

## USACE Media Roundtable Transcript 4-11-2018

Tom Findter (**TF**): Welcome and thanks for joining us for a discussion about the Pebble Project Environmental Impact Statement. I'm Tom Findter, I am the chief of public affairs for the USACE Alaska District and seated next to me is Sheila Newman, who is the Deputy Chief of our Regulatory Division. We have allotted one hour for this session with Sheila delivering some opening remarks and then we will turn it over to you all for questions. We would like to do that in an orderly fashion so to where each person on the line will have the opportunity to ask one question and if we still have more time we will go back around the horn. As a courtesy we ask that you place your phone on mute until you are ready to ask a question and then if you could hold your questions until after Sheila's initial statement we would appreciate that and then when you do ask a questions if you could state your name and affiliation we would appreciate that as well.

Before we get started I would like to do a quick roll call so we know who else is on the line and if you would be kind enough to just let us know who you are and who you are with we would really appreciate that.

Becky Bohrer Associated Press **BB**

Steven Lee Bloomberg Environment **SL**

Elwood Bremmer Alaska Journal of Commerce **EB**

Scott Rhode KENI Radio **SR**

Elizabeth Harball Alaska Public Media Energy **EH**

Shane Lasley North of 60 Mining News **SL**

Isabelle Ross KDLG Alaska Public Media **IR**

Steve Quinn KTVA Joined late no questions **SQ**

Sheila Newman (**SN**): Ladies and gentlemen, Thank you very much for taking the time today to discuss the District's regulatory review processes. My name is Sheila Newman and I am the Deputy Chief of the Regulatory Division. My role, along with our Division Chief, David Hobbie, is to oversee the execution of the Regulatory Program in Alaska and support our project managers as they review permit applications. Last year the Alaska District reviewed 775 permit applications. The permit application submitted by Pebble Limited Partnership was received at the end of last year and was assigned to our program manager Mr. Shane McCoy for evaluation. Mr. McCoy will lead our project delivery team throughout the application review process including the development of the environmental impact statement.

In the Pebble Limited Partnership's application, Pebble requested authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Under both of these Acts, the USACE has decision making authority. Section 404 of

the CWA regulates the discharge of earthen material into Waters of the United States (WOUS) often referred to as aquatic resources and Section 10 of the RHA regulates impacts to navigable waters. Upon review of Pebble's application, we determined that an environmental impact statement level of analysis was required to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed discharges of fill material and work in navigable waters to the environment. We notified PLP of this on January 5, 2018.

As we reviewed the permit application we also identified two additional federal agencies that will have decisions to make with regard to what the applicant has proposed. The United States Coast Guard regarding a bridge over the Newhalen River. The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement regarding a right of way for the proposed pipeline crossing the outer continental shelf. The three of us, USACE, Coast Guard, and BSEE, will use the EIS to inform our respective records of decision for this permit application.

We have done a tremendous amount of work to prepare for the receipt and review of this application and have developed an interdisciplinary team referred to as the project deliver team or PDT to help us write the environmental impact analysis. This team includes our independent contractor, AECOM, as well as eight cooperating agencies at this time. In addition, we have invited thirty five federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes to consult with us throughout the entire decision making process to ensure we have a thorough understanding of concerns.

We are currently in the formal scoping phase building the framework of the environmental impact statement. Scoping is the gathering and analysis of information that we will use to establish the breadth, or scope, of the environmental review required for the applicant's proposed project. In other words scoping helps us to draft the Table of Contents for the Environmental Impact Statement.

As lead federal agency, the Corps is responsible for developing the scope of the environmental impact statement. The body of the document will necessarily be constrained to the identified scope. During the scoping phase, we are asking the public to help us by reviewing the permit application and identifying issues, potential alternatives, environmental concerns, and potential analytical methods and mitigation measures. We are doing this in a variety of ways including the public scoping meetings that are going on this week and next in nine different locations.

