

**AMBLER ROAD ACCESS  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**COLDFOOT/WISEMAN PUBLIC MEETING**

Wednesday, October 23, 2019  
12:19 p.m.

WISEMAN COMMUNITY CENTER  
Wiseman, Alaska

## **PROJECT LEADERSHIP ATTENDING:**

Robyn Miller, HDR  
Susan Signor, HDR  
Tina McMaster-Goering, BLM  
Tim Hammond, BLM  
Jeff Rasic, BLM  
Faith Martineau, DNR

## **Court Reporter:**

Kasidy Pighini, CSR  
PACIFIC RIM REPORTING, LLC  
711 M Street, Suite 4  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

## **WISEMAN, ALASKA; OCTOBER 23, 2019**

**12:19 P.M.**

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MS. ROBYN MILLER: Hello. Welcome to the public hearing for the Ambler Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, and for the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA, Section 810 Subsistence Evaluation.

This public hearing is sponsored by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, otherwise known as the BLM. This hearing is taking place in Wiseman, Alaska, at approximately 12:19 p.m. on October 23rd, 2019.

The hearing is required under the National Environmental Policy Act and ANILCA Section 810.

I'm Robyn Miller with HDR, a consulting firm under contract to assist the BLM. I'm facilitating the public hearing today. My job is to facilitate an orderly and effective hearing that provides a fair opportunity for all who wish to testify. I recognize that many people are passionate about this project, and we want to hear from everyone.

We will begin with a 20-minute presentation from the BLM, followed by a formal public hearing for both the Draft EIS and the ANILCA Section 810 findings, where we will take public testimony.

If you would like to make a public comment, there is a sign-up sheet here at the front. We will take comments from people in the order they signed up. To help you better understand the project, we have poster boards around the room, several handouts you may take with you, and the Draft EIS itself. Please hold your questions until the end of the public testimony.

The meeting allows the public to offer comments by directly addressing the BLM and cooperating agencies regarding the Ambler Road Draft EIS. These government officials seated here or standing, are here to listen to your comments.

As I introduce them, I will ask each of them to raise their hand.

Tina McMaster-Goering, BLM.

Tim Hammond, BLM.

Faith Martineau, State of Alaska.

Jeff Rasic, NPS.

We also have staff from HDR, Sue Signor.

Our court reporter, Kasidy Pighini, is creating an official transcript for the record.

We have a few ground rules to make sure that the hearing proceeds smoothly. Our ground rules are: Please help us maintain an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable and welcome, regardless of their position on the project.

Please don't ask questions during the presentation. If we have time following the public testimony, we can answer questions about the project. Please remain quiet so that the court reporter and others can hear, and please silence your cell phones.

Now we will hear from Tina McMaster-Goering, who is the project manager.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: Thank you, Robyn. I appreciate that.

Welcome, everybody, and good afternoon. Thanks for having us. The first slide shows all of the communities that we're holding public meeting and hearings in, and Wiseman is our last public meeting.

So we're going to start the presentation just with an overview of what we're going to cover today, and Robyn is my slide turner.

All right. So we're going to start with an overview of the project, then we're going to talk about the environmental process. We're going to talk about the agencies that have been involved in the EIS process with us. We're going to talk about how the Draft Environmental Impact Statement document is set up.

We're going to talk about subsistence, and the ANILCA 810 evaluation. We're going to talk about the schedules and the comment period and how to give us your comments.

[PRESENTATION BY MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING]

The decision for the best possible route through Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is determined by the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Transportation, based upon an Environmental and Economic Analysis completed by the National Park Service, and in consideration with the BLM's EIS.

So, Jeff, do you want to talk about the Park Service's EEA?

MR. JEFF RASIC: Yeah, just very briefly.

I work for the National Park Service. I'm the Chief of Cultural and Natural Resources for Gates of the Arctic, and I'm the Project Manager for the Ambler Road permitting.

We, as you can see, have a smaller piece of this bigger project, about 20 miles across Park Service lands. We've created a companion document that goes along with the EIS, and we've

focused on impacts relative to Park Service lands only, and the key decision about the route across Park lands.

So if you have comments specific to the Park Service, we have mechanisms in place. We have a comment system in place, and we're eager to receive feedback about that; however, we're also coordinated with the BLM. So any comments that go in through the BLM system, thoughts you share today, or provided in writing or online, will all get funneled to us if they pertain to Park Service issues, so we're in sync in the communication on this.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: Thanks, Jeff.

[PRESENTATION, CONTINUED BY MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING]

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Thank you, Tina.

It's time to move on to the hearing. Federal regulations require a public meeting on the contents of the EIS. ANILCA Section 810 requires a public hearing on subsistence. We are combining these into one hearing session today.

Again, the hearing is an opportunity for the agencies to hear directly from the public, and for your testimony to be transcribed and entered into the record as an official public comment. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity.

So that everyone has a chance to speak, please be respectful of the time of your comment. If we get through everyone who wishes to speak and we still have time, you may be able to come back and give people another chance to speak.

Before you begin your testimony, please state and spell your name. If you have a copy of your testimony, please give that to the court reporter so she can accurately capture your thoughts.

If you would like to give testimony to the court reporter more privately, and if we have time, you can come up and speak directly to Kasidy. If you aren't comfortable speaking in public, you can always leave a written comment. Comment sheets are available at the front of the room. Sue has more copies. Written comments receive the same consideration as oral comments. All comments received, including names, will become part of the public record, and may be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. We will address all substantive comments in the Final EIS.

I will now call people to -- well, I will call on people in the order in which they signed up, and I'll bring you the microphone. You can still sign up to speak or volunteer after we've gone through the list. I just ask that when you're speaking, please speak directly to Kasidy so she can fully capture your statement.

So the first person on the list is Jacqueline Veats.

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: My name is Jackie Veats. J-a-c-k-i-e, "V" as in Victor, e-a-t-s.

Thank you for outlining the Alternatives A, B, and C, but I want to talk about Alternative D, which is no road at all. We're here talking about an Arctic land of snow, permafrost, lakes, sand, fish, wildlife, and waterways, and I'm against the Ambler Road Project.

Here are some of my concerns. This is just some of them, and I'm just hitting the highlights here: Devastation of the delicate ecological balance of a pristine wilderness, habitat destruction, effects on the drainages of the Kobuk, the Alatna, and the Koyukuk Rivers, subsistence and cultural risks, disturbance of a way of life, interruption of the migration patterns of wildlife, disturbing animals; caribou migration, moose, Dall sheep, wolves, grizzly bears, and all of the other little critters that live out there; permanent alteration of the entire area.

A road that goes through the Gates of the Arctic opens up a can of worms. What comes next?

