

# AVCP

Association of Village Council Presidents  
P.O. Box 219 • Bethel, Alaska 99559 • Phone (907) 543.7300

55TH ANNUAL CONVENTION  
BETHEL, ALASKA      SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2019

## RESOLUTION 19-09-10

**TITLE:     A Resolution Opposing the Further Development and Near Future Operation of  
              the Donlin Creek Gold Mine**

- WHEREAS The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) is the recognized tribal organization and non-profit Alaska Native regional corporation for its fifty-six member federally recognized tribes within Western Alaska; and
- WHEREAS Although the development and operation of the Donlin Gold mine could bring much needed employment opportunities to our regional residents, AVCP anticipates that our hired residents would soon relocate to Anchorage or other urban settings as the mine would provide for their transportation to and from the mine for their shifts; and
- WHEREAS This anticipated migration of our locals would become detrimental to the local entities that work together for providing essential services for our well-being, as their population count contributes to the funding allocation for each village, and also their earnings would benefit the urban areas more than it would the villages that the locals moved out of; and
- WHEREAS It would become even more devastating to the remaining elderly residents that rely on those able workforce family members to provide for their traditional sustenance, that has contributed to being the main source of their health and well-being as it has been passed down and fully utilized since time immemorial; and
- WHEREAS All species of salmon and other species of fish that return are largely the main source of food for the majority of families on the Kuskokwim River and nearby coastal communities and the fish has been relied on by countless generations ahead of us; and
- WHEREAS The close proximity of the proposed Donlin Gold mine to the Kuskokwim River leaves no doubt, that the planned method of gold retrieval that calls for the use of cyanide and other chemicals that do not dissolve or evaporate, will jeopardize every fish on the Kuskokwim, its tributaries and coastal communities, should a disaster strike the mine and its tailings pond; and
- WHEREAS The mined rock from which the gold will be extracted from reportedly contains mercury, and the mining process will intensify the risk factor that the fish and all living creatures will face more and more each year the mine is in operation; studies are being conducted on how the chemicals will impact us all in the next 100 years; and
- WHEREAS The support infrastructure being planned to be constructed soon are: a natural gas pipeline that stretches 315 miles from the Cook Inlet to the Kuskokwim River, a new barge terminal in Bethel, AK, a 30-mile road downriver from the mine to a 5-acre

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port on the Kuskokwim, a new 5000 ft. airstrip, a 40,000,000 gallon diesel fuel farm, a tailings pond to use while extracting from a 2 mile by 1 mile pit, and increased barge traffic hauling fuel, chemicals, supplies, and equipment to support the mine when the river is ice free; and

WHEREAS Even when all safety measures are exercised, there are disastrous accidents prone to happen due to human error when the mine support activities are carried out, and we can all imagine the devastation to the Kuskokwim fish and wildlife AND every person that relies on the Kuskokwim River for their livelihood should this catastrophe occur.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the Association of Village Council Presidents opposes the further development and near future operation of the Donlin Creek Gold Mine, due to the extreme hazards and excessive risks it poses to the health and welfare of the people, fish and wildlife on the Kuskokwim River and Yukon and Kuskokwim River Delta Region, and other factors that will adversely affect the local families.

ADOPTED by the Members of the Association of Village Council Presidents during the Association's fifty-fifth annual convention held in Bethel, Alaska, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of September with a duly constituted quorum of delegates present.



Raymond Watson, Chair



Vivian Korthuis, Chief Executive Officer

Submitted by: Native Village of Kwinhagak

# AVCP delegates pass resolution against Donlin Gold Mine

By **Krysti Shallenberger, Alaska's Energy Desk - Bethel** - September 27, 2019



*The proposed Donlin Gold mine site in 2014. The site is located north of Crooked Creek, which sits on the Kuskokwim River. (Photo by Dean Swope / KYUK)*

The Association of Village Council Presidents no longer supports the proposed Donlin Gold mine. That decision came during its annual convention this week.

After two hours of passionate debate on Wednesday, Sept. 25, delegates from the 56 tribes that AVCP represents overwhelmingly voted to withdraw a resolution supporting the mine, and then voted to pass a separate resolution that opposes it. There were 41 delegates attending the convention on Wednesday.

The resolution asking for AVCP to withdraw the resolution supporting the mine passed with 34 delegates voting yes, four no, and two abstaining. **The resolution opposing the Donlin mine passed with 35 delegates in favor, two opposed, and three abstaining.**

**The vote reverses a 2006 AVCP resolution delegates passed that supported the Donlin Gold mine, and the new resolution shows that the mine has lost significant regional support from tribes.** The Orutsararmiut Native Council of Bethel, which opposes the mine, submitted the resolution to withdraw AVCP's support for the Donlin project. The Native Village of Kwinhagak, which also objects to the mine, submitted the resolution for AVCP to oppose the project. Both these resolutions will be presented at the Alaska Federation of Natives' annual convention in October.

Donlin Gold did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment. Donlin Gold has repeatedly said that it plans to build the mine as safely as possible.

Last year, AVCP tabled two anti-Donlin resolutions **that sought to reverse** its position on the Donlin Gold mine because they were not submitted on deadline.

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**Krysti Shallenberger, Alaska's Energy Desk - Bethel**

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