-G-I-T, Han, H-A-N, Gwich'in, Upper Tanana, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim; Deg Xit'an, D-E-G, H-I-T'A-N. I'm not even going to try to pronounce the next one -- H-O-L-I-K-A-C-H-U-K, Northern Tutchone in Yukon Territory. Tutchone, T-U-T-C-H-O-N-E, and Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Kaska.

Fifteen indigenous nations rep- -- indigenous language groups representing eight out -- which are all -- and then, as you mentioned -- as I mentioned -- 88 indigenous governments oppose this road.

That's my statement for the moment.

Chief, we have here the -- advisor Christi Heun who Evansville -- I'm sorry -- who offered to come and testify and share information about caribou at this stage. She brought some reports to hand over to make -- make part of the record.

Is that okay if she goes now?

CHIEF HARDING: Alatna welcomes that.

ROB ROSENFELD: Okay. Alatna welcomes that.

THE COURT REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.

ROB ROSENFELD: Okay. Christi, come on up.

CHRISTI HEUN: The hot seat.

ROB ROSENFELD: Christi has some hard copies to hand over to you as well.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Great. Thank you.

CHRISTI HEUN: My name is Christi Heun, H-U-E-N. And like Rob said, I'm here as a consultant for the village of Alatna.

I'd like to thank everybody here today, but especially folks in Alatna. I appreciate it. I know it's hard to sit on these calls in front of a phone or a computer all day, so I really appreciate you guys being willing to sit through all this.

I'll be discussing some specifics about the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, and then highlight areas of concerns in the Draft Supplemental Impact Statement as it relates to caribou.

Can you guys hear me there in Alatna? Chief, can you hear me?

CHIEF HARDING: Yes. We -- we're hearing you loud and clear.

CHRISTI HEUN: Okay. Good. I just wanted to make sure because I know the connection's a little spotty sometimes. Okay. So first, a little bit about the

Western Arctic Caribou population currently. I want to give a little overview.

As a lot of us in this room probably know, the Western Arctic Herd was estimated to be around 500,000 in the late '90s, and Fish & Game's most recent estimate is about 150,000 animals, still in decline, and down 23 percent in the last few years.

And as we know, caribou --

ROB ROSENFELD: Slow down a little.

CHRISTI HEUN: Oh, yes. I can slow down. I do apologize. I'm a fast talker, and I get excited about caribou.

As we know, caribou populations are known to fluctuate in response to a variety of factors, and these factors include things like climate change, which affects the forage quality, quantity, and accessibility, as well as it affects harassing insect populations. It involves development and habitat fragmentation, hunting harvest and predation, novel species, diseases, and contaminants. These all play a role in these population demographics.

So given these drivers of the broad scale, let's consider the current Western Arctic Caribou population trends and demographics as we see them today.

First, calves. Looking at the 2023 report for

the Western Arctic Caribou Herd there's no major concerns with calving rates. Long-term parturition rates for caribou calves is about 70 percent, and our most recent estimate this year was 77 calves per 100 cows, so that's higher than average, which is great for the herd.

Recruitment. The long term average since the '90s is 17 short yearlings per 100 adults, and the 2023 estimate was 17 as well, so, again, no concerns.

Composition, which is the bull to cow ratios. And we've got an objective minimum of 30 bulls per 100 cows, and right now we're above that at 50, so again, looking good on that front.

Disease. Caribou are susceptible to a certain strain of brucella -- brucellosis, and we have concerns for brucellosis in herds like the Mulchatna where we're seeing late-term abortions, reduced fertility rates in females, lameness, swelling of joints, and sometimes death. But we don't have brucellosis issues in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd so that's good news for us.

Lastly is adult survival, particularly adult female survival. If we like to see the grow -- the herd grow we like to see 85 to 90 percent of females needing to survive the next year to drive the population up. And the 2023 estimate was only 69 percent, so that's a pretty big cause for concern.

So what we can do as humans, out of the six things I just mentioned being climate change, development, hunting harvest and predation, novel species, disease, and contaminants, there's really only three things that we can do for the Western Arctic Herd in the short term.

The first is we can manage our harvest. We can manage our harvest to protect females, which we've been doing for a number of years. And we have shifted to a more preservative measures in recent years, such as discouraging taking female caribou and calves. So this isn't really new information. A lot of folks on the ground are really well aware that you need to preserve adult female caribous in order to uplift the population as a whole.

The second thing we can do is suppress predators. In the words of Darry Vent from Koyukuk, "The whole Yukon is trying to survive without salmon," and that means bears too." I thought that was a really interesting statement that he made, and very poignant. So we might see more predation from bears on the caribou as they're forced to shift prey species, but as we also know, predator control is often a short-term Band-Aid solution as predator prey dynamics are just that. They're quite dynamic and change quite a bit.

So lastly, and most importantly, the third thing we can do is protect connected habitat. Putting a 200 or 300-mile road through the migratory corridor of one of the longest-traveled terrestrial migratory species in the world does not do a very good job of protecting habitat.

So with those perspectives in mind, I'm going to discuss a little bit about the Draft Supplemental impact statement. Right off the bat, the draft SEIS makes the severity of potential impacts to caribou seem misdirected.

And what I mean by that is, the executive summary starts out -- it's a seven-page abstract to familiarize the reader with the scope and the content of this giant 512-page document with three appendices. So these seven pages should be pretty direct and not misleading. They should give the reader a good idea of what they're getting into with this big document.

However, in the primary impact section here it states that, quote, "Alternative C also would have greater effects on the Ray Mountain Caribou Herd and moose, as well as greater involvement with discontinuous permafrost. Alternatives A and B could have greater effects related to sheefish habitat and Western Arctic Caribou Herd, and use of materials containing naturally

occurring asbestos."

In a recent paper by Gal Woodall (phonetic) they found that greater than 95 percent of permafrost will be gone by the year 2100, and the remaining 5 percent will be in places like Greenland. So Alaska in the next very short window of time can expect a complete loss of permafrost. This should also be added to the BLM's assessment of permafrost in these opening statements.

