

USACE Media Teleconference 2-20-19

John Budnik – USACE

Shane McCoy – USACE

Jill Burg – Bloomberg Environment

Izzy Ross – KDLG

Tim Bradner – Alaska Legislative Digest

Margie Bowman – Cordova Times

Ariel Wittenberg – E&E News

Elwood Bremmer – Alaska Journal of commerce

Mariah Oxford – Pebble Watch

Michael Chee – AECOM

Steven Lee – Bloomberg Environment

Alex DeMarban – Anchorage Daily News

Becky Bohrer – Associated Press

Tim Sohn – Outside Magazine

Steve Quinn – KTVA

John Budnik: Let's get started here I'd like to do a roll call, this is in order of receipt of your RSVPs. So without further ado is Mr. Tim Sohn, Outside Magazine on the line?

Tim Sohn: Yeah I'm here John, thanks.

John Budnik: Hi Tim. Steven Lee, I know we talked briefly there, so I know you're on the line. Is Margie Bowman, Fisherman's News? [silence] No Margie yet.

[inaudible]

John Budnik: Margie Bowman?

Jill Burg: No, this is Jill Burke.

John Budnik: Oh hi Jill, thank you.

Jill Burg: Hi, good morning, thank you.

John Budnik: Is Izzy Ross on the line?

Izzy Ross: Yes I'm here.

John Budnik: Hi Izzy. Just one second. Tim Bradner?

Tim Bradner: I'm here.

John Budnik: Ariel Wittenberg?

Ariel Wittenberg: Yeah hi.

John Budnick: Hi Ariel, Jill just got you. Mariah Oxford?

Mariah Oxford: I'm here, good morning.

John Budnik: Hey good morning. Is Dylan Brown?

Ariel Wittenberg: He's not here, this is Ariel.

John Budnik: Ok, thank you. Is Elwood Bremmer?

Elwood Bremmer: Hi I'm here John.

John Budnik: Hi Elwood, Alex DeMarban? [silence] No Alex. Becky Bohrer? [silence] No Becky yet. And we also have Michael Chee with AECOM on the line, he is going to be a listening participant today. Without further ado, we'll pass it on to Shane to deliver his opening remarks.

Shane McCoy: Thank you John. Thank you everybody. Good morning ladies and gentleman. On behalf of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, I would like to thank you all for participating in the February monthly media teleconference. My name is Shane McCoy and I am the program manager for the review of the Pebble Limited Partnership's application and subsequent EIS. The United States Army Corps of Engineers has the responsibility to review permit applications that would require authorization under section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the US. Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act regulates activities that may affect navigable waters of the United States. Ultimately, we are required to make a decision whether the permit application complies with the requirements of these acts. The district is developing an Environmental Impact Statement to inform these decisions. The draft EIS contains a description of the affected environment, a reasonable range of alternatives, including the no action alternative, and analysis of potential impacts from the alternatives. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was made available to the public this morning via the project website: Pebble Project EIS, all one word, dot com. There will be a notice of availability, published in the Federal Register, on March 1st. Publishing the notice of availability will initiate a 90-day public comment period. During the 90-day comment period, comments will be accepted at public hearings, on the project website, pebbleprojecteis.com, again Pebble Project EIS is all one word, or via mail. Please note the end of the comment period is May 31st, 2019. Concurrently, the Corps is publishing a public notice to solicit comments on the application that will help inform our public interest review and the 404, the USEPA's 404(b)(1) analysis, as required under the Clean Water

Act. We will use the comments from the public notice, and the draft EIS, to revise the final EIS and ultimately inform our public interest review. The Corps will hold nine public interest hearings to receive public comments on the draft EIS and the permit application. Specific information for each public hearing, including the addresses of the hearing locations, the times, and the dates, have been posted on the project website. Again, Pebble Project EIS, all one word, dot com. At this time, I would like to open the teleconference to questions from you. John would you facilitate?