The federal decision making agencies, Corps, USCG, BSEE, will review this information in the context of what our jurisdiction is to determine whether the issues, topics, and/or analysis will be included in the environmental document. Once we have completed this task, a scoping report will be housed on our public website. [Pebbleprojecteis.com](http://Pebbleprojecteis.com). The public scoping period ends on June 29, 2018.

We will then work with our team to write the analysis which will be produced in the

form of a draft EIS and released for public review and comment. The availability of the draft EIS will be announced in a Federal Register notice, public notice and in press releases. During this review period, we will also hold public hearings. The timing for the release of the DEIS is estimated early January 2019.

After the public comment period for the DEIS, we review and revise the document and subsequently publish the FEIS. The timing for publication of the FEIS is currently estimated at Late 2019. The FEIS is a standalone document that the three federal decision makers will use to inform their respective records of decision. All agency records of decisions are drafted after release of the FEIS. In our record of decision, we will identify our decision to issue or deny permit application for the discharge of fill (earthen) material into aquatic resources (WOUS) under Section 404 of the Clean water Act and whether to authorize work in navigable waters under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. If things progress as we see, a decision will be made no earlier than spring of 2020. Thank you.

**TF:** OK with that we will turn it over to questions and I am just going to go down the list of the folks that are on the line based upon the order that they registered for today's conference call. First up I have Becky with the AP.

**BB:** Good morning thanks for your time. Can you provide some context into with the scoping period that we now have 90 days. Can you put that into context with some other major projects in terms of where that falls on the spectrum?

**SN:** I will talk with you about how we know when a project has been scoped enough. That is a really interesting question and it depends on the information contained in the permit application along with the other sources of information that we have gathered. So for this particular permit application there is a tremendous amount of public information and public comment from other federal agency activities over the past 10 years. You know every project at a minimum in the NEPA process must have some form of public involvement that begins with our notification and normally that includes a 30 day public comment period that begins with a public notice and really minimal information in the permit application. In the case of this project we had a lot of information but we also made the permit application publically available for 85 days prior to the initiation of the public scoping period. We have never done that before. Given the 85 days of preparation we began with 30 days of public input. We have extended that to a total of 90 days now at the end of this 90 day period the public will have had 175 days to digest the permit application and provide meaningful input into the process.

**TF:** Are you good Becky?

**BB:** In terms of other size projects the commissioner of DNR mentioned Donlin for example. I guess can you is there a range up to how long typically for something like this. Is this at the upper range of what you have done historically for a major project?

**SN:** This is the upper range what we are doing for this project right now 175 days is certainly not something we have done in the past.

Looking backward at projects is not necessarily that is the necessary exercise for us because we have to evaluate the project information in front of us. For Donlin we had little information going into it and had a long public scoping period where we were starting from square one.

For the pebble project, there has been over a million public comments through activities of other federal agencies and the project has been in the public eye for I think the first inkling was in 1987 so certainly for the last 10 years but potentially much much longer than that as well.

**TF:** Ok. Next up Isabelle with KDLG radio

**IR:** I guess just very generally can you say how the environmental impact statement might assess the planning for the mine?

**SN:** Let me try to. In order for me to answer that Isabelle I have to give you a little bit more context about what the Corps authority is and what other agencies have the authority to do. For the Corps of Engineers authority is limited to that discharge of earthen material into waters of the United States (WOUS) in work in navigable waters. Our environmental impact statement will necessarily contain the information that we need to make decisions under our jurisdiction. The mine plan itself along with the many other aspects of the Mine plan is under the authority of the State. The State of Alaska is one of our cooperators however as not being a federal agency the state is not required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We don't necessarily include all of the information that the state will then produce in order to make a decision on I believe it is called for the state the licensing of the mine. The information in our environmental document will be tied to the things that we have the decision to make over but not necessarily specifics of the mine plan of operations. I am not sure exactly if the mine plan of operations is what you are asking me about so maybe you could see if I am headed in the right direction to help you answer that questions.