To the reader this seems to suggest also that the impacts on the Ray Mountain Caribou Herd, which numbers less than a thousand animals, and has a yearly take in the single digits, is somehow equivalent to the impacts of the Western Arctic Herd which has approximately 250,000 animals, and is an important source of food and identity for 40 communities.

Not until -- not until page 3-67, or 102 pages later in this document, is the reader informed that the Ray Mountain Herd is, in fact, smaller than the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, and not until page 3-69 is the reader informed that the Ray Mountain Herd is 200 times smaller than the Western Arctic Herd. It is also unclear why moose are included in this original summary statement. When moose were, quote, "Not identified as a significant issue based on scoping comments."

So drafting statements like this suggest that

the BLM is more invested -- invested in selling this A/B alternative than engaging in a clear analysis of pros and cons.

I think it's disingenuous and intentionally misleading, especially to regular people who do not read thick government documents with any sort of regularity. This impression is furthered by the DSEIS decision to analyze the impacts of the mines which will certainly dramatically amplify the effects of impacts to Western Arctic Caribou. It's in a separate section, instead of as a portion of the project.

Simultaneous- -- simultaneously minimizing the apparent likelihood of mining impacts and adding reader confusion.

For instance, the life history and seasonal distribution of caribou section notes that some collared caribou spend at least a portion of the winters within 15 miles of Alternatives A and B. There is no accompanying note about caribou with or near the Ambler Mining District. It is unclear if that is because there is no data, because no caribou winter there, or because the analysis is focused on the road rather than the mining district.

If the latter, the SEIS must be revised to incorporate impacts of mining within the body of life history section, as well as other appropriate sections.

Constructing 200 or 300 miles of road enables the possibility, and one might argue, the probability, that it will facilitate more connecting roads, spur roads, access roads, and mining claims throughout one of the most pristine landscapes left intact on this plant.

It is not a secret that developers would like to further develop prist- -- projects once this road is laid. This is just a logical series of events of what happens when you build a road.

Therefore, the Draft Supplemental impact underestimates impacts by failing to analyze reasonably foreseeable development that would have a significant impact on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

This includes a possible extension of a road from the Ambler Mining District west to the coast that would create a road barrier across the entire Western Arctic Caribou migratory route. It also fails to analyze the reasonably foreseeable potential impacts of a public road-based sport hunting access to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, much like Roy was talking about earlier here.

Even if left closed to the public, trespassed from non-local hunters is a common issue many tribes face, again, like Roy was telling us earlier. And I fail to see how this road will be any different as the draft SEIS

does not meaningfully address this matter.

In addition to unscheduled future hypothetical projects, there are currently nine development projects facing the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. We can no longer view development as isolated, finite projects. The BLM must take a holistic approach to reviewing the combined effects of such projects impacts to the caribou, or at least address the possible cumulative effects in some way.

This is an oversight and a supreme example of tragedy of the commons. And to me I think this is sort of like a room full of dentists, and each dentists pulls one of my teeth, and at the end of the day I don't have any teeth left. That's how I explain it to children.

These nine projects that are currently on the books for discussions include the Ambler Road, which we're here talking about now. The D-1 land withdrawals, NPRA special area rule-making, Graphite One Mine, OTZ Microwave Tower broadband project, ASTAC fiber optic project, for Anarraaq exploration, the will of master development plan and SEIS and the Noatak Red Dog Road.

Confusing language. The draft SEIS uses confusing language to discuss three types of impacts to caribou from the road without fully defining the impacts or making clear to the reader which impacts are most

important.

Habitat loss in the DSEIS describes the actual loss of habitat caused by construction. Given the vast range of acreage other than the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, it's not particularly significant when viewed from such a scope.

Displacements, however, appears to describe the area near proposed development that caribou are likely to avoid. The draft SEIS understates this type of impact.

Plante et al., 2018, found displacement from roads up to 15 kilometers, and from human settlements up to 18 kilometers. Boulanger and Plante found areas of avoidance by caribou around mines ranging from 11 to 23 kilometers. And while this is -- displacement impact is relatively small in terms of overall acreage, it's a really large area we're talking about here, and that's a pretty small footprint.

It is large enough to be very significant for local communities if caribou begin avoiding traditional areas due to road and mine proposal. When local communities face gas prices like $7 a gallon, traveling farther to reach caribou isn't always an option, especially if it isn't certain that caribou will be there when you show up to hunt.

And finally, loss of range appears to describe the impact the road may have in changing caribou behavior and steering them away from portions of their range. This impact is potentially extremely significant, both in terms of potential lost caribou habitat, and in terms of lost subsistence opportunity for communities downstream of the road if you will.

Unfortunately, the draft SEIS leads with habitat loss. The least important of the impacts to caribou, rather than focusing its attention on displacement and range loss. It does not include displacement or range loss in the tables describing caribou habitat impacts in Appendix E or H. The end result is an analysis that fails to inform the public of the real impacts on caribou of the choices BLM faces.

Take a breather. Sorry. I'm a fast talker. I'm going to slow down.

Okay. Let's talk about roads. So roads perpendicular to the direction of the herds primary movements are most likely to have significant impacts on their movements. We know this, a lot of us here.

Wilson et al., in 2016 reported satellite-collared caribou were delayed an average of 33 days by the Red Dog Mine Road during the fall 2011 migration. Some individual caribou were delayed much

longer than this. The draft SEIS minimizes this impact in Volume I by stating that, quote, "Similar deflections and delays are reported along rivers and other natural linear features." This is incorrect and inconsistent with scientific and local indigenous knowledge. If the BLM wishes to make such a claim it must provide a citation.

The draft SEIS draws a misleading, implied comparison to the impacts of habitat fragmentation on the Central Arctic Herd. In the case of caribou, other Alaskan herds such as the Central Arctic Herd, have maintained habitat connectivity and general migration patterns despite being intersected by highways and roads. That's a quote from the draft SEIS.