John Budnik: Yeah, thank you Shane, we're just going to go down the list in order of RSVPs, I think we have a few more reporters on the line, so for the sake of time just kindly ask that we adhere to the one question and one follow up so that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions. So, starting with Tim Sohn.

Tim Sohn: Thanks John and thanks Shane for the intro, exciting day for you guys I'd imagine.

Shane McCoy: Yes, yes it is.

Tim Sohn: That's not my question. [laughter] To kick it off, with the last thing you just mentioned, which was the hearings, there was some dissatisfaction around the way these scoping meetings were carried out and I'm wondering what the format will be for the draft EIS hearings and how long the comment period will be.

Shane McCoy: Certainly. Thank you, Tim. I would like to make a clear distinction between the scoping meetings, which were held after the notice of intent was published, which were, the intent of those were to help inform the scope of analysis and identify issues of concern from the public. Those were a meeting format, so they were more interactive than what the hearings are. Hearings are very prescribed, there will be an open mic available for people to provide public testimony at all venues, unlike the scoping meetings where three of the venues did not. The colonel or lieutenant colonel will be present as well. In the larger venues there will be two court reporters available to take testimony either via the public avenue or there will be an opportunity for those who want to have it recorded at, you know, away from the larger groups. Now that being said, we will be holding those meetings in the same nine communities in which scoping meetings were held. And to answer you last question, Tim, the comment period will be 90 days.

Tim Sohn: Is there a component for the partnering and participating agencies for their feedback as well, is that separate from the hearings process?

Shane McCoy: I'm not exactly certain of the question, but if you're asking me are we asking the cooperating agencies and other agencies to review the document and comment, the answer is yes.

Tim Sohn: Yeah, that was the question, okay.

Shane McCoy: Okay.

Tim Sohn: But, their comments would come in different forms to you separately outside of the hearing format, is that correct?

Shane McCoy: They can comment any of the opportunities, including if they would like to participate at the public hearings, they would like to mail them in, or again they can submit them on the project website, I'm going to repeat it over and over so you guys hear it, pebbleprojecteis.com.

Tim Sohn: Got it, thank you Shane.

John Budnik: Thank you Tim. To you, Steven.

Steven Lee: Hey thanks, John and thanks Shane. Just had a question about if you could characterize the nature of the analysis that was done, I've not gone through the hundreds of pages of the draft EIS but I was having a conversation with someone who represents tribal interests, and what this person was saying, I'm just relaying what I heard, but this person was saying that, this document takes a, in his view, a very narrow look at the effects of the mine, particularly the cumulative effects. He was saying that the draft EIS looks really at the environmental impacts at the mine site itself, in other words the hole in the ground that Pebble would dig. For instance, when looking at water, allegedly, the draft EIS looks only at the actual adjacent waters to the mine site, but not the water that runs downstream, which was dismissed according to this person, as inconsequential or too disconnected to the work that you're doing. So, just wondering how you respond to those kinds of critiques, which I'm sure you've already heard, that essentially the draft EIS was not consistent with what other similar draft EISs have done in the past.

Shane McCoy: Who is this?

John Budnik: This is Steven Lee.

Shane McCoy: Ok, thank you for the question Steven. I understand your question; however, I'm trying to present as unbiased a presentation to the media as possible today. And what I'm really encouraging everyone to do is read the document, formulate their own opinions, and then provide comments on the subsequent analysis.

Steven Lee: Ok, ok thanks I'll wait for the next go round, thank you.

John Budnik: Alright, thank you Steven. Izzy? [silence] Isabelle Ross, are you on the line? Ok, she may have dropped out, to you, Tim Bradner.

Tim Bradner: Thanks John. Hey, I think I've asked the question in previous sessions like this, but after the conclusion of the DEIS, what is the time table until the final and then the record of decision? What sort of frame work in terms of scheduling, are we looking at?

