

Audience Questions from Mining in Our Backyard Forum*

March 30, 2023

Doesn't the state have a policy to not close land to mining, even if it is residential?

Where do we locate accurate information on what gold mining really provides to individuals?
Less all of the subsidies?

Who is responsible for protecting neighborhoods from air, noise, light, and water pollution and traffic and infrastructure impacts: mines or neighborhoods?

Why did GVEA electrify along Old Murphy Dome Road after 70 years? Is this for a mine?

Why should we encourage hard rock mining for gold when the United States has gold in storage for decades and the majority of gold is used for jewelry?

Addressing negative pollution and environmental impacts, when Fairbanks and surrounding domes and hills already suffer from regular forest fires and climate change that has made our summers drier, how can environmental permits and laws protect our lands, no matter if this is private lands or public lands?

One of the continued and oft repeated rationales given for mining in Alaska is the need for rare earth minerals for tech and renewable energy needs (and the cobalt mining by children in the Congo is usually mentioned), however that argument is weak in the FNSB where gold is the element historical and currently and proposed [being] mined. Gold is not a critical or rare earth mineral and mostly goes to gold bars or jewelry. So, how do you reconcile that argument re: mining is critical for gold-focused mining in the FNSB?

Unrestricted general funds are monies deposited into the "People's Checkbook" if you will. It pays for troopers, schools, public health, and transportation infrastructure. In FY 2021, mining taxes and royalties contributed .6% of total UGF receipts. Where does that contribution rank when compared to all other fund sources for all other major industries?

How can the state of Alaska be objective about permits and things like an EIS when: Alaska [Permanent Fund] is managed by PF Board; PFD owns 7.1% of Contango; Contango owns 30% of Peak Gold; Jason Brune of ADEC sits on the PF Board and owes allegiance to promoting the PF, and he also owes Alaska constitutional allegiance to protecting our environment?

Has the Department of Environmental Conservation put forth a plan to deal with the potential acid mine problem at Fort Know with the Manh Choh ore?

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In the Kinross mining, isn't cyanide solution used, and is it in their waste materials and settlement lake?

What will be the impact on the infrastructure needs throughout the state when Federal Infrastructure money will be diverted to subsidize the highway infrastructure needs for the [Manh Choh] trucking route?

How and what monitoring of water quality and corridor dust is in place in order to have baseline data prior to mining and transport of ore?

Reclamation: Manh Choh mine companies say they will reclaim to native/original vegetation. Is this reclamation plan feasible?

Who and what State and Federal agencies are specifically responsible for the ore haul proposal between mines? Are there any parallels, in the world for the scale or distance proposed? I don't have a question or opposition to the mines at Fort Knox or Manh Choh. I am specifically asking who is responsible for regulating ore haul?

For Deantha Skibinski:

How much gold (in size, i.e. ½ cup, tablespoon, etc.) will be in each side dump load of a haul truck?

Would it be more profitable building a processing plant in the Tok area than to haul it in oversized trucks to Ft. Knox?

How long would it take to build a processing plant in the Tok area? How much would it cost to build a processing plant in Tok?

For Bob Loeffler:

Given the extensive discussions about mining's possible effects on fishing, regarding Pebble in Bristol Bay, has ISER done any study on the possible effects of Manh Choh trucking on tourism via the Alaska Highway?

For Dave Charron:

[One Amanita questioner, self-described as 50-year a resident and small business owner, recalls the initial lack of public comment on the 2021 Avidian permit that then was changed to a "courtesy" comment period, and asks] "Do you believe that the public should be involved in

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decisions concerning large-scale, foreign open-pit, hard rock gold mines in established communities, residential neighborhoods and recreational and preserved areas? If so, how are you going to restore public trust in this process going forward?"

Does DNR have policies or practices that reduce or eliminate conflicts between property owners and mining?

The ore from the Tetlin area is potentially acid generating (PAG) and heavy metal leaching (ML) and differs from the ore currently being processed at Fort Knox. Will Fort Knox be required to update the 1993 Environmental Assessment and re-permitted to account for the ore differences. Will the reclamation and closure plan be likewise re-permitted to accommodate the differing ores?

Can and will the DNR Commissioner and the State of Alaska designate a leasehold location/mineral closing order to surround our residential areas? (DNR currently recognizes that settlement land should be closed mineral entry per the Eastern Tanana Area Plan Settlement land as defined by 11 AAC 55.202:

"Areas designated Settlement should be closed to mineral entry prior to sale, and, in this plan, a leasehold location order (LLO) is recommended to be imposed on proposed settlement areas not yet affected by a current mineral closing order. This land may be conveyed to municipalities and individuals.")

What provisions are made during the construction/maintenance of the hold ponds/pits at Ft. Knox in case of a major earthquake affecting the area?

How does DNR intersect with ADEC? Who has the most legal responsibility when environmental or state/federal permit violations happen?

How does enforcement of permit violations work?

Can you explain how AMD can be mitigated? How common is this at mines?

If a spill occurs from toxins leaching into the Chena will the DNR have to bear the responsibility?

Do you have a problem with Kinross/Contango putting a mining processing plant on Contango's 100% owned mining claims (State of Alaska) on the Tok Cut Off or on Tetlin Land?

Melissa Kellner:

What will be the effect on the Borough electrical costs when Kinross Ft. Knox shuts down?

Is a gigantic industrial ore haul in our FNSB comprehensive plan?

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For Sarah Heinchon:

What areas or what mines is Save Our Domes concerned [about]?

For years this community has co-existed with Ft. Knox and dozens of placer mines. How do you establish economic worth of our quality of life without hard rock mining the domes and without our public roads being used for ore haul purposes?

For Barbara Schuhmann:

Based on the concerns outlined by Advocates for Safe Highways, should we shut down and oppose the transportation of all goods and services that are transported via tractor trailers on Alaska highways? (PM 2.5, highway casualties/safety, environment (burning of diesel fuel))

Why isn't Advocates for Safe Highways opposing the trucking of natural gas from the North Slope for the Interior Gas Utility?

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