So the National Parks Conservation Association contracted with Jim Dau. He's referenced in the -- he's cited in the SEIS quite a bit and is a widely known and respected caribou biologist who worked on the Western Arctic Herd and the Central Arctic Herd during his decades-long career at Fish & Game.

I'm going to read a very long quote from him. So this is all -- all that -- what Jim Dau had said.

The Dalton Highway and TAPS generally parallel the north/south migratory movements of the Central Arctic Herd. So much of this herd -- so most of this herd may only rarely contact -- let me try that again.

So most of this herd may only rarely contact these manmade structures during spring and fall movements. Roads extending west from Prudhoe Bay are generally oriented east/west. Thus, during summer, Central Arctic Caribou repeatedly encounter these east/west roads near the northern extent of their range during summer as they move between coastal insect relief habitat, which lies a very short distance north of most infrastructure, and inland feeding areas with relatively little or no infrastructure.

When I worked with this herd, spring through summer 1982 to 1985, the Central Arctic Herd successfully negotiated high-level traffic -- high traffic levels on some dense networks of roads even under high traffic levels and substantial associated infrastructure when insect harassment was severe.

However, when insect harassment abated, thus removing that overwhelming stimulus to reach nearby coastal insect relief, as well as evaluated manmade gravel pads and roads, the Central Arctic Herd experienced difficulty and delays negotiating those same developed areas to reach feeding areas to the south.

The proposed Ambler Road will be oriented roughly perpendicular to the spring and fall Western Arctic Herd migratory movements and a seasonal habitats

they'll be moving towards calving grounds, insect relief habitat, or winter range will at that point be far away.

Although the Western Arctic Herd exhibit a strong migratory drive during spring and fall when they are most likely to encounter the Ambler Road, it is much less intense than the stimulus of severe insect harassment. Thus, Western Arctic Caribou Herd may be more easily diverted by Ambler Road than the Central Arctic Caribou Herd had been by oil -- oil and gas field infrastructure.

He goes on to say: The Western Arctic Herd has exhibited multiple persistent, lasting more than 10 years, large spacial shifts in range use since at least the 1980s. Since -- since -- at least since the 1800s. Okay. Let me say that again because it's confusing.

So the Western Arctic Caribou Herd has exhibited multiple persistent, greater than 10 year, large spacial shifts in range use, since at least the 1800s. The most recent shift occurred during the mid 1990s when the Western Arctic Herd shifted its primary winter range from the Nulato Hills to the central Seward Peninsula. This may have been attributable to chronic high use of the Nulato Hills and overstaying their grazing welcome.

During the previous 15 to 20 years a sort of

self-induced natural shift. These shifts in range use are significant in that they illustrate important -- importance of preventing caribou habitat fragmentation.

Although the Ambler Road may largely be south and east of the areas used most heavily by the Western Arctic Herd during the last 30 to 40 years, long-term survival of this herd may depend on their having access to portions of historic range that have gone unused for decades or longer.

Archaeologic evidence and Inupiaq oral histories indicate that caribou were once abundant in the entire Seward Peninsula, the Upper Kobuk and Koyukuk drainages, the Central Brooks Range, but had not disappeared by the early 1900s -- I'm sorry -- but had disappeared by the early 1900s.

So in recent decades the Western Arctic Caribou Herd have generally used the Kanuti Flats area north of the proposed Ambler Road relatively lightly. However, in some years tens of thousands of caribou have used the Central Brooks Range.

So basically, caribou have practiced range rotation long before herding and agricultural cultures conceived it as a tool to increase herd or crop productivity.

This makes it clear that a diminishment of range could have significant long-term impacts on the Western Arctic Caribou even in places where caribou currently use it only occasionally or not at all. The draft SEIS must include and evaluate this risk.

To emphasize this point and to ensure consistency across maps, I recommend that the draft SEIS uses Fish & Game range maps rather than replacing them with the 95 percent and 50 percent kernel maps that use a subset of the Western Arctic data and different season dates.

The kernel maps make analysis more difficult and may confuse the public. I wish I had a map to show you. I do have a map I can pass it around if you want to know what I'm talking about. But these range maps are the ones that kind of are these hotspot maps where they show high use and low use -- and I don't have that one earmarked. Okay. We'll find it later. It's in here somewhere. I'm sorry.

So in some years tens of thousands of Western Arctic Caribou have wintered in or migrated through both during spring and fall the Ambler Road Project area. The use of kernel maps undermines this point, and as with mu- -- as with -- with much of the Draft Supplemental impact statement deemphasizes the potential impacts of

the road and mining districts on caribou.

While these maps are useful for studying annual habit conditions, it is misleading in a complete range assessment of a highly migratory species like caribou.

Finally, almost done, when the draft SEIS acknowledges the disproportionate importance of lichen habitat -- lichen habitat for the Western Arctic Herd, it concludes that project impacts on lichen habitats cannot be quantified due to the expense -- due to the expense of obtaining lichen data. This is unexpect- -- unacceptable, especially given acknowledgement that habitat alteration of lichens could extend away from the footprint of the road, thus leading to additional impact beyond the quantified -- beyond that quantified in Appendix H, Table 2-10, and in some instances may have effects equivalent to complete habitat loss.

Lichen is most commonly relied upon by caribou as a winter forage source. And given the overlap of the proposed project area with the Western Arctic Herd winter range, this makes any detrimental effects on lichen availability or quality quite concerning. A more robust accounting for these potential impacts is needed.

And that's all I have to share about caribou for now. These I'll leave with you. They're the

references I made and some other tidbits of fun information about caribou.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Great. Thank you. And we can -- the maps that you wanted to show, if you're going to be here this afternoon you can present some of that within the -- the working group this afternoon as well.

CHRISTI HEUN: Great. Wonderful.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you.

ROB ROSENFELD: Thank you, Chad.

Thank you, Christi.

Chief, April Monroe has offered to testify at this time.

Would that be okay with you?

CHIEF HARDING: Yes. I see -- my brother Jerry Sam there too.

ROB ROSENFELD: Great. We'll make sure he has a chance. I figured we'd -- we'd let him settle in first, and then have April go, and then Jerry -- Jerry be ready to go after that.