Shane McCoy: Thank you for your question. The schedule as it is right now would result in a final EIS being published in the Federal Register in February of 2020, with the record of decision, which would be a joint record of decision with both the Coast Guard and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, Department of the Interior, scheduled to be signed 90 days later.

Tim Bradner: Ok and then, in a separate action would be the permits, the section 404 permit, because the permitting's a separate action that will follow, is that correct?

Shane McCoy: The NEPA the National Environmental Policy Act analysis, the Environmental Impact Statement, is the analysis and disclosure document that will inform the decisions. The record of decision is the decision whether to issue a permit, issue a permit with conditions, or to deny the permit.

Tim Bradner: Okay, thank you.

Shane McCoy: Yep.

John Budnik: Thank you Tim. Ariel?

Ariel Wittenberg: Yeah hi, I just wanted to follow up on Steve's question. I haven't read the whole EIS but I have gotten my way through the a good chunk of the fisheries section and I saw that it did seem like the review was being limited to those three main vein rivers, the Koktuli River, Upper Talarik Creek Watershed, along with a thousand foot buffer around the mine site. I'm wondering, how are those parameters chosen and what about these types of streams?

Shane McCoy: Thank you, Ariel. As I believe most of you are aware, that is where the actual open pit is anticipated, if permitted, to be. With that being said, it would also have the greatest impact if permitted and constructed. However, as you continue to evaluate or review the document, you'll see other sections, for instance 4.27, where the effects of the potential impacts are further downstream from those three singular watersheds.

Ariel Wittenberg: Ok thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you Ariel. To you, Jill.

Jill Burg: Hi, I'll pass this round, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you Jill. Mariah?

Mariah Oxford: Hi guys. A lot to read this morning. I wanted to ask you about the comment period and the length of the comment period. I know that Bristol Bay Native Corporation and the Native Association and the Economic Development Corporation have asked to extend that period to 270 days, and I wondered if you have considered requests for extension?

Shane McCoy: We consider all requests. But that is a decision that the district engineer, the commander would have to make and currently there's an internal conversation about that. But I'm sure, as you're aware, the regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act require 45 days and so in anticipation of the requests we initiated a 90-day comment period.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, was just looking at the Donlin comment period, which was 188 days, so you are actually in conversation about potentially extending the comment period?

Shane McCoy: We always entertain all requests. But that's also why we put the document out in advance of the beginning of the comment period, to give people an opportunity to look at the

document prior to the actual initiation, the notice of availability in the Federal Register, of the public comment period.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you Mariah. To you, Elwood.

Elwood Bremmer: Alright, thanks guys. Curious as to why there were no, I guess other than the tailings dam design changes, no other alternatives for development on the mine site. Whether it's dry stack tailings or other options maybe moving the power plant or something like that.

Shane McCoy: Sure. So I would encourage everyone, the alternatives are the heart of the document, really. They will inform the decisions to be made. Chapter 2 is where the alternatives that were carried forward for analysis are discussed, Appendix B is the, oh I think it's over 200 alternatives that were considered but eliminated. I encourage everyone to take a look at those and if they have comments provide them to us.

Elwood Bremmer: Can you speak at all as to why there were not more alternatives, just for the mine site, specifically?

Shane McCoy: We looked at a reasonable range of alternatives. Again, I don't want to speak to the analysis because I'm very intimate with it. I really want to encourage everyone to read it themselves and if there's something we may have missed, including alternatives, to please provide those in comments.

Elwood Bremmer: Ok.

John Budnik: Thank you, Elwood. That concludes our first round there, I just want to check to see if there's anybody on the call that I may have missed in the roll call. Those that did not--

Margie Bowman: --yeah, this is Margie Bowman I had to chime in late.

John Budnik: No worries Margie.

Margie Bowman: So, I'm listening.

Alex DeMarban: Same. Same here this is Alex DeMarban with the Anchorage Daily News.