**IR:** Yes that was very helpful thank you

**SN:** Ok great

**TF:** Next up we have Steven with Bloomberg

**SL:** Hi thanks for convening this call. Sheila I had a question about the public meetings. It is my understanding that three of the meetings, the ones in Anchorage, Dillingham and Homer will not have open microphones for the public. I understand there is going to be an opportunity to enter their remarks into computers in the room. But there has been some complaints that these are the locations where the mine's

opponents are expected to be the most vocal and some of them have indicated that they don't think this is really in the spirit of either the law or established practice. I just wondered if you could comment on those allegations.

**SN:** Certainly, I think there has been some confusion about what exactly is a scoping meeting. And I think the confusion has been between the difference between scoping meetings and a public hearing. Both things occur during our process. The public hearing, when we actually ask folks for public testimony if you will occur at the draft environmental impact statement phase. The sole purpose of the scoping meeting is to help us form the table of comments for the document. So, I think the open mike comment, I am aware of it, comes from maybe a poor word choice on our part and maybe not a clear explanation of the differences between public meeting and a public hearing. We have not produced anything yet for the public to comment on or give testimony on. We are just now trying to establish the framework of the document that we are going to produce. So what folks can expect at the scoping meetings is an open forum meaning people can come and go as they please to come in and provide any input that like and our goal is to accommodate as many individual as possible.

What we will be doing at these larger meetings is having a variety of ways that people can put their input in. So a line of computers will people can comment directly. They can type their comments in and we are also rolling out for the first time a geo-referencing tool so people can pin or tag their comments directly to the geographic location that they are very concerned about. People can also just walk into the scoping meeting hand one of our staff their comments and leave. We will have court reporter available for people who would like to dictate their comments. We will also have some extra recorders on hand for people who are ok for us recording their comments and transcribing them later. All of the comments will be housed on our public website. Really we are not looking for, again we haven't produced anything yet so we are asking people to help us form the framework of the document at this stage. Does that clarify?

**SL:** Yes thank you very much

**TF:** Next up Elwood with the Alaska Journal of Commerce

**EB:** Thank you and good morning Sheila. Understanding that the EIS schedule is fungible and no two projects are the same. With that said I have to you know for lack of a better way for lack of better option compare the EIS roughly 2 year schedule for pebble to Donlin which is looking like it is going to be a 6 year EIS for a very similar project. With Pebble then there is naturally concern that it looks like the Corps is working to usher this project through to so the EIS timeline fits with the lawsuit settlement with the EPA and just wanted to give you a chance to comment on that.

**SN:** Sure, you know, we look at each project on its own merits and again for the pebble project we have a tremendous amount of information you know before we even started including a tremendous amount of baseline data that our team is already scrubbing through to determine whether or not it is adequate and identifying data gaps.

Any EIS is an iterative process where as an agency we have to do internal scoping which is that diligent effort to identify all of the information available for us to evaluate this project and then go forward and identify requests for additional information to the applicant. So that is an ongoing process. Really the hard work of rolling up the sleeves the and writing the document and then producing the draft for the public review and getting all of the comments incorporated and answered to the final EIS is a process that as an agency we definitely want to fit into a reasonable timeframe. Now as you said the schedule is fungible I have given you estimated dates and we will be working every day to do that but I don't see that we are trying to fit this into anybody else's process or any arbitrary timeframes.

Looking backward, I am very familiar with Donlin and other EIS's that we worked on. when we took a look at this project we had already decided from our learning experiences on these other large mine projects Donlin and Chitna that we were going to build as many efficiencies into the process as we could so we are not spending unnecessary time because at the end of the day we don't authorize the mine for this project but we do make federal decisions whether that decision be a denial or a permit and how can we do that as public servants in the most effective and efficient way possible for any project including this one.

**EB:** Okay and I don't mean to take up too much of your time. As generally as you can maybe an example of one of those streamlining efficiencies.