APRIL MONROE: Hey, Harding. Hey, Alatna. Okay.

CHIEF HARDING: Hi, April. Welcome.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Thank you. We're just getting dumped on. So much snow over here. Hopefully you guys picked a good day to not try to come in by plane.

My name is April Monroe, A-P-R-I-L, M-O-N-R-O-E, and I'm going to testify today at Alatna's request.

So I spent a lot of my childhood in Evansville, the first village impacted by the potential road, and my husband is originally from Huslia. Although, of course, ancestrally his parents, his dad, actually, was still nomadic, so in this area prior to it being settled, which included the Alatna area.

And then in my home I'm a justice activist and lands manager, and my husband is a real traditional hunter and a healer -- a person who prepares medicine.

So we have been deeply opposed to this project in many ways, and I've had lots of opportunity to have conversations with people about it. And recently conversa- -- I want to share a couple of them because we were able to have a conversation with some elders from this area. Silas Henry, Samson (phonetic), Henry -- Thomas Henry who all grew up, you know, traditionally in this -- in the area concerned.

And I guess what I want to talk about is just the nature of that management and the way that it hasn't been adequate. Indigenous knowledge hasn't been adequately considered.

I hear all this conversation that surrounds the

proposed Ambler Road topic about saying, like, "Hey, we need more data here. We need more data here. We need more data here. We need to look at how this would be managed or how this would be managed." But the reality is that there is a group -- I mean, there is a management system which worked -- flawlessly worked, and -- and this still exists, right? And this is indigenous management.

We have got expert -- we've got people with absolute expertise on the area -- the animals in the area, and who can answer then, the question ultimately posed by the SEIS, which, you know, can this project go forward? Is it -- is it too harmful? Is it possible this go harm- -- go forward. And when you juxtapose that concept with the degree of tribal opposition, what you're seeing, is that we already have sufficient data, and we already have sufficient expertise, and the experts unilaterally have reached scientific consensus and are saying no.

So some of the things that they were talking about in relation to the road was the nature of, like, sheefish spawning areas. And the report really does not sufficiently cover this, because they're so poorly identified.

But one of the things that they were talking about is how perceptive sheefish are. They even -- slight changes to the condition, maybe there's

more wind, or maybe -- they were saying sometimes you have a year where there's so much water there's like water, you know, locked away from the land, but you could -- they said they can just tell. They could tell that they would be able to spawn over there and make it back to the river. That there would be enough, you know, rain that they'll travel back.

So they were talking about essentially, like, this is so intricate, but it's so delicate. So saying, like, you wouldn't even, like, urinate in water where sheefish are spawning, or where they could be spawning, because they're so -- you know, the reason that their spawning territories can be hard to find is because of this high degree of intelligence, but also this high degree of sensitivity. I think sometimes in the Western world there's this total failure to grasp kind of the basics of indigenous management.

It's -- when you're living in deep, deep relationship with the land and the animals you're able to manage in ways that policy just can't replicate and we've seen that in the results.

For example, I remember Roy's late mom, Florence, she would always watch the moose in the area, carefully, and year after year, you know. And I remember she had watched a cow and she was explaining to us how

she'd watch this cow carefully, and the cow would always have twins.

And then after some years the cow started to have just single calves. And then, you know, a year and no calf. And then, you know, some time between calves.

And eventually when she had noticed there had been this long time that the -- that cow didn't have any calves and that the bulls weren't coming around it, that it wasn't acting differently in that season, that's when she said, "You can get that cow." Because now she was sure that this cow was no longer fertile. That it was okay to take it out of the -- you know. And also with compassion for the animal, right? Because this -- this cow is also nearing the end of its life.

Contrast that to the Fish & Game policy where they just go, "Huh, that's weird. Like, the bull/cow ratio isn't what we expected it to be. I don't know. I guess just go kill as many cows as you can this year. We'll see what happens." And it doesn't work.

You cannot point to one Fish & Game policy in Alaska, in this area, that has ever worked. It has produced nothing but imbalance to the animal populations and perpetrated harm.

You know -- and at the same time, there is a management system that works that is being kind of swept

to the side, right? Like, we've got people who are coming to these meetings to make comments who should -- who -- the table should probably be turned. These are the experts.

Another conversation they were having about the road was about the way that predators move. So when -- predators, you know, move with tremendous efficiency, so, you know, they're saying, like, in a year where there's maybe high snowfall but lots of sun that it can expose, like, ridges and pads first, and how quickly predators will be able to move over these pads and it will create balance, and also how you can't -- how you can't get them, how you can't track them.

And the way that a road through an area is so delicate of this size would completely throw off that balance. Predators would be able to move very quickly along it, but animals like caribou and moose would be actually hesitant to cross it because they're always trying to be in protection. They'd be in deep snow.

You know, the -- the concept being that to really understand the impacts of this road there's only two choices to do it fairly, right? Like, Western science can sit back and observe for the next 10,000 years carefully, or they can speak to the people that have already conducted the 10,000-year observational,

scientific project, because it's complete, and they're in consensus of giving such a super clear directive.

And then the other thing -- so, I mean, certainly if you sit down and talk to my husband that's what he's going to say. He's also going to -- you know, there's this conversation how do you mitigate it, and it says you can't, you know?

I mean, sheefish -- you know, a little bit -- he said, "You know how you can see a sheen on a puddle sometimes?" That happens one time in a sheefish spawning area and there's no more sheefish in that area. The ecosystem is too fragile, and the subsistence activities are 365 days of the year.

The place where I have a lot of information and where I feel like the SEIS is really lacking is something I've commented on before, but it has a lot to do, I guess, with the social and economic impacts.

I think that the SEIS is tolerating levels of dishonesty by industry, which -- which amount to fraud, right? Saying, for example, you see these little video clips on there -- in their campaigns that say, "This road will be great for the people in Allakaket who's having this financial study. This road will bring jobs."