John Budnik: Cool, thank you both.

Becky Bohrer: And Becky Bohrer with the Associated Press.

John Budnick: Perfect, thank you. Well then let's go ahead and kick the question to Margie there.

Margie Bowman: Yeah, I'm on a listening mode right now catching up, thank you.

John Budnick: Sure. Alex, do you have a question?

Alex DeMarban: Ok, yeah thanks, had couple questions how long is the EIS? I haven't seen the single total amount 800 pages? 10,000 whatever it is. Secondly then, tribes are saying that their concerns were not taken into account and sometimes were outright dismissed, I think the dry stack tailings would be one of those. Can you say whether those concerns were dismissed and why weren't they taken into account?

Shane McCoy: To answer your first question, the body of the Environmental Impact Statement is around 1400 pages.

Alex DeMarban: Oh thanks.

Shane McCoy: It has technical appendices as well, attached to it. So the entire amount of review is greater than 1400 obviously. With regards to the tribal concerns, they have been considered and incorporated. And part of the comment period is to again solicit as much traditional ecologic knowledge, and the folks in the communities we'll be visiting as well as the public, help inform the revision to the draft.

Alex DeMarban: Well they said their concerns weren't taken into account in many ways, so I guess that's just a difference of opinion that the Corps has with the tribes.

Shane McCoy: Yep. Yes it is.

Alex DeMarban: Ok, thanks.

Shane McCoy: We do consider everybody's position and stance.

Alex DeMarban: Hm. Ok. Alright, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you Alex. To you, Becky.

Becky Bohrer: Thank you, Becky Bohrer with the Associated Press. I was interested in the role of EPA, EPA, the region, our regional administrator last year about this time had said that EPA would seek to have any protection of lease if necessary, included in the permit. What role, if any, have they played until this point and at what point might they be able to place restrictions on the permit if they deem necessary.

Shane McCoy: So to answer your question a permit, if issued, would be issued by the Corps of Engineers. That being said, as EPA is a cooperating agency, helping us develop the analysis as well as helping review and comment on what will be the draft 404(b)(1) analysis. And within the regulations for EPA there are a whole suite of considerations for discharges into aquatic resources. To answer your question with regards to when they could put additional conditions in our permit, there is not that option; however, they do have an opportunity to elevate if, and what I mean by that is they have a veto ability if we issue a permit and they believe that it doesn't adequately protect or balance development with impacts.

Becky Bohrer: Thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Becky. Alright, we're going to go ahead and start round two of our questions here, back to you Tim Sohn.

Shane McCoy: I think we lost somebody.

Tim Sohn: Yes, sorry John. I know Margie just jumped on too, I don't know if Margie had a question first, otherwise I'll go ahead. Margie?

Margie Bowman: Oh, yeah, on the last comment that the EPA has veto ability if they don't feel that the area is adequately protected. How does that work? Sometimes things go on while something is being challenged. If the EPA feels that an area is not adequately protected environmentally, even though nothing has happened yet, can they halt construction or use of the area until the matter is resolved and better protections are put in?

Shane McCoy: Absolutely, and in fact right now they have preemptively vetoed, and they have withdrawn their withdrawal or suspended their withdrawal of that veto pending the final environmental analysis that we're doing right now. The Corps cannot take a final agency action until after the record of decision and the current status of that veto is resolved, either they do veto or they withdraw it.

Margie Bowman: Ok. Ok, yeah go ahead Alex.

John Budnik: I was going to ask Margie if you had a follow up to that.

Margie Bowman: No, I'm just reading over right now, the comments that came in from United Tribes of Alaska, I don't know whether the Army Corps of Engineers has seen it, but they are really not happy with your draft EIS. Go ahead for now, I'll come back on the next round.

John Budnik: Okay, thank you Margie. Go ahead Tim Sohn.

