

Public-data File 85-5

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN ALASKAN MINING (AS SEEN BY THE
ALASKAN MINING COMMUNITY)

Compiled By

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Alaska Division of
Geological and Geophysical Surveys

March 1985

THIS REPORT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED FOR
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TEXT) OR FOR CONFORMITY TO THE
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PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN ALASKAN MINING (as seen by the Alaskan mining community)

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What are the major problems encountered by miners and the mineral industry in Alaska, and what are possible solutions to these problems? To collect data for the annual reports on Alaska's mineral industry, a questionnaire that includes this inquiry is mailed to companies and individuals with mining interests in Alaska by the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys and the Office of Mineral Development. Responses to these questionnaires are an important source of information used to compile the annual report, 'Alaska's mineral industry.'

Lengthy responses to the question concerning major problems encountered by mineral firms cannot be included in the annual report. However, these problems are critical to the survival of the industry in Alaska and should be publicized. Therefore, we have compiled a complete and unaltered transcript of the answers to the 'problems and solutions' questions from the 1983 and 1984 surveys. We received 178 replies in 1984 and 186 in 1983. Approximately half the respondents included comments on problems and possible solutions. Respondents include a lone individual who prospected for a few days, two people who operated a suction dredge for a limited time, mainstream placer miners, and officials of large mining firms with extensive exploration or development programs in the state. Most respondents are placer miners, but a significant number of lode, gravel, and miscellaneous ventures are also represented.

Minimal editing has been done on these mostly handwritten responses. To preserve confidentiality, identifying words (mainly geographic names) have been deleted and replaced by ~~~~ or [].

We hope that presentation of these comments will promote an understanding of some problems that face the mineral industry in Alaska.

1984 Mining Season

1. Water - either too much or not enough; too much money and time spent in ponds for pollution control when dilution factor in area is probably sufficient to control settleable solids - ponds flooded out 4 times '84 season; by-pass construction not possible due to rock bluffs.
2. People not researching ground before they paperfile over the top of you. Land closures. Not enough people realizing their rights (the public). Stringent laws. Many people think most miners tear up the land and disregard the water pollution, when most miners I know do their best to keep the river clean and the land reclaimed. A possible solution might be a stronger mineral lobby in Washington. Making people aware of their prospecting and mining rights. Better press for the miners.
3. My greatest problem is access. Supplies are either flown in or barged up the ----- River from [town]. Both diesel and gasoline cost as much as 3.55 per gallon delivered to [place] or [place]. A road connecting to the pipe line road would greatly decrease my costs.
4. Our problem was cost of fuel and food out of [town]. Also the rain this year was so much we were flooded out 3 times. All of this is unavoidable. Hope this information helps.
5. 1. State land status plats and historical indices are badly out of date and contain a great many errors. 2. Personnel at Division of Mines interested more in empire building and policy than in day to day mining activity with exception of [person]. No one there knows anything about mining or exploration.
6. [unreliable and/or incompetent lessees]
7. Difficult to meet discharge requirements. These need to be more realistic.
8. I can't speak for other miners, but our major problems are weather and price of our commodity. And I have not figured out anything I can do about either.
9. At both [place] and our ----- lode properties we have to fly every thing in by air. The cost of flying is expensive and the cost of keeping the fields in good order also adds to the expense. We are always experimenting with the washing plant to correct faults and to incorporate new ideas so as to get maximum recovery and to try to use less water.
10. E.P.A.
11. Conflicting agencies, State of Alaska and federal agencies. Who do we answer to and what regulation do we adhere to. Please!!! Do not circle mining operation with an unidentified aircraft.
12. Federal, state, and borough governments imposing socialism on individual miners through bureaucratic "plans" in the name of "management".