This isn't just marketing. Like, this is -- and it's not even pushing it, you know. I

think for the -- at -- the way that the SEIS repeatedly kind of dignifies this type of lying by citing it is not appropriate. How can it -- you know, Allakaket is 60 land miles away from this potential road, and then 250 miles away from the mine. How -- like, how does that work?

Allakaket, in an area that has $4 million a mile road construction cost. So you're talking about a tribe saying, "We're in economic crisis," and, you know, people with high degrees of responsibility who are engaged in these Western systems and understand them have got an obligation to transparency the -- it's -- it's ridiculous to say, that, "Oh, a tribe in economic difficult -- a difficult economic situation could build a $240 million road by which people can then travel another 200 miles to -- to get to a mine, and that this is going to solve economic problems."

It's so preposterous that I think that it's kind of a travesty that the SEIS is allowing industry to -- to be dishonest in a -- in a format by uplifting these kinds of statements.

I also think that there's just no real and appropriate deference to the social impacts. Those of you who have been going to these meetings have seen how many of the meetings have been delayed because of crisis

in the community. You just delayed a meeting for a crisis in the community.

If you've got a community of 200 people and one person commit suicide, what would the equivalent look like in Fairbanks? What if we woke up today and found out that 500 people in our community had woke -- had hung themselves last night? Or in front of their children? That many families were devastated.

We're -- we're really conditioned to ignore indigenous suffering because the country is built on it. But if we're ever going to move into a new era that's something that we have to stop doing. And then in our communities we're very conditioned to avoid talking about things like this because you don't want to end up touching people while they're already hurt.

You know, one of the most prolifically pro-road speakers in leadership later became the first sitting chief to die by suicide, and I think that it's not a coincidence. I think that this is colonization, and we know what it produces.

Sometimes you hear people say, "Oh, these issues are really complicated." And it is complicated. It's -- trauma creates behaviors and ripples effects that are complicated, but in the end it's actually very simple. Colonization is genocide against indigenous people. And

under genocide people are exterminated in a whole variety of ways. Actual deaths, and then divesture [as spoken] of cultural. And these are cultures that depend on whole, healed, intact landscapes.

And, you know, we can't, as parents -- and that's what gets us showing up, right, as parents? We can't erase this from our children's metagenetics. We can't take away the experience. We can't change that they have grandparents who are mission school survivors. My husband is the only living child of his parents. His other siblings are all dead by suicide. We can't change that in our home. We can't change the way that that affects -- it affects us every breath we take, you know?

But what we want is -- is to -- is to stop it, and to start moving in the other direction, right? That's the idea of decolonization. Something my husband said, I think, when he -- he was writing his comment to testify he said that he wishes that our children would grow up and live like they lived a thousand years ago, rather than in whatever kind of brand new Tesla, new iPhone, green future these companies describe.

And I think that fundamentally that the human beings impacted here have got constitutional rights to practice their religion. To exist. They're citizens. They're citizens just like anybody else in the country.

And if they were not indigenous this proposal would never be going forward. We would never suggest this type of harm be perpetuated on any other group of people.

If I suggested that we need all of Washington, D.C., food unsecure because the corporation had a neat idea, would -- there'd never be a meeting. There would never be a meeting, right? We would recognize that the humanitarian cost is too high.

And something the report fails to do, that the country fails to do, that the system has -- fails to do, that we have to start doing, is just recognizing that. You guys are going to -- you've heard from incredible speakers. You've heard from people who've -- that you're going to hear from more.

You know -- and I really hope you can find a way to incorporate that core reality into your report, right? That these people matter.

I'm -- I'm good.

ROB ROSENFELD: Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you. Gerald? You can have a seat, and then just say your name before you start. Say your name before you start speaking -- introduce yourself. Thank you.

GERALD SAM: How loud?

CHIEF HARDING: She'll tell you if you need to

be louder.

GERALD SAM: Good morning, everybody. My name is --

CHIEF HARDING: Hi, Jerry.

GERALD SAM: Good morning, everybody. My name is Gerald, Jerry Sam. I am originally from Alatna. Currently I am the second chief. I can state my age, and that way I'll be able to give you guys exactly who I am. I'm 62 years old. I was born in 1962 in Alat- -- right on the riverbank of Alatna.

I'm happy to be testifying against the Ambler Road today. And I'll give you a couple of insights and different avenues that you guys might not -- you guys may have heard or may not have heard before.

So, again, right now I'm working for Tanana Chiefs Conference as an environmental tech- -- technician. So I'll -- like I say, I'll give you guys another view for you to look at.

I -- I grew up in Alatna, very, very, very small town, but then again it's going to be affected by this road drastically. Our ancestors have always relied on subsistence. That's just our way of life. Because, I mean, that's -- if you look back in deep history there were -- there were two grandmothers that was traveling from the northwest area, and then one -- one -- they came

to a branch right up by Kobuk area, which is going to be affected by the Ambler Road, and then, again, they were looking for subsistence-use areas, and then being strong people they were walking.

And then one of them said, "Well, I'm going to go further interior."

And then the other one said, "I'm going up north." And then she actually ended up in -- in Barrow area.

And then my other grandma, who came down, went right down toward Alatna area. And then that's one of our foregrounds for where we actually came from.

And my other -- my grandfather came from probably further up in the northwest area, which is also benefitting the Ambler Road.

And I've got ties up there, and then, again, when I speak with these people they said as long as you're against it they could probably jump on being against this road also.

But going back to my -- my upbringing, our -- our grandfathers have always lived this type of subsistence life.

And then, again, the actual road going across the Alatna River will go right across malamute area [as spoken].

And currently -- when I was growing up we used to traverse all the way up this river -- all the way up and down with my -- my uncles and my -- my fathers, and my brothers, and my -- my cousins just for hunting and subsisting off the land. I'm saying hunting, but then yet we would be fishing.

So that's an area that some of you guys probably really haven't looked at too. Then when we would be going up we -- we would be traveling up and then stopping at -- at camps where -- where our -- our fathers and uncles actually grew up around, and then -- and that's where we actually really got to know -- and then I actually grew up right -- right in one -- one of the first camps up along the river which is called Butter Rock (phonetic).