Benefits go to a foreign mining company; burdens go to Alaskans. Alaska DOT estimates the cost of building the road to be 844 to 960 million -- now, these are estimates that I've read about. These may not be exactly point on -- maybe a billion dollars to build the road, with 8.5 million to maintain the road on a yearly basis. The mine is supposed to pay 214 to 371 million in State taxes over the lifetime, which is less than the total cost of the road.

AIDEA, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, has some of their past projects being called "boondoggles." When I read about this organization, the word "boondoggle" keeps coming up. Is this another one? They have already spent 30 million on the proposal and permit process. They estimate 486 jobs for construction, which is short term, and 68 jobs for ops and maintenance. Some of those jobs may be performed by existing jobs already. There's no guarantee that Alaskans are going to get any jobs.

There will be nine tons of waste rock per one ton of ore. Acid mine drainage will cause mobilization of heavy metals and toxic contaminants flowing into lakes and streams. Waste will require perpetual storage and maintenance. So what are the costs and the damage controls of these and the storage areas for these wastes?

You want to build a road for a foreign country that will export everything to foreign countries to bolster their economies and to create a few jobs in an area where people live a subsistence lifestyle, and, again, there's no guarantee that any Alaskans are going to get any work out of this.

Public access is denied. I believe this road will not stay private. The Dalton Highway is a very good example of that. It will become another Dalton Corridor. It will open the area to illegal usage and over-hunting. Who will pay for road maintenance, monitors in the area, like rangers and troopers?



The Dalton Highway, which used to be a private road, is a two-lane road, with big trucks and heavy loads tearing it up day in and day out. The road is in constant need of maintenance. Not that our DOT doesn't try to do a good job, but it's constant. Potholes are large and deep. The road is full of washboard areas, cracks, slippage, frost heaves. It's a dangerous road, and it can't take any more traffic on it. I understand that this would add at least 100 more trucks to the Dalton on a daily basis, which I just don't think it can sustain that. The noise, the dust, the danger, the tourists, the problems, and now you want to put that many more trucks on the Dalton Highway.

I've heard the Ambler Road being called a "211-mile driveway" associated with a mine that would require additional spurs, development of mine sites, lots of industrial disturbances, and tailing ponds. There's a lack of details in the proposal of dealing with permafrost, migration issues. It fails to address impacts to the environment, wildlife, fish, village ways of life, protection of plants, and introduction of non-native plants to the area.

What is the life of the mine, and what happens when it's finished? Or maybe they will extend the road into more pristine areas to do more mining. This road opens a door to the unknown. It will provide short-term economic benefits and long-term negative impacts and burdens on the people of the State of Alaska. I beg you to consider the negative aspects of building this road before you go any further in this process.

Please don't build the road.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Jack Reakoff.

MR. JACK REAKOFF: So, I'm Jack Reakoff, and my family moved to Wiseman in 1971 before this road was built, the Dalton Highway, the Haul Road. There were lots of activity and displacement of the animals during the construction of the road. This road here, the animals had

to respond by moving away from the road. This road was closed to the public. If you had land along the road, you could get a permit to travel the road, and there was lots of miners that were industrial users. They used the road also.

I've seen this road built. I've seen this road close to the public, and this road was opened to the public long before the State officially opened it, because the hunters learned to stake mining claims north of the Brooks Range, and they had full access to the road. Once the State of Alaska got that -- received the road, they put a checkpoint at the river, just like this Alyeska did. When the Board of Game opened the Dalton Highway Corridor to archery -- it was closed to hunting during the construction of the road from 1974 to 1982. When they opened the road to hunting in 1982, the hunters began staking the mining claims. They began moving to the north, and the State of Alaska moved the checkpoint in 1984 to Disaster Creek. They tried to keep that road closed, but there were so many, hundreds of hunters coming every year, that they gave up, and they said, "We're not even going to maintain a checkpoint anymore."

The road, then, was open all the way to the North Slope, and the North Slope Borough says, "Well, the road is supposed to be closed," so they put a checkpoint at the last tree at the North Slope Borough boundary, 68th Parallel. They did it one year, and they gave up because there were hundreds of hunters hunting north of the Brooks Range with permits. They had commercial permits. They were miners, but they brought their boats, and they brought their toys, and they were killing a lot of caribou. So there was a lot of hunting pressure long before the State of Alaska officially opened the road in the early '90s.

I'm on the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, and we have deep concerns for the resources along this road, having a history of knowing full well what happens when they build a road. The road is not closed to the public, and there is many reasons why the public will be using that road.

The Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission wrote a comment, and I'll read the comment, because I work with the Chair, as Vice Chair of the Commission, working with the Chair, Taqulik Hepa, in opposition to the road. I will read the comment, and I'll have additional comments also.

"The Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission is opposed to the Ambler Industrial Access Road for the following reasons:

"The Commission finds the road is not proven to be economically viable. Application for the Ambler Road is premature.

There is no agreement with AIDEA or with any company to ensure that tariffs will be paid for the road. "There has not been a comprehensive analysis of real costs of the Ambler Access Road. The State Department of Transportation Planning Division chronically underestimates new road construction to get initial funding. Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority has not actually had an independent cost analysis made as to real roadbed and bridge construction, as well as the true annual maintenance costs.

"There's no realistic idea what the tariff rate would be for the mining companies. Without a real idea of what the tariff rate will be, there will be no signed agreement with any company to use the Ambler Road Access Road.

"The Commission has serious concerns for detrimental long-term effects to both fish and wildlife and the people in the Koyukuk and Kobuk River watersheds by non-subsistence users. Detrimental impacts to the local resident subsistence users, wildlife, and fishery resources are unwarranted.

"If the Ambler Access Road continues to the next phase, the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission will seriously consider the northern route through the Gates of the Arctic

Kobuk Preserve. Crossing smaller streams would have less impact with smaller bridges. There would be more limited boat launch access by sport users higher in the drainage, lessening the competition impacts to communities of the Kobuk River watershed and customary and traditional harvest areas, and that would be off Alternative A, the northern route.

"The National Park Service should seriously consider methods and means restrictions that are in place for the Dalton Highway. The Dalton Highway Haul Road was built into wilderness. The closure to all-terrain vehicles and firearms has helped reduce the high harvest of low-density game populations and damage to surface terrain. Management methods of the Dalton Highway Corridor would need to be applied to the Ambler Access Road if built."

There's a history of this. The oil industry built the Haul Road in 1974, as I discussed. I go over the -- how the State of Alaska took the road in 1974, and they scrambled to set up temporary maintenance camps and shops. The Haul Road was and is the lifeblood of the oil development that has highly benefited the State of Alaska.

The road was maintained for industrial traffic. I discussed with the Commission how those permits were purchased for \$12 to go as industrial users, to access the road before opening.

