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Names

First Name: Jacqueline**Title:****Address:** 541 Del Medio Ave. Apt. 330**City:** Mountain View**Zip:** 94040**Email:** Jacque.esai@gmail.com**Entity Type:****Last Name:** Esai**Organization:****State:** CA**Country:****Mailing List:** False**Submission Information:****Submission ID:** 110**Date Submitted:** 3/29/2013**Submission Format:** Email**File name:****Date Received:** 3/29/2013**Venue:**

Submission Text:

Comments:

-----Original Message-----

From: Jacqueline Esai [mailto:jacque.esai@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, March 29, 2013 2:15 PM

To: Kuhle, Don P POA

Cc: John Runkle; Kerry Alles; Sharon Runkle; daniel_esai@yahoo.com

Subject: Donlin Creek natural gas pipeline scoping comments

Dear Mr. Kuhle,

My name is Jacqueline Esai and I write to you to express my strong opposition to the natural gas pipeline planned between Cook Inlet and Donlin Creek Mine. I was only recently made aware of this project proposal and the scoping deadline. Despite this short notice I have the following comments:

My parents are Dora and Phillip Esai of Nikolai, a community on the Kuskokwim River. We have a traditional Alaska Native hunting camp, Silvertip, that sits on the western edge of the Alaska Range. We strongly oppose this project because it will destroy critical habitat that my family needs to sustain our ability to hunt and feed ourselves. We oppose it because it will drive away the animals we depend on to survive, while simultaneously creating what will essentially become a roadway into Interior Alaska, thus allowing innumerable people easy access to an area that has never had to confront that sort of demand on its resources.

Every fall, my Alaska Native family migrates to Silvertip, a cluster of log and canvas structures among the hills below Tsemokesh, our Athabaskan name for the tallest mountain south of Mt. McKinley. For generations, this has been an important stop in our traditional subsistence lifestyle-a nomadic progression from one camp to the next in pursuit of seasonal resources such as caribou, blueberries and salmon.

Every summer, my family boats along the Kuskokwim River to Blackwater, where my mother has her fish camp. I have heard stories of days when people could pull a hundred kings out of that river to supply themselves through our long winters. But those days are long gone due to a combination of commercial fishing and the destruction of salmon habitat. Our people are forced to contend with long winters and very small food stores.

We do not live in a closed system but rather a web and where we pluck one strand the whole web will quake. Will the impact on our rivers, our critical king salmon population, and my parents' drinking water be taken into consideration? Drinking water? Yes. My parents have a well sunk below their house, but the water that comes through is literally orange with rust so they, like other elders and families in our community, continue to drink water straight from the Kuskokwim River as they have always done. I do too when I'm home. The Kuskokwim River begins in the Alaska Range and is fed by numerous streams arising from snowmelt. The creation of a natural gas pipeline through the proposed area would cut straight through the land that these streams cross to feed the Kuskokwim and affect the purity of our drinking water. This same water is also used by elders not only to drink but to bathe in, water their dogs, and is the same water from which they harvest fish, and mammals such as beaver and muskrat.

Even more tangibly, there will be large gravel pits, man camps, equipment, fuel and pipe storage, and so on necessary to accommodate the construction and subsequent maintenance of a pipeline. I object to the placement of not only this but any pipeline near the Khuchaynik Creek, and in the area between Farewell and Big River. The creek beds in these areas will be especially negatively impacted. I can barely imagine what the impact will be on the animals that live in these areas. We have been fortunate to share the area with a diverse array ranging from moose, caribou, fur bearing animals, birds such as a geese and ducks that enjoy the wetlands in our region, and so on. Their populations will certainly be harmed by a project involving such a massive level of destruction.

The impact of such a massive amount of construction and the accompanying influx of manpower and machinery must also be considered from a cultural standpoint. Alaskan Native cultures have long been the dominant group within Interior Alaska and for countless years have created entire cultures centered on living closely to land. Native groups and leaders must have adequate notice and time to formulate responses to this proposal as the intrusion of not only the pipeline but anyone following will greatly challenge a way of life that has already been threatened by outside influences such as the changing climate.

I was raised in my family's hunting and fishing camps, then went away for boarding school in Sitka, Alaska, then on to college at the University of Denver in Colorado, and finally to Yale Law School in New Haven, Connecticut. I have worked as an art gallery assistant in Denver, a staff assistant for the United States Senate Appropriations Committee in Washington D.C., as a copy writer in San Francisco, California, as a legal research intern in Budapest, Hungary, among various other jobs, and now I have just taken the California state bar. Thanks to these varied experiences I have come to see just how very special Interior Alaska is.

Interior Alaska is an area that is unique in its majesty, biodiversity, and ability to support indigenous cultures that have existed for thousands of years. It must be protected - we cannot allow it to be marred for the sake of a mine that will likely tap out in less than three decades. We have so few places like this left in the world.

Thank you for your consideration. Please put me on the mailing list for this action and notify me of all proceedings:

Comment # 1 Comment ID: 488

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Category: SUB -- Subsistence:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 2 Comment ID: 489

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Category: SUB -- Subsistence:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 3 Comment ID: 490

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Category: WAQ -- Water Quality and Quantity:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 4 Comment ID: 491

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Category: WILD -- Wildlife Impacts:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 5 Comment ID: 492

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The impact of such a massive amount of construction and the accompanying influx of manpower and machinery must also be considered from a cultural standpoint. Alaskan Native

Category: TWL -- Traditional Culture and Way of Life:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 6 Comment ID: 493

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Category: WCR -- Wilderness Characteristics:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive

Comment # 7 Comment ID: 494

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Please put me on the mailing list for this action and notify me of all proceedings:

Jacqueline Esai

Category: PUB -- Public Involvement and Scoping:

☒ Substantive ☐ Non-Substantive
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For technical assistance please contact Rachel Wagner at Rachel.Wagner@URS.com.