**SN:** Sure. Again as I stated earlier we went for complete public access and transparency as soon as we possibly could for this project by making the application publically available 15 days after we received so that was a first. Another thing that we have done is build a platform to house all of the information in one place so we can be responsive to inquiries including answering the mail when people are providing their input to us so we can house that together. We have done some technical things with the geo-referencing tool. One of the management things that we have done has gone from a single project manager to a project manager team. These things are going to apply to every EIS moving forward. This just happens to be the first one that came in the door after we had done our analysis and restructuring on the way we would tackle project that require eis level of analysis. As I mentioned in my opening remarks we had 775 permit applications last year and this is not the only one that requires the eis level of analysis and we are constantly trying to learn and improve ourselves and will continue to do so moving forward.

**EB:** Okay thank you

**TF:** Shane with north of 60 mining news

**TF:** Shane are you there, no ok.

**TF:** Next up Scott with keni radio

**SL:** Hi this is really nitpicky but the website address pebbleprojecteis.com why not .gov

or .mil?

**SN:** So we have a third party contractor so that is not an actual army person but a third party contractor that develops our website for us and they are not a government entity. The cost of us maintaining the website is passed along to the applicant. But I guess I hadn't really considered that question a .gov .mil and maybe I will look into that and see if it is something we should change in the future.

**SL:** Alright thank you.

**TF:** Now we go to Elizabeth with Alaska Public Media-Energy

**EH:** Thanks for taking me on this call. It is my understanding please correct me if I am wrong that it is extremely rare for the army corps of engineers to deny a permit. And if that is true, why is that true and then what would be the circumstances under which you would deny a permit like this?

**SN:** I would say the District has denied less than 1% of the permits over the past fiscal year for sure. I would have to look at historical numbers. Many times we have applicants withdraw their permit applications if they have not been able to demonstrate that their project is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) which is a technical term under our 404b1 analysis. Other times we work with applications to help them find ways to avoid and minimize so that they can bring their project into LEDPA determination. I won't speculate on what may or may not result in a denial but again it is an iterative process that happens over the course of the permit evaluation.

**EH:** Thank you could I ask one unrelated follow up or do you want to go around again?

**TF:** I'd say we have plenty of time to go again so why don't you go ahead and knock that out.

**EH:** With the extended comment period what are you going to do with that extra time are there going to be more meetings?

**SN:** There are no more meetings planned. We have to again evaluate this permit application in the context of the hundreds of others that we have and by that I mean we have to work within our budget and make sure that we are addressing all of the applications we have. We will be working every single day even during scoping and even before scoping to identify alternatives for consideration. To do a thorough description of the environmental baseline using our technical experts, using available databases and relevant research papers and reports. We will be working on Impact prediction which is really-- forecasting the likely changes in the environment commonly called impacts that will occur as a result of the discharge of fill material or work in navigable waters. We will be drafting an Impact assessment. We will be doing an interpretation of the importance or significance of the impacts and that is one where thing the public will really help with and separate the wheat from the chaff you know

what are the most important things that the public is concerned about for this project. The mitigation measures as well we will be working on those. We don't have stops and starts in the EIS process. We are from the day we get a permit application in we are already taking a look what resources we are going to be evaluating What the intensity and the magnitude potentially could be. We will still be working I guess is the answer to that questions.

**EH:** Thanks

**TF:** I just want to make sure everybody has their phones on mute we are hearing a little bit of static on this end. Back up to the top Becky.

**BB:** What role if any does EPA play at this point in the process?

**SN:** The EPA can comment on the permit application as can citizen. They don't have a role in the permit application decision making per say but they are a cooperating agency invited for special expertise in the environmental analysis.

**BB:** thank you

**TF:** Ok Now we go back to Isabelle

**IR:** I'm going to pass along to next person

**TF:** Next up we have Steven

**SL:** I had a questions about AECOM, the engineer firm and it is my understanding they had earlier written a report on behalf of Northern Dynasty that found that mining activity in the watershed in British Columbia "has not had a negative effect on salmon populations and the commercial salmon fishery" Pebble actually included that report in a package that they sent to the EPA in 2012 along with a comment that AECOM can provide valuable lessons for development within Bristol Bay. Do you see any sort of comment or friction between or in the fact that AECOM is now being commissioned to handle the EIS for you?