The Ambler Road will see the same thing, except for a faster time scale. There's no restrictions outside the five-mile Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area. So once you go five miles away from the Dalton Highway at Mile 62, it's wide open for the use of all-terrain vehicles right from the road. Nothing stops the truckers or any other commercial user from using all-terrain vehicles and firearms from the road.

Hunters will now pay \$35 mining claim fee for the Ambler area for access permit. The "miners," in quotation, will bring air boats, jet boats, powerful ATVs and snowmachines to hunt all the way to the coast. The big boats the hunters have now and are using on the Yukon River and other

rivers, will be able to access wildlife and fishery resources down the Kobuk River and along the coast from Kotzebue, and the Chukchi Sea, as well as the Koyukuk River drainages, everything on the Koyukuk River, John River, will all feed into the main stem of the Koyukuk River.

This "Road to Resources," as was touted by Governor Parnell, has been talked about in the Alaska Outdoor Council, AOC, and Sportsman For Wildlife groups for years. The Ambler Road will expand the terrain devastation and high-competition combat hunting seen on the Denali, Steese, Taylor, Glenn, and other roads in Alaska.

The Dalton highway has ATV and firearm restrictions, except for very limited firearm and snowmobile use on federal public lands by a small number of eligible rural residents within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area. The political push for the Ambler Road is the affluent and politically powerful urban sport hunters of Alaska, as stated on their websites.

The Dalton Highway maintenance is a State expenditure. There are seven maintenance camps from Livengood to Deadhorse. There is a tremendous cost to the State for wages, insurance, and retirement for the crews. For the work one week on and one week off, the State pays for charters to fly their crews up and back. The State also pays for the equipment and fuel, as well as other parts and supplies that all have to be trucked up. All of the remote operations are not cheap. The Ambler Road would be just as expensive, but likely more.

There would need to be airfields built near the camps to change the crews out. There would be -  
- need to be a minimum of three to four camps on the Ambler Road. Coldfoot would maintain the first 60 miles, but the budget would need to be increased for the Coldfoot site. Most likely, Coldfoot, John River, Alatna, and Ambler would be the camp locations.

The State receives very little royalty from mineral extraction. Selling access needs to have signed agreements to assure cost recovery.

The Northwest Arctic Borough will receive property taxes, but the State will lose tremendous amounts of money for construction and maintenance. Current cost of construction and maintenance projects are highly flawed. The State cannot afford to be squandering money at any time, but especially now.

The State Department of Transportation Planning Division chronically and vastly underestimates the stated cost for new road construction.

The Manley to the Yukon River "Road to Nome" section is an example. The actual cost after completion will be three times the DOT initial stated estimate. Using the typical ratio as the minimum understated cost for the Ambler Road due to very large river crossings, extensive permafrost requiring use of geotextile, the Ambler Road will cost at least three times the DOT lowballed estimate.

The Ambler Road will likely cost at least one to \$1.2 billion, and that would be the northern route. This is not accounting for the cost of airfield access for some of the maintenance camps and camps themselves. The camps and the equipment to maintain the road would be tens of millions of dollars. The absolute minimum cost of the crew and the equipment will be 11 million annually, taking in account the cost per mile of the Dalton Highway of \$49,000, last figures found. Costs per mile, \$49,000. That's what I found from the -- I had to go into the Legislature's accounting. It's a phenomenal cost for a 211-mile road.

The application is premature. Currently, there's no viable demonstrated mining plan by Trilogy Metals.

Where is the huge amount of -- there's no mining plan. Where's the huge amount of energy going to come from? A gas line or massive amounts of diesel will be needed. There has been no projection. Is there a gas line in these -- in these alternatives? Do you know what it takes to

mine hard rock? It's very energy expensive. There's no mining plan. Everything done to date regarding operating mining operation by Trilogy Metals is vague, at best. The current mining proposal has huge logistical gaps that make this proposed pie in the sky. The reason is Trilogy has stated publicly they are not going to mine. Their intent is to sell to a company who might mine the copper ore. There's no plan.

There is no agreement between the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority with the mining companies to guarantee that the Ambler Road will be used. There's no assurance to the State AIDEA Board that this road will be profitable to the Alaskan economy, or that the Ambler Road would pay for itself eventually.

The State of Alaska has not fully explored other economically viable options to ship the copper ore to market due to reduced annual maintenance cost, such as railroad access to Norton Sound, or a winter ice road to a port on the lower Kobuk River or Hotham Inlet.

One only needs to look at the Fortymile Caribou hunt in the fall from the Steese and Taylor Highways to see what the Ambler Road will be when the Western Arctic Caribou Herd tries to cross the road. The herd already has maximum use -- as a 12,000 harvest for the Western Arctic Herd, and the subsistence use is taking 12,000 animals. It's already at maximum sustained yield right now.

Road-access hunters will usurp the Western Arctic Caribou Herd allocation to an entirely new road user group. Road access will allow large boats to be launched in the Kobuk River drainages to hunt all of the drainages to the Chuk -- to the Chukchi Sea.

Moose populations will be affected up and down the Koyukuk, Wild, John, Alatna, and Kobuk Rivers by boat and all-terrain vehicles, accessing from the Ambler Road.

Local hunters will have their seasons and bag limits vastly reduced once large numbers of non-local hunters usurp allocation. The other communities in the Northwest Region and Western Interior that rely on the Western Arctic and Teshukpuk Caribou herds will also be affected by the reallocation of bag limits, including Anaktuvuk Pass, Allakaket, Alatna, Ambler, Hughes, Huslia, Bettles, Evansville, Kobuk, Shungnak, and Wiseman/Coldfoot.

Sheefish spawning grounds on the Kobuk, Alatna, and Koyukuk Rivers will largely be affected. The sheefish are highly sought-after fish for sport use already. This large, and most important fisheries on the south slope of the Brooks Range will be very near the road alignment. Additionally, grayling and whitefish species like pike also have spawning grounds in the Alatna River.

The Gates of the Arctic requested -- the Commission requested that the Sport Fish Division for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game do an analysis on catch and release of sheefish. Just with -- with optimum handling of fish, there's a three percent mortality factor with catch and release of sheefish. It's the major spawning grounds of the Yukon River, sheefish spawning in the Alatna River, and a major spawning ground on the Northwest Arctic populations in the Kobuk River.

There is a real -- there is a real possibility for copper sulfide and other toxic mining chemicals to be released into the Kobuk River and other watersheds. Hotham Inlet, Kobuk Lake, and the Kotzebue Sound are extremely important estuaries for tomcod, smelt, herring and other small fish in large biomass. Humans, as well as sheefish, arctic char, salmon and other larger fish rely on this biomass. Marine mammals, including seals and beluga whales, also use these small fish.