And then our -- our -- all of my paternal -- my paternal grandparents' side, he had many sisters, so, again, that whole camp area would be similar to this room right here with -- with all the -- the families, right, within that area.

And, again, we lived -- we lived off of the subsistence. Like I say, we'd be traveling up there, they would be hunting pretty much for moose, caribou, bear, and gathering all the fish and berries. And all the different type of things that we can store for -- for

our -- our uses.

And then these are traditional foods that we grew up on. And even now that I'm living here in Fairbanks I probably have to cook up a pot of moose soup or caribou or fish during the week so that way I can really tie myself back to where I'm from, and then I can carry on and keep myself full and energized for what I have to do.

When we -- we were -- we'll be going up there, like I say, pointing out these areas. If you look at the maps up -- up there in the Brooks Range Mountains, all those mountains have names that are probably renamed by the Western civilized people similar to people sitting here. But then again, all these names had different names from all the -- our grandpas similar to that mountain back there because, again, they would be hunting for sheep and caribou and -- and different -- different individuals like me would be saying, "I'll go this way and that way." And then, again, all -- all these names would have names in the Eskimo language after their namehoods right there.

And then after this current day right now we do have people that are actually traveling all the way up the river to go hunt sheep in these areas, and then to just keep -- keep on our cultural ways which is very

strong right now.

And, again, it's -- it comes at no easy cost, because, again, you can see the cost of living, which -- which is -- compared to your side, on the western side. Everybody else would go -- go flux -- go crazy when you be looking at gallon of gas going above three gall- -- $3 and some a gal- -- a gallon compared to the fact that we have to pay $11 to $12 a gallon for gas. And for a quart of oil that is the same case right there.

So the -- the -- this is social economic values of subsistence that we actually live off of, but then again, the hardships that we actually have to go through it.

Again, I'm -- I'm talking about the caribou and moose and bears, because, again, a long time ago when our -- our fathers and mothers and grandpas was around there was actually no moose and -- and caribou around the area. This is historical facts. And then the -- the large animals would be bears. And then, again, that's -- that's what our fathers and mothers would actually learn to live off of and subsist off of along with all these small -- small animals, rabbits, ptarmigans, and birds, and stuff like that. So all -- all -- that's that.

And then going back to fishing, we'll be driving all the way up along the river with our uncles and everybody else to use -- that's similar to this -- this table right here. We'd make a big U-turn, and then draw it back in, similar to what the fishing units are doing outside, and then -- for -- for all their fish. And then we'll pull back in and then we'll be gathering our catch for sheefish, whitefish, pike, and then all the other fish. These would be storing up for the winter months for our dogs and our families and stuff like this.

And then, again, now that it's winter we'll be eating up all these food -- cooking it up, and then also having it, frozen fish, if -- if you seen any old movies you would see our people living off of raw subsistence foods, and then that's how we got our -- our name being Inupiaq from further up north, up on the Alaska map, and that's called -- we are called the real people.

And then, again, when we're talking about this Ambler Road it will be truly affecting our people. When -- when the actual road went up to the Prudhoe Bay -- before that we used to have caribou running -- running right probably couple miles above our community.

And then just growing up while I was young like this with a .22 I can probably run back up that far and

then yet I'll be able to catch some caribou, just because, again, we -- I just -- being the manhood that we're growing up to be, and now we rarely, rarely see caribou unless you drive all the way up into the mountains which I was talking about before.

And then, again -- maybe again there will be bouncing off just because they will be veering off a different migration routes by themselves, and then giving us their blessing to having some of that caribou coming down to us now and then.

And it's -- if this road does go through, and then, again, they're proposing the road and then saying it's going to be just for -- for commercial use only, and then that's the same thing that they said about the Dalton Highway going up to Prudhoe Bay. And then later on they opened it for public use, and then, again, it will be opening up for all you outsiders.

And then everybody else will going -- going up there and then taking advantage of going hunting, and also making your homesteads and everywhere else along the road. If -- if you look at some of the maps along the Alatna River right now we're -- we're already seeing some of -- some of the outside folks going up there, staking their claims because, I mean, they're seeing how -- how -- how they can also benefit right now

for -- for gold mines and different -- different avenues just to make themselves rich.

We as Native people have never thought ourselves rich, but then we always are because, again, we -- we're able to sustain our livelihood off of the land, and then this is what it really comes down to.

When they first held the meetings over at the west -- Westwood (phonetic) along with the -- the people from the NANA region I couldn't really speak up with it because I also work for TCC. But then -- yet, I had to -- I had to break my way in the door. And then I said, "This -- this road is yours against mine. Or yours -- not -- not yours and mine. It's yours and mine," even though they're fully benefitting from -- from this access.

And AIDEA is pretty much an outside agency group that is in control, which is not even including many other different people from Alaskan inputs [as spoken]. So that is something that I would -- I could probably say too, even though I had not really thoroughly examined, but then yet that's something.

And then that would -- if that were -- would be the case in any other region throughout the world, that's -- that is really -- that will be harming the people that would be -- that really, really dreadful

through my eyes right there.

Again, I could ramble and talk, but then yet this road will be truly affecting our people, and then it's going to be crossing the Alatna River which we're substaining [as spoken] ourselves, and also being an environmental technician I can see the effects of climate change.

And then, again, like I said, I -- growing up, and then I was able to easily traverse the river, but then now we're seeing many other different river changes. And then, again, with that going on, and with the high cost of gas it really makes it tough for people to actually gain the subsistence values, resources that we -- we need to keep on living up there in our area.

Thank you for your time.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Gerald.

APRIL MONROE: I think something though that they want to know --

CHIEF HARDING: Before -- before we go on. I -- didn't -- I'd like to introduce myself again.

I am -- I am Sam, Chief of Alatna, and I -- I am participating to stand opposed to this road. And that -- that came from the tribal members themselves. Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Chief.

