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The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, representing 74 federally recognized tribes and tribal communities in interior Alaska, is vehemently opposed to the Ambler industrial road development project. Our Tribes have shared our concerns about impacts on our communities from the road, and we are glad to see that the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) now acknowledges how it would hurt our people.

As communities in the Arctic North face a rapidly changing climate, these lands and waters, and the unparalleled subsistence resources they sustain - including caribou, salmon and sheefish - are a critical cornerstone to food security and sovereignty for the Alaska Native Tribes in the region. Development of this industrial access road on behalf of a foreign mining company for its private use, is strongly opposed by our people, who have inhabited these lands for millenia.

The proposed Ambler mining road would bulldoze a route through nearly 3,000 streams with 11 major river crossings including the Kobuk and Koyukuk Rivers which support essential habitat and spawning grounds for salmon and sheefish. Sheefish, a giant member of the whitefish family (up to 50 pounds in size) is found only in arctic and subarctic regions, and is an essential tribal subsistence food, particularly as salmon populations have suffered severe declines in the region. These spawning grounds are particularly sensitive to increases in siltation, impediments to fish passage (e.g., faulty culverts), and contamination from hazardous spills.

“I want to save something for our future. I’ve seen crashes of caribou, of the salmon. Most communities don’t even know what king salmon tastes like anymore,” says First Chief Julia Roberts-Hyslop, of the Native Village of Tanana.

Furthermore, the development of the Ambler industrial road project undermines the rights and self-determination of indigenous peoples. Our communities have maintained an unbroken connection to this land for countless generations. Responsible mining projects should guarantee a sustainable supply of critical minerals, contributing to job creation and resource security. There is no evidence that extracting minerals from the Ambler Mining District via the proposed road is economically viable. Even if so, it would not ensure a reliable supply of critical minerals.

We strongly encourage the Biden administration to give top priority to safeguarding our water resources, food security and ancestral lands of our tribes by choosing the "no action" alternative

and canceling existing permits. This collective stance reflects our deep commitment to the preservation of our ancestral lands and the well-being of our communities.

“In the end after looking at the facts, and all the impacts that this will have on our rivers, our streams, our creeks - it’s too devastating. We are asking that in the end others will look at this process that was completed, and say this is not a good idea,” says Kathleen Peters-Zuray, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed member and Tanana Resident.

“I am here for my grandchildren and I am here to be a part of the fight against this mine and road, to help protect the spawning grounds and moose and caribou habitat for the future.”

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