The food chain would be in jeopardy if toxic mining waste were spilled into the Kobuk River watershed. The annual subsistence harvest of fish is hundreds of tons. The fishery and marine



mammals are extremely important resources shared by thousands of people of the NANA Region for subsistence.

There are the same concerns for the food chain and spawning grounds of the Koyukuk River Drainage. The king salmon spawning grounds on the South Fork Koyukuk River and on Henshaw Creek are of utmost concern. Human subsistence use of the fishery resource in the Koyukuk and Yukon watershed is also in the hundreds of tons annually.

An ANILCA Title 8 Section 810 analysis would show extreme detriment to subsistence users on the federal public lands and all of Northwest Alaska.

This loophole for commercial uses would permit commercial hunters, commercial guides, hunting transporters to use the road to access fish and wildlife resources. AIDEA's language stated, that Joe Balash, who used to be the Deputy Commissioner of State of Alaska, Commissioner of Natural Resources, was working with the Interior Department in August 2, 2018. Joe Balash wrote to the Subsistence Resource Commission in response and said, "AIDEA cites that the right-of-way application especially requests a right-of-way for industrial access for which access would be controlled and primarily limited to mining-related industrial uses, although some commercial uses may be allowed under -- under permit process."

Wow, it's not just EMS response. It's not just a few things. This opens the door as a loophole where such commercial users, as hunting guides, hunting transporters, and hunting is going to occur from the road.

So, currently, such subsistence users are excluded from the road, which is not legal under Title 8 of ANILCA Section 811. Subsistence resources have a priority use, and they have access under Title 8 of Section 811. The BLM should, therefore, clarify or remove reference to other commercial users. That's a mandate in the right-of-way for the Ambler Road.

The EIS and EEA specifically should state that "There will be no transportation of hunters, game, guides, game parts, or other non-subsistence use of the fish and wildlife resources on the Ambler Road," like the Dalton Highway. It's illegal to transport hunters' gear with an all-terrain vehicle on the Dalton -- from the Dalton Highway under statutory closure. The BLM and National Park Service and the State of Alaska recognizes that subsistence will have a priority over commercial or sport hunting allowed on federal public lands near the route of the Ambler Road.

Finally, if commercial hunting and fishing is permitted along the Ambler Road, it should be allowed -- not be allowed at the exclusion of subsistence users. If this road has one sport hunter or if one animal comes off of it with mining, permitting, truckers, I don't care who it is, you're not going to keep the subsistence users off that road. In fact, subsistence users should have access. Your maps for the subsistence use for Wiseman include Chapman Lake Road and the roads that we use for subsistence currently, and it wasn't just the other communities. Wiseman is going to have one of the biggest impacts from this road.

So those are my comments. Thank you.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Bernd Hicker.

MR. BERND HICKER: That would be me. I'm just going to make it brief.

Even though you're saying that this isn't a democratic voting kind of thing, I want to make this very clear: I'm against this road, period. I'm against for another resource giveaway of our resources. I think we should actually have a right to vote on that, because these resources belong to the people of the State of Alaska and will be extracted from the State of Alaska. I think we should benefit from that, but it doesn't seem that we will.

Other than that, I've lived in this community here, for, heck, over 35 years now. I think the Dalton Highway is the perfect example of what's going to happen when we build this road into this area. It'll be just like this. I don't have to go into the details of how populations have been, you know, hammered away with all of the stuff that comes with it.

I mean, we have a perfect example laying right here. You guys didn't look at it on the way up. I assume you all flew up. You're going to meet another 100 trucks on the way south of the Yukon River. I think it's a disaster to this road that nobody talks about.

Besides that, I don't think the State of Alaska has the money for any of this. Both of my kids go to the University of Alaska. These days, we're worried that they're not going to be able to get their classes anymore, you know, because we don't have money to keep our schools and our universities up.

First things first, and as far as this road is going through the wilderness -- I think wilderness is one of our most important things that we have left on this earth, and I think we should protect it at all cost. We're going to need water. We're going to need all of this stuff clean. There's lots of it over there.

So no right-of-ways. Leave it the way it is. It works just fine.

Thank you.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Sir, can you please spell your name for Kasidy?

MR. BERND HICKER: B-e-r-n-d, H-i-c-k-e-r.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Thank you.

Bob Maurer.

MR. BOB MAURER: Bob, B-o-b. Maurer, M-a-u-r-e-r.

I am going to try to stay specific to the EIS. First, the Draft EIS is wholly, wholly, wholly inadequate in addressing the impacts from this road. This State needs to acknowledge, the BLM needs to recognize, and the EIS needs to reflect that this road over time is not going to be closed to the public. So you need to go back, and you need to readdress all of that in this EIS, because Alternatives A, B, and C do not adequately acknowledge all of those impacts.

I went through, briefly, four of the ring binders, two more specifically pertaining to the impacts, and, again, it wholly is inadequate in reflecting what is going to become of this "limited-use road" to open up the Ambler Mining District, which the real intent is to open up Western Alaska, and it's about time that that's acknowledged.

When I think of the impacts, just speaking of one portion of it, I think of the Koyukuk River, the Wild River, the John River, the Malamute Fork of the John, the Malamute Fork of the Alatna River, the Iniakuk River, the Alatna River, the Kobuk River, the Reed River, Beaver Creek, the Mamelak River. Think of the change of what's going to happen to those corridors into Interior Alaska. All you have to do is look at the South Fork of the Koyukuk to know that the EIS is wholly inadequate when it describes the impact from those bridges, because over time, like I said, this road is going to be open to the public.

Secondly, any decision made in regard to this EIS by the current acting director of the Bureau of Land Management -- as I said, "acting" -- is in violation of the "Advise and Consent" portion of the Constitution, which requires him to be confirmed by the Senate, and was just appointed for a six-month-more term. Every decision that this acting director makes needs to be contested in court, along with every other decision that's being made by these public land agencies over the course of the last three years, because even though the preferred alternatives are A and B -- I have no idea who the final decider is. I'm sure it's nobody here in this room. I'm sure it's way

back in another part of the country. And so, like I said, any decision at this point regarding this EIS needs to be challenged in court.

Pertaining to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve -- a place that I spent a lot of time and have a great love for -- and this is to the State: Just because ANILCA allows for a right-of-way in the construction of the road across the Kobuk boot of Gates of the Arctic National Preserve, doesn't mean that it's right to build that road across the Kobuk boot.

So, again, my main point is: The EIS is wholly inadequate. You need to acknowledge that, and you need to go back and start this all over, to address the true impacts from a multi-purpose road that is not going to have a 50-year-life span, but is going to be a permanent road over time into Western Alaska.