**SN:** The third party contractor which is AECOM has gone through that the process and produced conflict of interest statements meaning that they have no vested interest in the project's outcome. They are the Corps contractor working directly for us. It is something do go through with counsel whenever we select a 3pc to ensure the conflict of interest addressed. Just producing a report for a different endeavor was something that had come up and we could do some follow up on that but the conflict of interest process was gone through. I know that much but I don't know what other details there are to know.

**SL:** But there was a legal process sounds like that we went through and then the determination was made that was ok to go forward.

**SN:** I know we have the 3pc forms from the contractor yes. I am not an attorney so I can't speak to exactly the legal process.



**SL:** Ok thank you

**TF:** Now we go back to Elwood.

**EB:** Hi again. Sheila I know you folks obviously focus more on the environmental and engineering of a project but does Pebble's lack of public economic evaluation impact your work at all? Given that it is my understating anyway that um you know practicable alternatives that include things that are at least somewhat economically reasonable as well as mitigation measures and how economically viable they are. Does that play into your decision making at all?

**SN:** You know Elwood that is great questions because it is definitely one that comes up. If you look in our implementing regulations at 33CFR320.4(r) there is a statement about the requirements for economic data which is something that the District Engineer can request through the evaluation. It is not something that we would request just upon receipt of the application but it is an issue that we addressed with Pebble to let them know that we will be seeking information in this regard. The form that it will likely come to us in is a preliminary economic assessment (PEA) but the timing of that information is not set in stone yet. We certainly would need that information prior to making a decision on the application.

**EB:** But not prior to publishing a draft eis

**SN:** No not prior to publishing a draft eis.

**EB:** Ok since I have got you one other very strait forward question. You invited 35 Tribes to consult. How many have decided to be cooperating agencies?

**SN:** Two different things which is a great point. We have invited 35 federally recognized tribes to government to government consultation with us which is a much broader participating that cooperating agency. We have had I will have to get back to you on the exact number Elwood but I want to say that we have had 23 that have responded they would like government to government throughout the entire process. We have invited two tribes to be cooperating agencies and have not received responses yet.

**EB:** I don't meant to hog all the time but do you know which tribes for g2g

**SN:** Which tribes for government to government consultation or for cooperating agency?

**EB:** For cooperating agency.

**SN:** Yes sure, Curyung Tribal Council and Nondalton Tribal Council. One is in the Nushagak river watershed and the other in the Quijakc river watershed

**EB:** Thank you

**TF:** We will give Shane another try here. Are you on the line with north of 60 mining?

**SL:** My questions have been answered thank you Sheila

**SN:** Thank you

**TF:** Great so we will move on now to Scott

**SR:** No further questions thanks

**TF:** Okay how about Elizabeth

**EH:** I will take every questions I can get. I just want to clarify when you extended the comment period there were a lot of stories written saying this was after Senator Lisa Murkowski and Alaska Department of Natural Resource Commissioner Andy Mack. Is it fair to say the comment period extension was in response or were there other factors contributing?

**SN:** There were a lot of requests by a lot of different parties including some parties that called and said you know we just now realized that you had the application out there for 85 days. So it was a combined response to a lot of different folks because again we do want the public's input in the framing of the document. We are again trying to constantly improve our processes. We know that this project in particular has such a high level of interest. We put the application out there early so people could digest it. It seems like some folks maybe did some folks didn't.

We are also doing things to be prepared for that next stage that Draft EIS stage by putting information on the public web site including all the baseline data as we receive it. Again, we want to be flexible and make sure the public is fully engaged on this project. We understand the level of interest.

**EH:** Thanks a lot

**TF:** Ok Becky any more questions?

**BB:** I guess one question as far as the draft eis goes could one of the alternatives be just a strict prohibition or is the intent always to err on the side of mitigation.