Tim Sohn: Alright, thanks. Shane, I'm curious if there was anything since our last call in sort of the final lead up, any surprises or anything else that came in down the home stretch that threatens to disrupt the schedule at all or anything else, I mean I saw there were still, up until February 11th, there were still requests for additional information going out, the question is, did you have adequate time given the last minute information you were still requesting to get everything in here.

Shane McCoy: Certainly. We absolutely did. Some of those requests for information have to do with the parallel process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. We are continuing to engage what they call consulting parties, which are parties that have interest in historic and cultural properties. So, the requests that we were requesting at that point have to do with other parallel processes.

Tim Sohn: Ok, I mean there was one, and maybe this just had to do with it being uploaded, there was one document related to cyanide that was uploaded on February 11th, stuff like that would seem a little late to the game for that to be coming in.

Shane McCoy: Oh, the upload date. Well, the request was much sooner than that, it was just the work that was being done behind the scenes precluded it from getting up in real time exactly when we got it. But that request was a request of the applicant and the information was received prior to finalizing of the draft.

Tim Sohn: Ok, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you Tim, Steven?

Steven Lee: Thanks. Shane, just going back to this issue of comparing this draft EIS to other draft EISs that have been done, that were similar, one thing that I was told was that the Donlin mine draft was allegedly much more comprehensive and thorough in terms of taking, a much broader look at the impacts of that mine compared to this EIS, which the opponents say is very limited. I wondered if you could comment on whether there were any changes in the process that you undertook. I assume that you guys have the standard operating procedure for putting these documents together, did that change at all in this case?

Shane McCoy: Well the process is laid out in the Council of Environmental Quality Regulations, with regards to the assertion that the document is less sufficient, I'm going to allow the public to inform that themselves and please provide us comments.

Steven Lee: Ok, got it, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Steven. I'm going to go ahead and call on Izzy again, I don't know if she's dropped off. She checked in with us but then she dropped off. [silence] She must not be there. Go ahead, Tim Bradner?

Tim Bradner: Nothing at this time, John.

John Budnik: Alright, thank you Tim. Ariel? [silence] Ariel may have dropped off, to you, Jill.

Jill Burg: I'm fine at this time, thanks.

John Budnik: Ok, thank you Jill. To you, Mariah.

Mariah Oxford: Hi there. Shane you said a few times to read the document and provide your comments. So, could you give a little advice to members of the public on how to tackle this 1400 page document? And what kind of comments you're looking for? In terms of, in scoping period you wanted substantive comments, are there additional guidelines for the draft EIS in terms of the types of comments that you will consider?

Shane McCoy: That's a good question. Obviously we are always looking for substantive comments. Comments that identify alternatives that weren't addressed within the document itself are very helpful, comments with regards to the technical proficiencies if they believe they are inadequate or adequate. They are all very helpful. Now with regards to tackling the document, I would suggest reading the executive summary, and then where the public wants to dive deeper, go into the document itself and read. And again a lot of the technical stuff is going to be in appendices. Chapter 3 is the affected environment baseline and chapter 4 is

environmental impacts. So, I would point people to start with the executive summary, which I believe is 80 pages or so, and it's a higher level, and then dive down in deep into the other subsequent sections and chapters.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, thank you.

Shane McCoy: Sure.

John Budnik: Thank you, Mariah. To you, Elwood.

Elwood Bremmer: Alright, to the alternative proposing a pipeline for feeding slurry to the port, and possibly a return pipeline for water. Where did that concept come from? Is it something that's done other places? It's just not anything I have ever been aware of in a mine operation.

Shane McCoy: The concentrate slurry concept and alternative was developed from a comment from one of the cooperating agencies, as well as from the applicant, when discussing the reasonably foreseeable future actions. So, I can't answer whether or not it's done other places, it's my understanding it is, but it was a suggestion by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Elwood Bremmer: Ok. Good to know, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you, Elwood. To Alex.