APRIL MONROE: -- and I think Roy --

DAWN DAVID: Hi. My name is Dawn David. I'm the department administrator. I'm also tribal member and tribal council member, and I fully oppose the Ambler Road.

Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you.

DAWN DAVID: I think Roy and Gerald could help too.

CHIEF HARDING: And then -- yeah. It's me, again. And I don't know if I'm going to come back after lunch, but I would like Rob to give information update on our trip to Washington.

Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Yep. Thank you. We can do that after lunch. We want to make sure that we have the opportunity here to get anyone else that wants to provide any public comment. We have probably another half an hour with the court reporter, so we want to make sure that anybody else in this room that wants to make a comment can make a comment.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Sonya, do you want --

SONYA KNIGHT: No.

CHAD RICKLEFS: No?

APRIL MONROE: Can you -- Sonya could you -- one of the things they're wanting to know about it, like, you know, like where people were hunting and fishing, and, like, what time of the year they were doing it -- when you were growing up.

SONYA KNIGHT: Seasons.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: Seasons -- what's available.

APRIL MONROE: Like when you were growing up, like, maybe in the winter, like, January, February, when it's really cold?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: Were you guys just hiding out?

SONYA KNIGHT: There was rabbits if you run out of moose -- moose meat, caribou, and fish that you fished for. You can have rabbits. Yeah. And ptarmigan. All those.

APRIL MONROE: Go snare them?

SONYA KNIGHT: Huh?

APRIL MONROE: You'd do -- go set snare for them?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. Or shoot them. Whatever.

APRIL MONROE: When it starts to get a little -- and when are they getting beaver?

SONYA KNIGHT: Springtime.

APRIL MONROE: Oh.

SONYA KNIGHT: Is it spring?

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Maybe March.

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. March.

APRIL MONROE: Starting around March.

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. Start.

APRIL MONROE: And then what -- and then after is muskrat? When is muskrat?

SONYA KNIGHT: In the spring.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: After -- you know, breakup time.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. And then how long a distan- -- and then summer comes, and then how -- you know, when you guys were growing up where were you mostly? Did you guys stay in one place or were you moving around?

SONYA KNIGHT: No. No, we didn't move. Not my family. But some people -- the springtime go out for spring camps, you know. They can fish through the lakes or the creeks -- whatever they can get out there. Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. And then muskrat in the springtime. And then what about summertime? Fishing?

SONYA KNIGHT: Fishing.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: And we usually have enough food just to last until the fish thawed and we'd have fish to eat. And then we'd plant gardens and stuff.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. What kind of fish?

SONYA KNIGHT: We had everything. Salmon, whitefish, sheefish, those little whitefish, grayling, pike -- all that.

APRIL MONROE: What's the best one?

SONYA KNIGHT: The best one?

APRIL MONROE: The sheefish? I think I like sheefish best.

What about caribou? Do you remember when there was caribou around?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. In the fall.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: Fall time.

APRIL MONROE: And that would be Alatna/Allakaket area they were coming through?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Did that change?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: Did they --

SONYA KNIGHT: It did.

APRIL MONROE: What happened?

SONYA KNIGHT: I don't know what happened in

those days, but I think the big decline was when they built the pipeline. That did something up there. So I don't know.

APRIL MONROE: Because they were coming through always before that?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: What were you guys using them for? Just to eat, or for --

SONYA KNIGHT: For what?

APRIL MONROE: For just to eat or were you using them for clothes and everything too?

SONYA KNIGHT: Oh, everything. Use every bit of it.

APRIL MONROE: Uh-huh.

SONYA KNIGHT: If wasn't for eating it was for clothing. It was -- they use different parts of it. You make fish hooks out of their horns -- or what do you call them?

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Antlers -- their antlers?

SONYA KNIGHT: Antlers, yeah. Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: When did -- was there -- in that time was there lots of salmon and lots of sheefish and lots of whitefish, or was there --

SONYA KNIGHT: Oh, yeah. There's lots.

APRIL MONROE: -- lots of everything? Do you remember when did the salmon start to go away?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. It wasn't very long after pipeline I notice that -- all of it. I don't know if it's because the climate. I don't know what --

APRIL MONROE: What about moose? Remember, we used to see moose all the time.

SONYA KNIGHT: All the time.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: You'd have to check outside your door?

SONYA KNIGHT: Uh-huh.

APRIL MONROE: How is it now?

SONYA KNIGHT: Nothing. I didn't see one moose last -- I stay in Bettles. Before -- I moved to town, so I don't know.

APRIL MONROE: Have you seen the city moose?

SONYA KNIGHT: Huh?

APRIL MONROE: Have you seen the city moose?

SONYA KNIGHT: Have I seen what?

APRIL MONROE: Oh, no -- no moose here either?

SONYA KNIGHT: Nothing. I know the caribou didn't come through either. So I don't know. Maybe they went south of us or north of us. I don't know.

APRIL MONROE: How far were people going, you know, like Alatna people, would they go to, like Hunts Fork [as spoken]?

SONYA KNIGHT: Do what?

APRIL MONROE: Like Hunts Fork [as spoken] or even the Kobuk -- how far do they go -- would people go?

SONYA KNIGHT: For what?

APRIL MONROE: To -- for -- for anything to trade or to -- to fish or hunt or to trade.

SONYA KNIGHT: Well, there wasn't very much coming up -- fish coming up Bettles at the time, and I think it went through that place down there. What's the river that goes --

APRIL MONROE: The John?

SONYA KNIGHT: -- Bettles?

APRIL MONROE: The John?

SONYA KNIGHT: Wild -- John River.

APRIL MONROE: Oh, the -- yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah. There's also the Wild River above Bettles, so I don't know what --

APRIL MONROE: Where they were going?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: What do you think -- if a road came through there, do you think -- do you think -- how would it affect things do you think?

SONYA KNIGHT: I think it would affect everything.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: All the animals, birds -- we're running out of birds also, so --

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: All of them. All animals.

APRIL MONROE: And you think the pipeline road -- the pipeline road changed things --

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: -- once --

SONYA KNIGHT: It did.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. For -- you know, like, watching -- for hunting and stuff or taking care of things, that's what I was trying to explain, how -- were you taught mostly to, like, watch things carefully?