**SN:** I think this is a really interesting question. The Corps of Engineers has no authority to prohibit or to authorize a mine. So in our alternatives analysis, there will be a no action alternative. That no action alternative will be the one that does not include the discharge of dredged material or discharge fill material or work in navigable waters. So when we talk about a denial, a permit denial, we are saying that the discharge of fill material is not authorized but should not be mistaken in any way as somehow authority over the mine itself. The proposed mine is on State of Alaska land and the authority to authorize or not authorize the mine is solely the State's authority.

**BB:** But the Corps itself has a say in effectively a key element of the project?

**SN:** I would say so yes because obviously there are a tremendous amount of

jurisdictional waters in the project site but again our authority is only over putting that earthen material into those aquatic resources but not all of the other components. I think there is another 50 some permits required for the actual mine and many of them are with the State.

**TF:** Okay moving on Isabelle are you going to take another pass?

**IR:** I guess I don't know if you can actually answer this question. What are some of the environmental factors that might lead to a no action decision or options by the Corps of Engineers?

**SN:** No actions means no discharge but that is a different set of criteria than a permit denial. We have to evaluate the no action alternative for every single action we do. Regarding the denial, I am not going to speculate on resource impacts that may lead to a denial. There is no information to base that on.

**IR:** Thank you

**TF:** Steven

**SR:** Thanks just very quickly. I wanted to go over I think Sheila I heard you say that this Pebble DEIS process is the first one in which you are, the Corps, is implementing streamlined measures and I just wondered if you could repeat some of the ways in which that streamlining is going to happen and then I mean do you have any information on sort of the expectations going forward in terms of how quickly these things are going to happen now?

**SN:** I will start with clarifying that I am speaking for the Alaska District not the entire Corps of Engineers but the Alaska District has had a lot of experience with large mine EIS's and we have learned lessons over the years that have made us want to change course. The first course change being going from that single project manager to a project delivery team to work on these projects. The second thing that we realized is that when you are talking about mine permit applications in particular those are kind of a difficult type of application to digest so the second thing we did was we made that application publically available literally the day we determined it complete which I think was January 5, 2018. We took those two critical steps to prepare ourselves for any project to make sure that we are leaning forward with the public as much as we can so there is ample time for study of the permit application because that is what we are truly asking for evaluation and input on that permit application. Those are two key areas. The other thing we have done is taken a look at how we have managed cooperating agencies in the past and how we have identified and asked those agencies to assist us. As the lead agency we have the responsibility to not only identify potential cooperators but then to also assign roles to those cooperators. On this EIS we have been very precise about what it is we are asking cooperators to do as they roll up their sleeves and help us with this technical analysis. Those three management tactics are how we are leaning forward and how we are improving the efficiencies of our

processes here in Alaska. Predicting how it will go moving forward that is something we are still working on because this project has a high level of interest. We absolutely as we have shown by extending the comment period are going to continue to be flexible and responsive. We are also going to be working very hard to produce a document in reasonable timeframe and to make sure that the document is truly what is what supposed to be which is not a technical document but a document digestible for the public so the public can understand what the potential impacts of this permit application are.

**SL:** Great thank you very much.

**TF:** OK Elwood you are up.

**EB:** What baseline is the Corps using for acceptable impacts to wetlands? In the lower 48 often times it is my understanding that there is a no net loss baseline. Obviously pebble is proposing to impact over 3000 acres of wetlands so I guess if you see what I am getting at there.

**SN:** So I am going to start just making sure the numbers are correct. The application as proposed right now has a grand total of 4080 acres Elwood of wetland impacts. I am little bit confused what you mean as a baseline and using the terms no net loss. Can you explain to me a little bit more what you are asking?

**EB:** Certainly-what the corps goes into any project with it would seem any agency doing this type of review would go into the project with a general idea as to what a general policy as to what is acceptable and what isn't.