Thank you.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: So that's everyone who had signed up on the sign-in sheet that wish to speak, but now we'll open up the floor, if there are other people who would like to make a public comment.

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: I have a comment about something Jack said about the road opening the area through the mining permits to hunters.

I work in the post office in Coldfoot, so I have a lot of interaction with the public. I have had miners already tell me, "I am going there. I am going to stake a claim, and I'm going to hunt." So put that in your EIS report.

Thank you.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Anyone else?

MS. UTA HICKER: I have a question more than a comment. I was wondering, who is actually for the road? Not this community. So is it mostly accepted in the Ambler District? Do they really want this road? Do they want jobs? Are they against it?

MS. ROBYN MILLER: If you're okay with it, we'll finish the public testimony, and then we'll go off record and answer questions. Just a few more minutes.

MR. BERND HICKER: I want to just add a little bit to my rambling. This is especially to the BLM, and I forgot to mention this.

There's going to be invasive species. I know you guys have very serious problems with that. Again, the public process here we were all against, like, eradicating them with herbicides and various other means. You guys choose to do it anyways. I'd hate to see, you know, all sorts of herbicides along all of these rivers, and all of these -- so it should be going on record that we're going to have more invasive species clear across the -- you know, clear to the Bering Sea.

Thank you.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Is there anyone else who would like to make a comment? Okay. We'll go ahead and close the public testimony, and then we'll have questions.

(Recess taken.)

MS. ROBYN MILLER: So thank you to everyone who made comments. Even if you commented aloud today, you can still comment in writing. Written comments receive the same consideration as verbal comments. All comments must be received by October 29th. Our project team will remain here and are available if you have any questions.

With that, I am closing the hearing at approximately 1:26 p.m. Thank you.

(Recess taken.)

MR. MAX HANFT: I guess my main point in the discussion of the different alternatives, A, B, and C, is I don't really think there is a great deal of attention paid in the examination of those lands; for one, in the Rays, or the Tozi, or, you know, around Indian Mountain. There's a whole different area.

So much focus has been paid to this northern route that it's kind of the alternate that was rerouted to go through a village that's recently come out in support of it, and now the road is going to it, virtually. And to say that it has less impacts because there's less mileage is an assumption with no data to support it at all. The only real identifiable impact that's being avoided by just counting it -- you know, which it seems that it's being done -- is financial.

And if we're talking about the cost of the road, like it's been said before, you know, the estimates are woefully inadequate, and the major thing that's not even built into it is the removal of the road. So this whole plan is built on a removal of the road, but there is not even an estimate of what the road removal will cost, or is it being built, or is the money being set aside, you know. So it's a huge component of the road that's being used in its marketing that is not even reflected at all, period, in the EIS. So, that's just one.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Do you want this comment on the record?

MR. BERND HICKER: Sure. That's why I'm here. I might as well. I don't know why we quote all of this all the time, because some --

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: Well, some people -- like, if it's just questions, and people don't want it to be --

MR. BERND HICKER: Yeah, well, okay. It could be a question or whatever.

You said earlier that with this whole road there's going to be a fiberoptic going on. Where does this fiberoptic go, and who has benefit of that fiberoptic?

And then my next question is going to go with that: When we rip that road back out, will that fiberoptic stay in place, and will it be, like, boosted and all that stuff like we're doing here? Like, every so-many miles we put in generator plants and all this and that. Because once we move the road out, you know, it's going to become kind of difficult to maintain that fiber, you know.

So I'm just kind of interested, even if we take the road out, what are we going to leave behind? Which, honestly, I don't believe that we'll ever take the road out, because even with this road here, you know, people don't -- most people don't even remember that it was never supposed to be open. And so now we're just, you know, going on and on and doing what we need to do.

But since it was brought up, and I'm a little curious about that fiberoptic, since we got one here - - well, we didn't, but there's fiberoptic strands running here that nobody actually has anything of. We don't -- nobody gets any access. I'm kind of wondering why some of these things are done, and what the further outlook is with the fiberoptic strand like that.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: Some of that is good questions, and I think we can take those questions back with us or comments back with us. So the fiberoptics was an amendment that AIDEA turned in after their original application, and one thing that they had showed in their application was that the fiberoptic line was needed for the road, you know, because otherwise it maybe would have been a separate -- a separate action. So they had to show that it was going to be for the road, and it had to be within the road embankment, and not, like, a separate big utility --

MR. BERND HICKER: And why --



MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: -- easement.

MR. BERND HICKER: -- would AIDEA have any interest in the fiber? I don't -- I'm not sure why that's part of the plan, the road plan, because this road existed a long time before we ever had fiber.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: They -- well, originally in their application early on, this was something that they were going to put in their application when they turned it in to the federal agencies back in 2017, but they didn't have a lot of the detail and weren't able to answer a lot of agency questions at that time. So this was something that they had intended all along, but they hadn't really firmed it up well enough until, like, 2018 when they submitted the amendment.

MR. BERND HICKER: Ah, that's just a few extra dollars for the construction, negligible amounts, I assume.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: And to tell you the truth, we would have looked at, even if AIDEA hadn't given us an amendment with the fiberoptic line in it, the EIS would have looked at that as a potential reasonably foreseeable development in the analysis.

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: Why?

MS. TINA McMASTER GOERING: Just because that's what we thought at some point in time, they might come back and ask for, so we wanted to make sure that the EIS, I guess, included that, so another EIS wouldn't need to be done.

MS. UTA HICKER: So it would be exclusively for the use of the mine, or for the road-building, or for the communities along the line? What's the purpose of the fiber?

MR. JEFF RASIC: So I know a little bit about this. AIDEA's stated purpose, the primary purpose for the fiberoptic is for -- to serve the road, to communicate between maintenance stations and provide communications for traffic control.

A secondary purpose of the fiberoptic, as they stated publicly, is to supply access -- communication access to the communities along the route. And in general, that's at the discretion of the communities, at some later date to connect into that line. So that's a later thing that could come, but it's clearly promised by AIDEA to serve those communities.

MR. BERND HICKER: It's also called bribery.

MS. NICOLE REAKOFF: I have a question related to that. If you were going to look at the potential fiberoptic cable, whether --

THE COURT REPORTER: Can you speak up, please? I cannot hear you.

MS. NICOLE REAKOFF: If you were going to look at the potential fiberoptic cable, even though it wasn't included initially, because you saw it as a reasonable potential development, I'm surprised to hear you say that you would have had the foresight to think of something like a fiberoptic cable and analyze it as a potential development, but not something like the road being open to the public as a reasonable potential development and include that.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: We'll take that as a comment. Thank you.