13. Water use - establishing a national standard we can work with under law. Access through fed areas - lawsuit. New land classification in known mining areas - lawsuit (10 years of mineral input to the federal government has resulted in all mineral areas to be included in or abolished completely in the new management plans). We have no recourse because the state government has also sold us out. Gas and oil is all the interior now has. 3 to 5 years we'll be dead (read the state CCU on the Steese Wt. Mountains withdrawal).
14. The small scale placer miner has been completely overwhelmed in the last few years by the proliferation of regulatory agencies that they have to deal with, many of which require adherence to unrealistic and arbitrary standards and specifications that make it both technically and economically impossible to survive. Unless the state of Alaska recognizes the historically vital role small scale mining plays in the state and local economy, and takes positive steps to insure the continued viability of this industry, only then can this industry hope to recover from the worsening situation that will probably lead to the demise of small scale placer mining by the end of the decade. The state and federal government seem to be stubbornly intent on legislating this country out of its economic existence. Is it any wonder then that the small business man looks forward to a gloomy future?
15. Price of gold.
16. Too many to enumerate - but E.P.A. is at the top of the list.
17. Dirty water from the cat miner from the ---- Creek.
18. E.P.A. water problem
19. #1 clean water standards.
20. Placer mining: 1. enforcement of water discharge quality standards; 2. slipping gold price. Solution: 1. careful engineering; assume the costs as part of mining and re-evaluated economics of the deposit based on the new figure; 2. go into construction in Fairbanks or Anchorage. Lode development: 1 high cost of operation on Alaska intimidates investors.
21. Problems - Attracting major mining companies. Solution - Better state and federal climate.
22. [company] is doing no exploration in Alaska. Access to prospective areas is the main problem. Access (lack of) makes exploration more costly and development impossible. The State of Alaska should work towards transportation development in mining regions, i.e. a railroad into the Ambler District among others.
23. Need prospecting equipment, i.e. churn drills and small dozers to move drills around and better placer mining recovery equipment.
24. Increased pressure for better water standards is the greatest problem. The state should industrialize certain mineable creeks so the resource can be extracted - this would prove beneficial to the local and state

economies. Once the minerals have been extracted - no matter the length of time, the streams could then be reclassified according to their best use, i.e. recreation. Mining helps the state.

25. 1. Lack of access roads. 2. Lack of infrastructure. 3. Very little of non-existent research funded by the State and related to minerals development conducted by the University/private firms. Basic technological problems common to small operation have to be resolved through state supported investigations.
26. I. Cost effective methods of meeting state and federal environmental regulations. II. Effective equipment to maximize production and especially recovery. III. High cost of financing operational costs. IV. Lack of access roads and high cost of transportation. I believe it is up to the State of Alaska to vigorously aid in the development of the mining and mineral industry.
27. The Alaska mining industry is having a very hard time meeting the specified requirements for clean water. Part of this problem is the stiff requirements combined with the glacier silt found in most of the soils in Alaska. In the past almost all of Alaska's streams have been classified as drinking quality. If those people wish to drink water out of Alaska's rivers, they can help themselves. The major rivers and glacier fed streams should all be reclassified. This would be a big assistance to many of the miners on those streams. They are required to produce clear drinking water after pumping and using the waters from the silt laden rivers only to feed it back into the muddy waters. Clear streams not fed by glaciers are another matter. Still, due to glacier "flour" mixed with the minerals in the ground, (carried in by wind, left by ancient glaciers, etc), turbidity and settleable solids requirements are very difficult to obtain and should be relaxed a little.

Another problem is beginning to raise its head. In the past the Alaska miner has been able to obtain most of the permits required for mining by completing the "Tri-Agency" application. Suddenly EPA can not accept this and an application for the EPA required permits must be filed separately. I hope this not a growing trend. Miners will become tied up with obtaining permits and have little time left for mining. I praised the "Tri-Agency" application and honestly believed a government agency had done something logical for once.

The third problem may be a problem only I am having. I filed a "Tri-Agency" application in February, 1983. I still have not received all the applicable permits required and with the exception of the Department of Fish and Game the permits I have received arrived in July and August. Other information I am supposed to receive, (i.e. ADL numbers, assessment work acceptance notice, etc.), is seldom received unless I specifically request it. Obviously the State of Alaska Department of Mines and Minerals is heavily overburdened with paperwork. I believe an effort should be made to get more people on the payroll, even if temporary, to get any backlog caught up.