Alex DeMarban: Ok, thanks. Sort of a follow up to my earlier question, but I'm understanding that some of the tribes called for technology updates that would reduce pollution but the Corps came back and said no these are not economically feasible options and the tribes have a concern with that because they say no economic feasibility study has been done. Is all that correct, are ideas being dismissed as not economically feasible without a report on that being done? Go ahead.

Shane McCoy: Again, I don't want to draw conclusions for our audience. I would really prefer the public reads the document and comes to their own conclusions and provides us comments as appropriate.

Alex DeMarban: Ok, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you, Alex. Becky? Is Becky on the line? She may have dropped off. We'll go back to Margie.

Margie Bowman: Yeah, and following up on Alex's question, economically feasible for whom? I mean, isn't the critical issue here to protect the environment, while proceeding with the development of the nonrenewable resource. Isn't the protection of the environment supposed to be number one? So why would they say it's economically unfeasible? Thank you.

John Budnik: Margie just for clarification, is that question directed at the Corps or is it directed at Alex or was it directed as kind of rhetorical?

Margie Bowman: Oh, at the Corps.

John Budnik: Ok.

Shane McCoy: Margie, I'm going to have to get back to you to see what the response is from the applicant on that one, I apologize.

Margie Bowman: Thank you. I wasn't trying to be rude about it, but when it comes to the cost I'm not totally sure who covers what costs and what criteria, and figuring out whether something is economically feasible whether there are, perhaps different rules applying for things that the Corps has to do compared to what the applicant has to do. I wasn't trying to be rude about it. Thank you.

Shane McCoy: So, to kind of jump on that. Let me state that economically viable is not determined by the applicant and it has nothing to do with profits. It has to do with--

Margie Bowman: Ok.

Shane McCoy: --It has to do with industry standards.

Margie Bowman: Ah, ok. Thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Margie. Just want to see did we have any latecomers to the call before we go into the next round of questions.

[silence]

John Budnik: Alright, without further ado we'll go back to Tim Sohn.

Tim Sohn: Thanks, John. Thanks, Shane. To jump off those last two, because you know it's a little awkward, I fully understand Shane, your desire to not prejudice this conversation without people having read the document, but with us having this call at this moment without having been able to read the document, to go back to Alex's question, do you guys have a specific sort of idea on whether it was being dismissed as, because it's not economically feasible. You said your response is read the document, or is that something that we'll be able to parse out of the document? Will it say this was dismissed because it is not economically feasible? And again, forgive my ignorance for not having read the document yet.

Shane McCoy: That will all be in Appendix B, yes.

Tim Sohn: It will be, ok. That's it for now, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you Tim, back to you Steven.

Steven Lee: I think I'm good for now guys, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Steven. Back to you Tim Bradner.

Tim Bradner: Nothing more, John. Just listening.

John Budnik: Thank you Tim. Jill?

Jill Burg: Nothing, thank you very much.

John Budnik: Thank you Jill. Mariah?

Mariah Oxford: Hi, just a couple of things. Could you please send us Shane's opening comment. I got cut off in the middle of it.

John Budnik: Yep absolutely. I'll be sending that to everybody here in the pool, for sure.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, excellent. And another question, will you be holding another media advisement during this time period when we might be able to ask some of these questions that we haven't had the benefit of reading the entire document.

John Budnik: Yep, absolutely. We're going to continue this pattern of monthly teleconferences. Again, really appreciate everybody that's joined us today. We understand that the EIS document was just put up today, so obviously no one has had the time to read the document in its entirety. But, our media teleconferences are a tool for you guys to join us. For us to make ourselves available to ask the questions that come up. And certainly we appreciate everyone's understanding of fitting in to this format. The reason is because obviously this is a big story for Alaska and the world. To pull Shane away from his duties to do one-on-one interviews, which certainly would be nice, unfortunately we just don't have that time. That way we can get everything answered in this format. But yes, we'll continue on with these monthly teleconferences for sure.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, thanks.

