

Chuathbaluk Traditional Council

#1 Teen Center Trail

Chuathbaluk, Alaska 99557-8999

March 28, 2013

Cooperating Agency Scoping Comments

To: Whom It May Concern,

1.) Barging and Barge traffic is a major concern of the Native Village of Chuathbaluk. The increase of Barge traffic will significantly impact the life of the citizens of our nation. We foresee the impact and have concerns in the following areas:

(a). Increased barge traffic will significantly impact our subsistence activities. We hunt for Moose in the fall and our main source of transportation to access the sights where we generally hunt is boat. Moose hunting along with waterfowl hunting takes place at least 90% by water and 10% by land. The barges will frighten most wildlife back into the woods or inaccessible areas. Hence, no wildlife access, no food. It takes several hours (close to five on large barges) for a barge to make it to a specific spot, pass the pass and continue up river or down river until the wave action no longer effects the specific spot. With as many barges as are predicted (any we feel their estimation is low), there will literally be no daylight hours left in which the river at any given spot will be at its "natural" state of flow/waves and not be experiencing barge altered conditions. The migrating waterfowl will no longer land on the Kuskokwim River and be inaccessible to harvest. Just the noise from the barges traveling past as frequently as predicted by the Donlin Mine proposal will scare the moose and caribou into the woods and out of sight. This traffic potentially will impact caribou migratory routes.

(b). Those of us who live on the River constantly see all sizes of barges stuck in the river. Locals cannot possibly foresee a barging season with such an incident not occurring. The mitigation plan for these stuck barges is not addressed. The citizens of the Native Village of Chuathbaluk are deeply concerned about the potential for river dredging and the impact that will have on the topography of the river bed and potential salmon beds and/spawning beds.

(c). Local experts will tell you that only a fool will travel on a river at the same time a barge is traveling. Barge waves last hours after the barge has passed. These waves are dangerous and can easily tip our standard river skiffs. Also the impact of these "barge" waves to the banks

2.) Another comment is on our concern on over the contamination levels already present in the river system. Base line data on slimy sculpin taken at the mine site has demonstrated that the contamination levels already present in the water system is unacceptable. It is assumed these high levels are the residual effect of historic mining in the area. With contaminants already in the system this fragile ecosystem that our citizens depend upon, there is a concern over even a potentially slight increase of contaminants in the watershed.

3.) Air Quality and pollution levels of tailings piles. This is pretty self-explanatory. Chuathbaluk is concerns about the prevailing winds for both the haul road and the tailings pile.

4.) Migratory waterfowl and vectors of the holding pond. The Nation of Chuathbaluk would like to see the proposed plan for the prevention of vectors, such as migratory waterfowl, distributing contaminants off site.

5.) Financial strategies for future health impacts on wildlife and humans. This is a huge concern after the mine closure and the financial guarantee and likeliness of actually being about to access this money without having to go through a big lawsuit.

6.) Scoping process 2 issues:

- (a). Completing the scoping process without a clear route described for pipeline.
- (b). Scoping process taking place in hub communities and smaller remote Tribes inability to participate in this process.

Submitted on behalf of the Native Village of Chuathbaluk, by the Chuathbaluk Traditional Council on 3/29/2013.

Lisa Carmel Feyereisen
Chuathbaluk Tribal Administrator