28. 1. Lack of cooperative attitude with the [district] US Forest Service.
2. New draft regulations that hinder a struggling mineral industry; a.

potential leasing regs; b. increased user fees for mandatory permits; c. unclassified water use, i.e. impossible Alaska water quality standards and EPA NPDES regs. 3. Lack of access, cooperation with potential ground owners. Solutions: 1. Administer all mining regs, permits, etc. through the (a) Bureau of Mines (for federal claims), (b) Division of Mines, State of Alaska (for all state claims) - not the enforcement agencies! 2. Number one: Classify water use for existing placer mining industry to survive! A MUST! State of Alaska should regulate water quality standards with existing industry use-attainable goals!

29. Money for test drilling.
30. Short season (no solution), lack of funds (no solution), lack of gold (no solution). Too many permits to get.
31. If EPA standards stay as is, I believe that we can meet them. Sediment in ponds will be a problem.
32. Same as before - impossible water standards by feds, although good cooperation with them.
33. 1. Lack of infrastructure will remain a deterrent to more extensive mineral activity until additional roads are built. 2. Lack of detailed mapping for much of the state; more mapping required. 3. Environmental constraints; regulatory modification which recognized some degradation may be necessary to allow the state to develop an economic base.
34. Financing - The financing of exploration ventures is a vexing problem; a state loan program to assist exploration/development projects would be highly beneficial. Permitting - a much cussed and discussed subject; I have no solutions other than to relax permitting requirements. Land withdrawals - a good portion of the state has been withdrawn from mining activity for one reason or another. Potential mineral areas should not be withdrawn.
35. Most miners are willing to comply with most of the State and fed EPA requirements provided they make sense and work. The problem is that as of now they are impossible to comply with and any attempt to do so is a waste of time, effort, and money, and will put most of the small operators out of business.
36. The major threat to the placer mining industry in the Circle Mining District is the proposed plans for the White Mountain National Recreation Area (WMNRA) and the Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA). Implementation of these plans as now proposed would essentially shut down placer mining in the area. The solution is to change these plans so that mining, in a responsible manner, can continue as a viable Alaskan industry.
37. The most serious problem facing the mining industry in Alaska is over-regulation by state and federal government, particularly in regard to water quality.

38. Discharge restrictions. It might help to reclassify mining streams to other than drinking water.
39. BLM; EPA; DEC; Fish and Game; Trustees of Alaska; Sierra Club; Friends of the Earth. Get turbidity units at an obtainable level; remove some of administrative law; you can't compete with [?] policies; help establish road corridors for mining purposes; reduce the bureaucracy of all parties involved.
40. Water quality: EPA, DEC.
41. Our problem is an overland access route to our claims and the proper governmental body to contact for permission.
42. Too much red tape like this report [the questionnaire].
43. In order of importance: 1. Weather - floods and freezes up. 2. Regulatory permits. 3. Access. Priority must be placed on the Alaska Constitution [which] provided for emphasis on mineral development. At this point state agencies are not supportive.
44. We have not had any problems yet since we haven't done any actual mining. We do anticipate some problems with the environmentalists. However, we are prepared to comply as much as possible with the discharge rules.
45. The major problem we are facing is in the uncoordinated permitting procedures followed by state and federal agencies. The environmental groups can delay or prolong the process thru numerous procedural actions. The permitting process is getting too complicated and expensive for medium and small projects.
46. EPA restrictions. Allow miners to return to status of some 40 years ago to mine and make an honest living. More difficult now due to inflated prices and price of gold too low to make a profit plus necessary working capital for the next year's start of operation. I've seen my areas mined over 40 years ago; the trees are still (again) growing beautifully and the fish are still plentiful in the creek. EPA should work with the miners, not just come in on a "rumor" (one case I've known of) and dictate and exercise a law made by someone in "D.C." - the law is ridiculous in many areas and does not, should not apply to miners in Alaska. We all hope for a friendly, working together atmosphere will revail. Your assistance will be appreciated by all miners.
47. Even though production figures are supposed to be held confidential by [government agencies], we both know that all figures are available to most anyone under the Freedom of Information Act, not to mention verbal slips, etc. I therefore decline to answer any question about same. Even a question or answer that is innocent and meaningless now, could very well come back and haunt us at a later date. The way this country is going in regards to ecology freaks, government harrassment, both state and federal and so forth, forces me to not generally (cooperate) in any way, shape, or form, including people or agencies that purport to be of assistance to us. The thing is, what will these same agencies be doing tomorrow.