MR. JACK REAKOFF: I have a question regarding Alternative C. This is a mining road. Under Alternative C, C crosses a lot of highly-mineralized lands, that the BLM did an analysis of the mineral potential -- along the Alternative C route, you're looking near Hughes. Why is Hughes there? Because it has a gold mine near there.

There's highly-developed, highly-mineralized lands along Alternative C, and it only has one bridge across the Koyukuk River. The cost of that was not actually reflected correctly, that the 1 bridge versus 15 bridges is not a little deal. That's a huge deal. Actually, it's two bridges, the Kobuk.

So Alternative C has reduced costs because of bridge -- bridge crossings. And Alternative C, I ask, was an analysis of the mineral potential along that road -- they keep trying to sell this road as a mining road. There's this route, Alternative C, that goes through mineralized lands, unlike the south slope is all sedimentary structures that outwash from glaciation along the south slope of the Brooks Range.

And trying to get to the Ambler Mining District, was there an analysis of the mineral potential in Alternative C? That's a pertinent question for Alternative C.

MR. MAX HANFT: Again, my name is Max Hanft. I just have one other comment on the EIS. If it's an honest assessment of the environmental impacts, to say it's complete in any way, it has to include the mine. I mean, there's no way to assess the environmental impacts of just the road, and then when it's time to do the mine, just do the mine, make these assessments, and make these choices in isolation like they're not all interconnected.

It's -- it's -- it's kind of like the EIS and its very partitioned analysis of impacts. Every impact is in its own little small thing. And we can mitigate this and mitigate that, and split this and split that, but in reality, it's an ecosystem that exists as one body that is worth far more than its parts. So to divide it and then assess it is inadequate. It's not an honest assessment. So if that assessment doesn't include the assessment of the mine, it's not really assessing it, and it's probably due to live in court. I mean, I don't know. That's really my sentiment.

Especially when it's a known purpose. I mean, I know that there's potentially a lot of other mines that might spur off of it, you know. It crosses many creeks that, you know, people would love to go scratch up, but -- and it's tough to analyze those, but if we're building a road to one Ambler Mining District, how could we not analyze the Ambler Mining District for environmental impacts? It seems inadequate.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Is there anyone else who would like to make a --

MS. UTA HICKER: My name is Uta Hicker. I think I can speak without the microphone.

One other question I have: When you talk about the monetary gain for Alaska and the jobs in Alaska, if you look at all of the Lower 48 and all the other places, the communities along the way usually have better jobs and more sustainable income from an environmental source, like the Park, for example, or Monuments, where people travel and tourists come to take pictures. That use is a longer sustainable economical growth for the community than a mine, which mines for a short time, very few people make money, and then it's all done, versus if you go, you know, to the Grand Canyon, it'll never go away. It'll always create income for the people living there.

So it's very short term to say the State of Alaska invests for employment for our people here, and for, like, mining, because it's going to be -- it's like a one-time thing. It's going to be done and gone, versus the Park and the nature is going to be always there, so you can make way more income for the State of Alaska with tourism to appreciate the wilderness, instead of mine it and then it's all gone.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Anyone else?

MR. BOB MAURER: All of the comments point to the fact that the Ambler Mining District is one aspect of the true intent of this road. It's to open up Western Alaska to build a multi-use road, and until the State acknowledges that, the environmental impact study is wholly inadequate,

because every comment here basically points to the fact that this is not the sole intent, and it needs to be acknowledged by the State, and it needs to be recognized by the BLM, and the EIS needs to reflect, like I said before, the fact that this road over time is going to be open to the public, and it will not be ended in 50 years.

Marion Creek Road is a perfect example to the BLM of something that should have been reclaimed and never was, and so this road, the true intent by the State in putting this proposal out is to get a permanent road into Western Alaska, and it needs to be acknowledged and reflected in the EIS.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Anyone else?

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: Jackie Veats. I totally agree with Bob. After listening to everything today, kind of to summarize it up, is the powers that be want to build a road across a pristine area to open up Western Alaska for a mine, that hasn't really got a plan, that really doesn't contribute a lot, that may even sell to someone else -- and then who knows what's going to happen. I have never seen a mining district that has not destroyed the area around it, whether it be pit mining, placer mining, whatever kind of mining. Go look at the Klondike area. That land is changed forever and is a mess. It's a big mess. It will never be fixed.

If you scar the permafrost, as you probably well know, it takes hundreds of years for that scar to heal. What's going to happen when they start mining in that area? So, to me, I agree with Bob. I think the powers that be, these people that voted on this stuff a long time ago have a plan to open up Western Alaska, and that road will never go away. It has to open to the public. They're not going to be able to keep it closed to the public. People are already making plans to go out there. So it's -- it's -- I'm going to raise the term "boondoggle" again.

Look at the fiberoptic that they put out here that crosses Alaska that no one can use. It's scarred the land. It's a ten-foot swath. It scarred the land, and it caused water to collect, and, oh, everybody's pointing the finger. Just magnify that by a million times by putting a road through, and not only a road. We talk about the Ambler Road, but what we're really talking about is road - road spurs, mine, mines, plural, more claims, over-hunting, people sneaking out there. And if you think they're not going to hunt illegally, come up here during hunting season. One or two troopers can't follow everybody. It's going to destroy the area.

It goes through a national park, for crying out loud. That opens a can of worms, because what's the next road we're going to build through the Gates, or through ANWR, or through Yosemite, or Yellowstone? What kind of uproar would that cause down in the Lower 48? So the whole summary of this whole thing is that, where's all of the money going to come from? Who really wants the road? Who needs the road? And what's it really going to be for? Because I don't think that those issues are really raised in the EIS.

Thank you.

MR. BERND HICKER: I've got one more last little thing, and then I'll be quiet.

I'm just wondering, actually, if there's anybody here that's for this road, or if we can go on record that the Wiseman meeting was unanimously against it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm against the road.

MR. BERND HICKER: I don't see anybody for it. So just for the record, you know, next time somebody asks, you can say we're all against it.

MR. JACK REAKOFF: I was going to ask exactly that same question.

You said that Hughes was mostly for the road, and one was for the road in Allakaket. I feel that this is America. My dad fought in the Korean war for our rights and so forth. I feel that if somebody in this room is for this road, they should say so, and those who are against the road should say so.

I'm opposed to the road, but if there's someone in this room that is for the road, you should say so. This is America. You should be able to say so.

MR. JASON CARSON: I mean, you keep looking at me. People were looking at me.

So I'm here for educational purposes, really.

I'm the foreman at Coldfoot, and my name is Jason Carson. I mean, so I'm just here to listen, you know, and try to get educated on it. That's the main reason I came. Nobody asked me to come. My bosses didn't ask me to come. I mean, I'm here on my own, just because I feel like I'm part of this community. I've been up here for so long.