John Budnik: Back to you, Elwood.

Elwood Bremmer: Alright, had a question about the benefit or the reason for having the alternative regarding the alternative tailings dam development concept. You know, trying to catch up on it now if it is in here, but what's the benefit of a downstream dam design, as opposed to what Pebble has proposed.

Shane McCoy: I don't really want to bias anybody. Again, I've read the document. So when John said nobody's read the document that's not true [laughter]. If it isn't clear and concise in the document, I really encourage the public to comment on that so that the final EIS adequately addressed and discloses.

Elwood Bremmer: Ok. Mind if I ask another one then?

John Budnik: Sure.

Elwood Bremmer: On a higher level, obviously the wetlands mitigation may be a necessary hazard and what compensatory mitigation may result, all that has to be worked out yet. But when you're evaluating these projects, is it a wetland is a wetland is a wetland is a water of the US? Or, do you place higher value on wetlands with high aquatic life, and presumably salmon being the highest value aquatic life there is, at least in Alaska?

Shane McCoy: So, to answer your question, there's a lot of scientific literature associated with the interactions between wetlands and streams and other aquatic resources, so to answer your question, no, there are higher functioning and higher valued aquatic resources than others, yes.

Elwood Bremmer: Ok.

John Budnik: Thank you, Elwood. Back to Alex.

Alex DeMarban: Yeah, hey thanks. And thanks again for this multiple round of calls, it's really great. So, I'm trying to go through Appendix B and what is considered economically feasible or not while everybody's talking here, but since I haven't had much time to do that, Shane can you just talk about a major idea that was dismissed because it's not economically feasible?

Shane McCoy: Let me think about that one for a minute. I'll have to get back to you on that one, I'm sorry.

Alex DeMarban: Ok.

Shane McCoy: I know that some of our alternatives were eliminated because they weren't practicable, and that's a term of ours that takes into consideration cost, logistics, and technologies.

Alex DeMarban: Ok.

Shane McCoy: I believe some of the alternative tailings facility sites were eliminated, but I can't list them all off the top of my head right now, I apologize.

Alex DeMarban: I saw dry stack was considered not practicable. I did not see anything mentioning economic in that section, but I saw that it was not practicable. Ok here's one maybe on pyramid project not economically feasible or economically extremely expensive to conduct the additional exploration.

Shane McCoy: Yes.

Alex DeMarban: Maybe that's just, I don't know, go ahead.

Shane McCoy: Yeah, that was, that was the reason pyramid was, was eliminated from consideration was because of the amount of information that the applicant would have to gather to get to the same level wasn't practical.

Alex MeMarban: Ok. I just randomly pulled that out, I don't know how important that is, it's just the first thing that popped up on my word search. Alright well we'll check it out I appreciate it.

Shane McCoy: Yeah, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you Alex. I'm going to go ahead and call on Becky again, I don't know if she's back there. [silence] Ok I think I did hear a beep, so do we have any latecomers on the line? Anyone that has not been called on?

Steven Quinn: This is Steve Quinn with KTVA. I didn't know about this, we didn't get the release so--

John Budnik: Oh, ok.

Steven Quinn: --I'll probably just talk to somebody after this just to get an idea of what's next.

John Budnik: Ok, did you say this is Steve Quinn?

Steven Quinn: Yes, Channel 11.

John Budnik: Oh, ok. I apologize if I missed you on my releases, but I will make sure you are on my distribution list for anything in the future.

Steve Quinn: Thank you.

John Budnik: Did you have any question upfront? This is an open format for the media to ask questions.

Steve Quinn: I don't know what I don't know right now, so I'm going to read a couple things and I might need to circle back with John and just get the skeletal understanding of this.

John Budnik: Sure. Fair enough, appreciate you joining us.

Steve Quinn: Sure

John Budnik: We'll ahead and go one more round. We're getting close exhausting our questions here for the day, but we'll go ahead and go through the list one more time here. So, back to you Tim.

