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**Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Tribes Fight Donlin Pipeline Permit**

*AKDNR Improperly Approved Right-of-Way for Natural Gas Pipeline to Fuel Mining Operation*

BETHEL — Orutsararmiut Native Council, Native Village of Eek, Native Village of Kwigillingok, and Chevak Native Village filed a legal challenge against the states authorization for a gas pipeline from Cook Inlet to Crooked Creek in the Kuskokwim headwaters to move forward despite the lack of an assessment of the cumulative impact of the pipeline and the Donlin Gold project. This is one of many permits the State of Alaska has issued in recent months and years despite calls from Tribes to pause permitting and engage in consultation with their governments. According to reports from state and federal regulators, the construction and operation of Donlin Gold could negatively impact human health and will destroy wild salmon habitat.

“The mine is a threat to the lives of every living thing on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. We depend on the land, air and water to sustain us. Our dependence on subsistence is not, ‘a way of life,’ It is our life,” said Gloria Simeon, a Traditional Council member of Orutsararmiut Native Council.

Represented by environmental law firm Earthjustice, the Tribal Governments and Cook Inletkeeper are challenging the state’s approval of the right-of-way lease for a natural gas Pipeline.

The proposed 315-mile buried pipeline, stretching from the west side of Cook Inlet to the project site 10 miles north of the village of Crooked Creek, would supply natural gas to power the mine. The state has authorized the permit without a clear idea as to how many salmon streams could be impacted. The pipeline is expected to increase demand for natural gas throughout Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula, likely raising household prices.

“The State of Alaska has failed once again to take a hard look at the impacts of this pipeline or the cumulative impacts of the entire project and the impacts it will have on Alaska’s salmon streams and the traditional gathering practices of Alaskan Native Tribes in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta” Said Richard Slats, 2nd Chief of Chevak Native Village. “These regulators are willing to sacrifice our food source, our Mother Kuskokwim, for the sake of this mine and the people of our region are standing up to say that is unacceptable.”

The Donlin Mine would be the largest mine in Alaska and one of the largest open-pit mines in the world as well as the first mining project in Alaska that is being permitted fully knowing that it would completely dewater salmon streams.

The permit for the pipeline is only the most recent state permit that ignores the known irreversible impacts that will result from the Donlin Gold Mine. This spring, ADEC Commissioner Jason Brune approved a Clean Water Act permit for the Donlin Gold Mine. Despite the fact an Administrative Law Judge found “state water quality standards for mercury will undeniably be exceeded by the project in numerous locations, in many instances by a significant degree”, Orutsararmiut Native Council appealed that permit in June and that case is pending.

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