I don't get subsistence rights because my -- my house is in Fairbanks. I'm kind of neutral on the whole thing. I mean, I am -- I am, you know, for responsible resources, you know, that kind of stuff. I mean, I can definitely see the "boondoggle" of -- you know, I think the last time they were here, I thought the number was, like, 360,000,000 for the road, and now, you know, it's jumped up. I might be wrong.

I mean, that number, like Jack was saying, it's just a "pie in the sky" number. I mean, it's probably going to be above what we think, you know, but, I mean, I'm not going to -- I don't know. I haven't really researched, and we have a lot of other things going on.

To speak about the way the road is coming apart, I mean, yeah, it's hard to keep up with, you know, especially with the way the State resources are nowadays, and just to add another, you

know, 250 miles of maintained, or supposedly maintained road, I mean, it's going to cost a lot of money, you know.

I mean, I can definitely see all of your guys' points, you guys that live up here, you know. And what's the State going to get out of, you know, taking that road to Ambler for a mine? I mean, I came to Alaska to work in gold mining. That was, you know, 25 years ago. I've been in mining, and, you know, everybody has their opinions on mining and I have mine. There's responsible mining and non-responsible mining. I mean, that's all something that's going to have to be checked, if this goes through.

My honest opinion, I just don't -- I don't think it's going to happen. Maybe that's my hope. I don't know. I mean, I'd like to have an access to go wherever I don't have an airplane, and people -- planes are going to be landing on that road. I guarantee you. I mean, there's going to be a lot of things going on out there that you just can't discuss now, because you don't know what's going to happen, you know. It's just going to happen, whether it's good or bad, you know.

Yeah, so I guess I'm neutral. I'd like to just see more of a realist to see what's -- how it's all going to shake out. But, yeah, when they sign on the dotted line, "We're going to build the road," then, you know, it's kind of a "can't turn back." But I -- gosh, I just don't -- after all of this stuff and all of this input -- yeah, I would like to hear some people -- you know, I obviously can't go to all of the other different villages or wherever -- where they had the meetings, to listen to some people that are for the road, to listen to a logical stance on that, you know, and it would be nice to have somebody here to kind of go back on that. We would need a few more hours, though.

So I can speak for the maintenance of the highway up here in this neck of the woods, and it's not getting any easier with the way budgets are, and finding people that actually want to work for the State and are qualified and aren't going to, you know, other private -- you know, other companies going to work on the Slope or whatever.



So like everyone is saying, the State has got their hands full, you know, already, and then, you know, to throw this in there, it just doesn't -- it doesn't seem like it's feasible, you know, right now.

Like, the fiberoptics going in, I mean, if they are going to build a road, I think it would be a good idea to put the fiber, because, you know, you've already got the footprint down, you've got the equipment, you might as well throw it in too. That's probably what they're thinking, the fiberoptics. This is 2020, so...

MR. BERND HICKER: It's going to be difficult to take it back out, though. I'm just kidding.

MR. JASON CARSON: Oh, no. Really, if the road gets built, they're not going to take that road back out. I mean, the cost to take that road back out, I mean, that doesn't make sense right there, to me anyway.

I mean, you guys did a lot of research, probably read all of the stuff. I haven't read a whole lot on it. Maybe my attention span isn't there yet or whatever. Like I said, I just wanted to come here and get an idea of what's going on, you know, and then, you know, I can talk with these guys and have constructive conversations about it. Really, I'm just a neutral dude here.

But, yeah, I've got to put the blade on the ground, or I don't know, you know, what all that's going to take. Like right now, I'm one person on this crew. So add another 60 miles of road, it ain't going to happen.

MR. BERND HICKER: What's an extra hundred trucks a day going to do to that part south of the Yukon River? You should know what kind of impact the increase of, like, the Colville tankers had when we started hauling diesel to Deadhorse, other than spills.

MR. JASON CARSON: Yeah. They're turning left after Chapman there. I mean, the road is so jacked up right now. I don't think it's going to make a whole lot of a difference, honestly. Maybe it'll help it if they drive it in the right area.

But, I mean, yeah, I understand. It's not just the impact of the road, but everything else that comes along with it, you know, I mean...

MR. BERND HICKER: Nobody talks about the extra money we're going to need to keep "X" amount of mileage on the Dalton Highway, you know, prepared to handle that extra traffic. Of course, if it's coming in out of the Ray Mountains, it's quite a bit less.

MR. JASON CARSON: We're so short-funded now, I mean, most of the money that we get to do a lot of our stuff is federally subsidized money, you know, a lot of our summer projects and stuff, which you guys know about that. So, yeah, I don't know. There's a lot of questions that would come up as everything moves along.

MS. LOUISE BISHOP: Hi. I'm Louise Bishop.

L-o-u-i-s-e, B-i-s-h-o-p. I'm from Fairbanks. I'm born and raised there. I just wanted to speak in solidarity with the community members here against the Ambler Mining Road.

As a young Alaskan, I'm already concerned about the loss of our natural resources due to climate change, and I was wondering, I guess, to you guys, if this EIS considers the effects of climate change in conjunction with the road. I'm already concerned about the caribou and the animals and permafrost degradation just because of that. So I think it's time that we move away from a boom and bust economy. I'm concerned for my future and my children's future, if I ever decide to have children. At this point it doesn't look like a good idea, honestly.

But, yeah, I guess I just wanted to speak in support of the community members here. Thanks, everybody. I learned a lot.

MR. BRANDON ELKINS: Brandon Elkins.

Before I make any comments, I want to be clear that I do not speak for the Alaska State Troopers as a whole. Any comments that I make are my own opinion.

And I'm just curious, from a law enforcement perspective, if they've done any sort of analysis of the additional amount of law enforcement personnel that would be needed for the road in that section there. I know that I am the only trooper from the Yukon River to Deadhorse. I cover from Canada, and then halfway to Kotzebue. That is my area. So it's about the size of Minnesota, and I am the only trooper that enforces State laws in that area. I'm curious if they've done any sort of looking at to see who would cover that jurisdiction.

Have they gone to other law enforcement agencies and asked, "Can you supply the extra-needed manpower to cover this area?" Because I don't know if that's been done, or if that's even been considered.

As well as -- so I cover the whole Dalton Highway, and I know that there are lots of gates that are set up and roads that you can't go any further, but just because there's a gate there or something, doesn't mean that people don't go around it.

I've seen trails that have been made by hunters, illegally accessing pipeline roads to help them get away from the corridor, and I've seen people use ATVs and snowmachines to get around and do a lot of those things. So just because it's not open to public access, doesn't mean the public isn't accessing those things anyway.