The major problem as I see it is as follows: Why can't anyone realize that agencies such as Fish and Game, EPA, Forest Service, National Park Service, BLM, to mention a few, could make life a lot easier for both peons such as myself, and the agency involved if they could or would come on our property, and try to solve a problem by working with us instead of against us, or using methods developed by Hitler in the '30's and '40's. Come on - we both know what our biggest problems are in this time of empire building by our government. Overregulation.

48. Fuel, water, equipment breakdown but Mr. ----- Fish and Game Representative who wants us to spray our discharge water on the steep north slope of ----- Creek drainage, which would cause a terrible erosion in short order. He shut our operation down on his first visit in '83 for apparent violation with out water sample. After several months and \$20,000 in attorney fees the state dropped charges. We have worked and mined here for 25 years. Put some people on the pay roll with brains.
49. Access and land closed to mineral entry. Solutions: Money set aside or made available for the development of transportation corridors. Legislation to open more land to mineral entry.
50. Come and listen to my paper at AMA annual meeting in Anchorage.
51. Higher costs. Infrastructure. Transportation.
52. The State of Alaska's financial aid and loan programs do not include gravel mining or processing.
53. My single greatest problem is vandalism and associated miscellaneous due to proximity to public access.
54. We had several visits by Fish and Game and DNR. One visit from the Department of Mines. Fish and Game did a lot of harrassment of miners. Most of the time it was just nit picking or general harrassment. This takes up a lot of our time. #1 we don't need so many people checking on us. #2 if people are sent out into the field they should first learn what mining is all about and what miners have to go through just to try to make a living. But most of all don't come out to us and start quoting regulation to us instead of asking what is happening. If one of our dams breaks because of a flash flood we don't need people telling us that we are going to get a ticket because we are mudding up a creek. At least these people could do is ask us, well how long do you think it will take to repair the damage and get an answer. But they just cite a guy and let him sweat it out as to what action is going to be taken by F&G or DNR and not close his operation down until the results are back from F&G or DNR.
55. The major problem is political. The environmental organizations have placed enough pressure on both the state and federal governments that regulatory agencies appear to base their decisions on how much work or public pressure a mining venture will place on them rather than if a venture is financially or environmentally sound. Of course their answers to the miner are cloaked in technical replies, but the burdens are on the miner. Multiple use requirements of federal law and pronouncements by state and federal officials appear to be so much rhetoric. Except for a

few state agencies I as a citizen despair of receiving a qualified, objective, fair appraisal of any operation plan by any miner.

It is my observed opinion that some agencies will go to any length to pursue agency policy, including falsifying records, individual harrasment in the courts, using public funds to publish ways of eliminating an individual operator, and providing this information to special interest groups. The problems are political, not environmental or economical.

56. Permits are terribly complicated procedures. 1984 could have been in production but state failed to get permits out till late July. Water quality is hard for small placer operators to meet but can be. Expenditures for W.Q. will be approx. \$18,500, [some fraction] of budget.
57. As we have not been involved in this business very long our problems have been minimal. We have surveyed and properly staked our claims and have applied for all necessary permits and state license. That of which we received.

When we first begin prospecting the area we encountered some problems with the resources offices in obtaining all the proper information that was needed and in some cases was completely misinformed. I think this problem could be solved with better understanding and cooperation within the Department of Natural Resources and the Developers. I think it would save time and money for both parties.