Tim Sohn: Thanks John. Is there any instance in which something would arise in the comment period, where it would introduce either new alternatives or will bring back in alternatives that have already been dismissed is there any circumstance in which you could see that happening by the comment period.

Shane McCoy: We always take information as it comes to us and evaluate, so the potential's always there, yes.

Tim Sohn: Ok, can you say is that something that in past EISs or in common practice happens routinely? Or that would be that rare? Or it would be somewhere in between?

Shane McCoy: I can't speak to all EISs, but I can speak to projects, and it's not unusual during the public comment period to receive information that does lead to additional avoidance minimization or alternatives that weren't considered.

Tim Sohn: Ok, great. Thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Tim. To you, Steven.

Steven Lee: I just have a final question about, and again, this is just going back to comments that I've heard, and this has to do with the community profiles about villages in Bristol Bay. I'm told that the Corps relied upon the 2000 Census so that data is 19 years old. And in other cases, data that was collected by Pebble in 2008, that may not have been independently verified or collected independently. Any of that true? And I guess it goes to a larger question about the quality of some of the data that was used. Just wondered if you could provide us with any insight on your process there.

Shane McCoy: Certainly. So, the implementing regulations for the development of an EIS require that we use the most recent and available data possible. In the case of the 2000 Census, that's what was available and in addition to the information provided by Pebble when the draft was being developed we identified agencies with special expertise, including agencies familiar with the area to help us inform the analysis, so it was independently analyzed as well.

Steven Lee: Ok, got it. Thank you very much, thanks for doing this call guys.

John Budnik: Thank you Steven.

Shane McCoy: Thanks for participating.

John Budnik: To you, Margie.

Margie Bowman: Again mostly in listening mode, but can you advise how soon you will email all of us a copy of the opening comments, which we certainly appreciate, those of us who were late on the call, thank you.

John Budnik: Sure. When we disengage here, it will be the first thing I do when I get back to my computer. So, shortly after the call here and however fast the internet is moving, you will receive it.

Margie Bowman: Ok, great. Thank you so much.

John Budnik: Thank you, Margie. To you, Tim. Bradner. [silence] He may have disengaged. Jill?

Jill Burg: I'm fine, thank you.

John Budnik: Thank you, Jill. Mariah?

Mariah Oxford: I was just curious, Shane, could you speak to the extent to which you analyzed the 78-year mine life scenario?

Shane McCoy: Well we--

Mariah Oxford: --and where we might end up?

Shane McCoy: The applicant applied for, as I'm certain most people are aware, a 20-year mine. There's information out there to consider that the 78-year mine might be reasonably foreseeable as well as part of the cumulative impacts.

Mariah Oxford: Where in this document can we find that analysis?

Shane McCoy: It will be throughout chapter 4. Summary information is also in the executive summary.

Mariah Oxford: Ok, thank you.

Shane McCoy: Yep.

John Budnik: Thank you, Mariah. Elwood?

Elwood Bremmer: I'm good for now, thanks.

John Budnik: Thank you, Elwood. Alex?

Alex Demarban: Yeah, I think I'm good, thanks for everything.

John Budnik: Thank you Alex. Looks like we've gone through the list and exhausted questions I'll just leave it out there to the open for any outstanding questions for today's conference call. [silence] If there aren't any, I just want to say thanks again for joining us, appreciate you guys taking the time out of your busy schedules to talk about the Pebble EIS Project here with the Corps of Engineers. The purpose of these is to help you guys get a better understanding of where we are in the process, what those processes are, and the path forward. If you have any further inquiries or things crop up after we disengage here, please do contact me, John Budnik in the public affairs office. And with that, that concludes today's conference call. Everybody have a fantastic afternoon, thank you so much.

[several participants]: Thank you, thanks, thanks very much.

John Budnik: Buh-bye