And if this -- this area is going to be a bigger road, then it means that if I'm going to be going to calls over there, then it's going to take me away from calls in other areas that I might need to go to as well. So it would kind of spread that, and so that extra law enforcement would be really important to look at and see if that would be possible to get.

I had another point, but I can't remember what it was, but I might come back later with it.

Thank you.

MR. BOB MAURER: If you went to Anchorage or to Fairbanks, the ones that are in favor are Alaska Outdoor Council, the Alaska Hunters Association. They know full well that all the pressure is going to be placed on the State to open this road. So those are the kinds of groups that are going to benefit, besides this theoretical mine that's going to be built because there's a road. If they had a full intent of developing the mine, they would have a plan for the mine.

Minnesota has gone through the same process for copper, sulfate, mine. They have to have a proposal. Of course the roads are already there, but without a proposal, the State is not going to invest 800 million while the intent isn't just for that mine.

I just go back, that the EIS does not reflect the true impact of the road, and it needs to go back and truly assess the impact.

MR. GLENN HOLLETT: So is the State maintaining this road? There's been comments about Coldfoot maintaining the first 60 miles. Is it going to be State maintained?

(Recess taken.)

MR. BRANDON ELKINS: Brandon Elkins.

B-r-a-n-d-o-n, E-l-k-i-n-s. Again, I'm not representing the Alaska State Troopers.

I'm curious if the Environmental Impact Statement took into account everyone who would possibly have access to that road, like a total number of people who would be authorized to go in and out, and then took that number and maybe considered them as potential resource users, hunters, fishers, trappers, in the area, if that was considered? Because my experience along the Dalton Highway is that there are lots of truckers, DOT, government agencies.

I've seen guys come up with GCI or cell phone companies, or all kinds of odds and ends of different businesses or commercial entities who use our resources along the highway. I've dealt with them as trappers and as hunters and as fishers, and some of them doing the right things, and some of them not doing the right things.

I'm curious to know if that has been done on that Environmental Impact Statement, of looking at every single person who is authorized to be in that area, and seeing, like, okay, well, let's assume that every single one of them is potentially using the resources along it, and what is that going to mean and do to the wildlife and the habitat as a whole.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: I would encourage you to look at the document. We do talk about -- we've taken some criticism from the Mining Association, that we are making all of the truck drivers look like, you know, they're providing alcohol, and, you know, bringing in sexually transmitted diseases. I mean, so this doesn't try to cover anything up.

We tried to, in this document, look at what would happen if truck drivers came in and they found an area, hasn't been used before, and they go back and tell their friends and access it. I mean, we look at all kinds of those scenarios and see what it impacts, so we don't try to jerk through anything.

But I do encourage you to look at the document for specific things like that, and we have stick drives to make that a little easier, just so you can search for things like recreational use, or, you know, trespassing, things like that.

MR. BERND HICKER: I think we have the perfect -- my name is Bernd Hicker -- we have the perfect examples going on here. Like Brandon was just saying, the amount of, like, road trapping, trapping stuff is phenomenal. It's unbelievable. It's off the charts. We get people wanting to stay with us because we happen to be halfway, you know, between here and Deadhorse and all this stuff. And this kind of stuff is a little bit off the charts, as far as I'm concerned, and that includes the hunting and some of the stuff.

For all of these years, we've been begging the BLM and various other entities to help to manage the resources that we have here. There has been next to none of that done. So it's a great example of, you know, how some of these things -- we can't even -- we can't do it on a highway that's been open to the public for, what, 30, 25 years now, and it's, like, totally out of control, as far as I'm concerned, you know. And I'm looking at some of these things, whether it's little things like garbage control, law enforcement, any kind of enforcement, period.

When it comes to the whole hunting and now the trapping issue, after the 1st of November, do not even think about letting any of your dogs out or yourself maybe wandering around any of these pullouts. They're so heavily set with traps and snares and everything else, it's crazy.

It's, like, really? Is this what a road is all about? I mean, these are harvests that are going -- that are just leaving here. They're unaccounted for, as far as I'm concerned, and it's -- it's just -- as far as I'm concerned, it's just out of control, and we need some management for this stuff, the existing stuff we have, and we can't get it here. Yet you want to build another 250-mile road into another area? It's, like, let's see if we can get a lid on the things here, and then continue. So a little management here would go a long ways.

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: Yeah, I'd like to add something to that, and the people that live here will remember when they were resurfacing the road between Wiseman and Coldfoot, the construction crews, it was a free-for-all shooting animals; right, Jack?

MR. JACK REAKOFF: Yeah.

MS. JACQUELINE VEATS: They had open garbage pits bringing in the bears, shoot them all. Human waste everywhere. I mean, it was a mess, a big mess, and we lost a lot of animals that way.

What would keep -- if a road went through -- and I do believe that the road is going to go, despite what people want. I think it's going to be built. So the crews that build it, it's a free-for-all. They're out there, and who is going to monitor them? Throw your garbage in a pit, bring the animals, boom. The animals are all gone. And that's the reality of it.

MS. ROBYN MILLER: Well, we're going to be here for a few minutes packing up. Kasidy will be here with her device. If you think of something else that you would like to give, a comment directly to Kasidy, you can do that, and we're also accepting written comments through October 29th, as well.

MS. TINA McMASTER-GOERING: And we have a few stick drives left as well, if anybody wants them.

MR. MAX HANFT: Can I make a comment, even more specifically to you all?

The EIS process is super-important to us. You know, we might not be for the road, but having a document that outlines the real environmental impacts, and putting that in the hands of people who have to make realistic choices, is so important.

But we're so torn. I'm personally torn about the process, but because in project after project on down the line, it's used as a ticket to ride, and there never really is a threshold for unacceptable impacts. They're all acceptable.

So I'm very torn on this whole process. It's important, but is this the process that leads to no road? No. The road that leads -- that stops -- the process that stops this road is at the ballot box. I mean, this has nothing to do with environmental impacts, whether the road is going to be built. I mean, to think that that's a choice, that's the reasons that people are using to have a road or not have a road, it's -- I don't know. It's hard for me.

Because that's why I want the environmental impact study to show everything, you know, because how could anybody make a choice, like putting in a road with an honest assessment of environmental impacts? But those choices get made against opinions like mine all the time. So is -- is -- is the process, the environmental process, really taking -- does it have any weight? Are there any unacceptable environmental impacts? I don't know.

MR. BERND HICKER: Are you calling for change?

(Proceedings concluded at 2:24 p.m.)



## **CERTIFICATE**

I, KASIDY PIGHINI, Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the witness in the foregoing proceedings was duly sworn; that the proceedings were then 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 HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 6th day of November, 2019.

KASIDY PIGHINI, CSR  
My Commission Expires 8/25/2020