58. Lack of transportation systems.
59. Too many sand and gravel operators in the valley now and specially large companies cutting out smaller ones.
60. It seems to me there is an overabundance of paperwork for such a simple procedure as placer mining. If there are no changes to the operation why can't applications and assessments be good for more than 1 year and place of filing be consolidated.
61. 1. Lack of communication between miners and government agencies. 2. Non-agreement on rules and regulations between miners and government agencies. 3. No distinction between large mining operations and small mining operations. Solutions: All parties involved must be able to communicate - both sides should start listening to each other. If both parties involved (miners and government agencies) would open communications lines, quite a few of the major problems could be solved. It's a give and take situation. NOT ALL GIVE OR ALL TAKE!
62. Transportation to remote areas.
63. Too much red tape.
64. No. 1 Delay and Discourage by US Forest Service and by outside conservation groups, the leaders of which are creating nests for themselves. Members have infiltrated federal bureaus, such as the BLM and the Forest Service. 2. Lack of support for the small miner from Alaska politicians and lack of funds to litigate in our own behalf. 3. The gradual demise

of the custom smelters and high freight rates to those still operating. 4. The staking of hundreds of mining claims by the oil companies and thus locking up vast areas of mineral lands. Native holdings and denial of access to otherwise open lands. 5. The emulation of the state in adopting federal bureaucratic practices in their resource development. 6. Difficulty of securing forest products from the US Forest Service; requiring bidding on large sales, thereby denying the small miner access to timber for shoring mine workings. I note that sales are scheduled for winter months, making cruising difficult. Bug infested timber has been burned to ostensibly make food habitat for moose. 7. Red tape has delayed me since September of 1983. With a declining mineral industry, lack of markets, public indifference, foreign competition (copper 60c, Asarco closing, Tacoma and Mexico supplying flux to El Paso plant = the Alaskan sil-[] ore has no market).

In closing, we are concerned about our deficit but do not remember that the mining industry helped us out of the great depression and that the small miner played a large part in that recovery. Alaska's mineral veins are narrow, especially here in the North and can be mined profitably only by the small operator. He must be given freedom to pursue his quest and be freed from arbitrary and capricious restrictions.

65. Too much land in wilderness status.
66. Water troubles, could do more and make more money. Law too hard to work with. More knowledgeable people on water works and more sensible working deals.
67. High costs of production; supply/demand will catch up eventually (we hope). Too many permits and regulations.
68. 1. Lode deposits - high capital investment. 2. Federal restrictions. 1. State loan and grant support. 2. Not until there is a national emergency will federal restrictions be lifted. We're a warehouse for the time being.
69. Lack of access and cheap transportation (i.e. ARR) into mineralized areas to make most mining economically feasible - need congressional review and changes in federal land administering agencies' policies to provide increased access routes and means across federal lands. If the mineral industry is to survive in Alaska.

Also need congressional review and changes in overly stringent and/or ridiculous agency requirements of miners attempting to obtain necessary permits in time to get any work done during our short mining seasons.
70. State assistance on ----- Road [] help on project financing.
71. 1. Low metal prices. 2. Lack of infrastructure. 3. Unstable state tax policy. 4. Uncertain and restrictive land classifications and management policies on state and federal level.

72. Higher costs to conduct exploration relative to lower 48. The need to discover larger and higher grade deposits to offset higher costs of production compared to lower 48.
73. My problem has been confusion between the state and federal governments as to who has jurisdiction of the land I've staked.
74. No place in Juneau or SE Alaska to have assay work done. No local mining supply outlets in Juneau area. Possibly reopen Bureau of Mines facilities for assay work in Douglas.
75. Extremely high cost of exploration and development and costly and time consuming permitting and environmental requirements. Also, the difficulty of making reasonable resource tradeoffs and balances. The solution is to make reasonable and environmental tradeoffs. We cannot develop our other resources if the "not one fish lost" mentality prevails.
76. Transportation: Better handling of permit papers, to construct shoreline dock and landing facilities, and the issuing of more permits to construct such sites, by Corps of Engineers.
77. Transportation into remote claims such as mine due to high costs and not usually friendly employees for DNR and AF&G.
78. Major obstacles are lack of physical surface access and excessive regulation. A state-wide surface transportation system needs to be established and the trunk line built while there is capital for the purpose.

Regulation has become a near fatal obstacle. Each agency competes to add its layer of conditions for operation and each layer of government builds empires of regulatory personnel. The resulting paperwork can cancel the advantages of excellent geological conditions for mineral development in the state.