SONYA KNIGHT: Watch?

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Like, do you watch the animals?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.
There's -- there's -- they have certain place -- people pick out their own hunting area.

APRIL MONROE: Uh-huh.

SONYA KNIGHT: And they stick to that. So everybody get a little of everything and leave some

behind. Make sure you don't just kill it all.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: And everybody go to one spot.

APRIL MONROE: Where were you guys getting things for medicines, like tea and all that?

SONYA KNIGHT: Huh?

APRIL MONROE: Where were you getting plants for medicine like teas and --

SONYA KNIGHT: I didn't -- we didn't do that. I didn't --

APRIL MONROE: You didn't do that?

SONYA KNIGHT: Well, maybe we did. There's some that they use, but I was too young to remember before we moved.

APRIL MONROE: And then now you still go get berries, right?

SONYA KNIGHT: Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: What kind? You get blueberries --

SONYA KNIGHT: Berries.

APRIL MONROE: -- and cranberries?

SONYA KNIGHT: Do I?

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: Berries -- cranberries in August.

APRIL MONROE: Uh-huh. You're getting salmonberries there still or no?

SONYA KNIGHT: Some. Yeah.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: There's -- there's hardly nothing left.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah.

SONYA KNIGHT: I didn't see any last summer.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Was there anything else about the road that you think or it would do or that you want to say or --

SONYA KNIGHT: It's -- they're going to kill off more -- the rest of the animals. Yeah. Some of them.

APRIL MONROE: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you. I think we have -- Roy, I think, did you want to speak one more time?

ROY NICTUNE: Yeah.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you. And you want to come back up? Thank you very much.

This will be our last.

THE COURT REPORTER: Okay.

ROY NICTUNE: Hello, this is Roy again. Just some closing comments on this project -- this proposed project of the Ambler Road.

Like I said before, it's -- it's going to bring -- bring a lot of changes, not only to our area, but to our people. If this road goes through it's going to be the beginning of the end of our people. Our life as we know it is not going to be the same anymore. This -- this land is something that we've depended on for centuries.

My aunty was talking, their grandpa came from up north, and grandma came from around Kobuk. And when they moved over to this -- where Alatna is now, they were following the game looking for better places to hunt and to survive.

The lands where we come from is probably one of the coldest regions in Alaska. I've -- I've seen it get down to 80 below and more. It gets so cold in the nighttime you hear these loud noises at night. What's happening is the trees are freezing and the sap just explodes and makes a loud noise. That's how cold it gets.

Just -- and the way our people survive, we -- we used all the animals and resources that we could, and that -- when you require that kind of food to survive you use a very large area of land. You don't just stay in one place. You move to different parts, different camps at different times of the year to harvest your food. That's how we survived.

And also, we trapped, and we -- to keep warm we dressed in furs. Trapping, you -- when you trap you -- you have to go in different directions. You don't trap one year or two years in a row in the same place. You give that land a chance to build up again, the population of the fur-bearing animals. That's -- that's how you conserve. That's -- that's how we -- that's how we learn to survive. With the animal populations. We took care of them. They took care of us. The land took care of us.

That's -- I'm trying to explain -- it's really hard to explain how -- how we depended so much on the land and the resources. It's -- it's just not one area. We -- we use a lot.

I used to have a good trap line. Went back from Evansville up to -- up to the mountains there, and I think it did good until someone decided to build a pipeline and cut my trap line in half. So I couldn't survive anymore -- couldn't make the money that I could trapping. It just wasn't there.

So that's where I ended up going to college and learning a different way to survive. But what I'm trying to paint the picture of right now is how important this land, the mountains, and all that country is -- how important it is to our people. We lose that -- we lose

that land, we'll be no more. It's -- it's -- that's the only way I know how to explain it.

Excuse me. I lost my train of thought again.

The -- the way I was taught, my mom said to always respect people and treat them the way you want to be treated. And that's -- that's what I'd like to end with.

When you go to make these decisions about these lands, remember the people that live there. Remember how important that land is to us.

Thank you.

BILL HEDMAN: Thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you, Roy.

Okay. I think we've got everyone that wanted to provide a comment -- had an opportunity to provide a public comment on the Draft Supplemental EIS as well as the ANILCA 810.

We're going to take a break now. This is going to conclude public hearing for the draft EIS as well as the 810 hearing.

We're going to take a lunch break for -- for Dawn and Chief Harding. We're going to come back here at 1:00. You can either stay on the line or you can call back in using the same phone number that you used before, as well as the same Zoom link. If you have difficulties

getting back on the line after lunch just let Rob know, and we'll work with you to make sure that you get back on the line.

What we're going to do this afternoon is Bill Hedman, and we're going to have Julie Aaronson, Raena from A- -- Stephen Braund & Associates, we're going to have Dave Esse and Erin Julianus in the room to help facilitate a discussion for what we have been calling a Section 810 workshop, working group, where we just want to continue these conversations that we've been hearing today, as well as what we've been hearing in the other villages related to subsistence, potential impacts, where -- where resources may be found that you utilize. Similar to the stories that we just heard from Sonya, how you access those -- those -- those resources and some of the trends that you've seen in resources. Any type of information that will be helpful that we could capture in notes that Raena will be taking that we can then take back to our -- our team of specialists when we motive forward to prepare the final Supplemental EIS.

So with that, do you have any questions, Chief Harding and Dawn, before we close for our lunch break, and we'll return again at 1:00?

ROB ROSENFELD: Chief Harding had to leave early.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Did Dawn -- did they all leave?

ROB ROSENFELD: Dawn may still be there.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Dawn, are you there?

CHIEF HARDING: Yes. I -- I just want to say thank you to all of the participants and especially the tribal members that take time for comment and testify. That -- you don't know how -- how much it means to this, so thank you.

CHAD RICKLEFS: Thank you.

All right. We'll be back at 1:00. Thank you.

(Proceedings concluded at 12:10 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