**SN:** What is acceptable and what isn't. Each application is weighed on its own merits. This is kind of a deep dive into technical things. The grand total of 4080 doesn't really tell us much. Those impacts are broken down in probably. If you put impacts in buckets there is temporary permanent, there is section 404 impacts, section 101 and 404 and section 10 only impacts and then further subdivided in to cowardin classifications and hgm classifications. We start by what the applicant has proposed and then we look for alternatives that would have lesser impacts to what is proposed. We go through a two part analysis which is the public interest review factors and there are 21 of those and then there are the substantive requirements of the 404b1 analysis. By the time we get to the other side of that the only thing that we could permit if we choose to is that LEDPA determination. But there is no magic number. There is no okay X number of acres is the threshold. That does not exist.

**EB:** OK

**SN:** Did that answer your question **Elwood**?

**EB:** Sort of but tie don't want to take up everyone times more than I already had.

Shane any questions

**SL:** You talked about three records of decision. I am curious how does that work as far as the EIS process goes and is there any potential for conflicts the records of decisions when their made at the end of the process?

**SN:** The three federal agencies with decisions to make are going work together. We will define the scope together. Ultimately, the corps is responsible for it as the lead federal agency but certainly the Coast Guard and BSEE all of their requirements will be folded into this environmental document. When the records of decisions are made we are making decisions on three very different groups of authority. There is always potential for conflict with differing RODs. We are the agency that has the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination. That does not apply to the other two agencies. We have no authorization for BSEEs ROW across the OCS so there is unlikely to be conflict there. The Coast Guard is responsible for the actual bridge permit over the Newhalen River. I mean I would not say that there are never conflicts in RODS but our authorities are pretty narrow and pretty separate. So um that is all I have on that one.

**SL:** Thank you

**TF:** Next up we have Scott

**TF:** OK No Scott moving on we have Elizabeth

**EH:** You mentioned that Army Corps is going taken in a lot of public information and reviews have been done on this project.t There was a report put out in 2014 by EPA The Bristol Bay assessment which was fairly controversial. Will that be one of the things that the Army Corps will look at or will you disregard it because Pebble has submitted a different plan?

**SN:** You know we are looking through internal scoping which is kind of the first and critical step in the process. We look at all of the information that is already available to determine applicability. I can't speak of off the top of my head whether there is useful information coming out of that report right now because I am not the technical person reviewing it. Our interdisciplinary team is literally combing through all of the information that is out there now including that report and will make a determination whether it is going to be useful in our analysis or not. Useful in the analysis is a determination that is iterative through scoping so as issues come up it may be. What the applicant has proposed now is different. There are no headwater impacts in the Nushagak river drainage which is totally different then, I believe, what was proposed before. Moving forward however as we develop alternatives, there could be an alternative that again has those types of impacts and then information in that report could become valuable but at this point in time it is kind of too early to tell.

**EH:** Thank you

**TF:** We have about 15 minutes left so hopefully we can get through one more round. We will go back to Becky

Becky Bohrer Associated Press **BB- I don't have any other questions thank you.**

Steven Lee Bloomberg Environment **SL-Yah I'm good thanks guys**

Elwood Bremmer Alaska Journal of Commerce **EB-For today anyway I'm good too thanks.**

Scott Rhode KENI Radio **SR**

Elizabeth Harball Alaska Public Media Energy **EH I'll let you off the hook. Thank you.**

Shane Lasley North of 60 Mining News **SL-I'm good thank you.**

Isabelle Ross KDLG Alaska Public Media **IR-No further questions**

Steve Quinn KTVA Joined late no questions **SQ**

**TF:** Sheila did you have any closing comments?

**SN:** I really appreciate the opportunity to have this information shared with you guys and also appreciate your questions. We are always constantly trying to improve our selves and will continue to do so, so thank you all very much.

**TF:** I will just echo that by saying that we really appreciate you joining us today and hopefully you have gained some greater understating of the Corps' EIS process and the path forward here. If we can provide any further assistance please don't hesitate to give the public affairs office a call, either myself or my colleague John Budnik a call. That concludes today's conference call and enjoy the rest of the day.