79.
 1. To have an accurate, up to date land status/claim status data base - have one now in Fairbanks at DGGs office - needs to be computerized soon.
 2. To get native corporation to settle land issues, select their lands and open up land that they overselected originally to mineral entry.
 3. To get a mine into production in Alaska - or several mines - to bely the myth of excessive costs, environmental snafus, and bureaucratic shuffle - Red Dog and Greens Creek will help - so will the Grant - its tough to sell corporate managers on exploration and mine development in Alaska when there are no producing mines.
80. Up date state and federal staking regulations! Up-to-date claim maps should be available at the recording office. 2. Standard metal tags (for corner posts and location posts). 3. Elimination of discovery posts for federal claims - claims are staked on stream geochem anomalies, alteration zones, and stratigraphy!
81. Unrealistically severe regulatory - particularly in water quality area; fragmental land due to checkerboarded and massive withdrawals which inhibit orderly and definitive regional minerals inventorying of strategic and base metals.

82. Voluminous paper work and the high cost of permitting necessary to place a small mine in production.
83. The cost and time involved in environmental permitting is our major concern.
84. Lack of capital, poor metal prices, poor political environment, lack of infrastructure, public perception of mining and environment. Reduce permitting time to reduce time between development and mining. The state should be an advocate not a hindrance.
85. The lack of access (transportation infrastructure) is still the number one problem facing the mining industry in Alaska today. The problem could be, in part, solved by State support and funding for the needed infrastructure. Such infrastructure development will not only be essential for developing a viable mining industry in the State but will also result in employment opportunities for rural Alaskans, the diversification of the State's economic base, and other development opportunities. Land withdrawals and excessive regulations are other problems encountered by the mineral industry in Alaska today. These problems, in part, result from the lack of an established State "minerals policy"; the State must commit to a sound minerals policy if they want to encourage and promote mineral development in the State.

These problems are exacerbated by the inherent high cost of doing business in Alaska. Where projects are going ahead, exceptional circumstances of grade, mineability, or access are present. For Alaskan deposits in general to be economically competitive with outside producers, both better grades and active State participation in infrastructure development will be required.

86. Strict regulations on water quality control, as over 1,100 men-days were used to construct settling ponds. This would close 90% of the placer miners in Alaska.
87. BLM; EPA; DEC; Fish & Game; Sierra Club; Friends of the Earth; Trustees of Alaska. Put turbidity units on an obtainable level. Stop trying to be socialists. Help develop access to mine prospects without all the fanatical hulabaloo. Inform your staff in the field to listen on occasion, not dictate.
88. EPA and National Park Service are the main obstacles with the various different state agencies more apt to be trying to help. The federal agencies seem to have little other purpose than to harass and stop all practical methods.

1983 Mining Season

89. "Paper work". Outlaw paper.
90. The major problem facing mining in Alaska is the state water quality requirements for turbidity. It is technologically and economically infeasible for this turbidity standard to be met by any placer miner. New regulations must be formulated for the placer mining industry to survive.

91. Major developments are critically hampered by the cost, in time and money, imposed by environmental protection paper and legal work. Smaller operations, such as mine, are less adversely affected primarily because they receive less attention in spite of the impossibility of compliance with certain mandated standards. This problem could be ameliorated by a more far sighted view of environmental impact and a legal system (and laws) that would give more credence and respect to the efforts and intelligence of industry.

Infrastructure is lacking. Development may come but will be hindered and made more expensive by problem stated above.

Short summer, cold climate, fragile environment and difficult terrain can only be changed by God and He moves slower than Washington or Juneau.

92. Transportation - lack of cheap ground transportation. If a railroad or road system existed in the Ambler district the prospects would be developed and mining would be carried out. Jobs would be available for the local village people.
93. Our problems have been mainly the high cost of getting things in to [town] and the building of the 5600 foot runway which is now completed. This summer the old bridge over ----- Creek will be replaced with a new one; it will cost us approx. \$20,000 but we must have it.
94. Lack of roads!!!
95. Lack of roads!!!
96. The main problem here in [town] and on ----- Creek is if we have a dry midsummer. ----- Creek gets very hard hit since ----- Creek goes dry quite a bit earlier than ----- Creek. We got in 3 10-yard dump trucks and 3-cu-yd Caterpillar front end loader this summer; this will increase our production also for next season.
97. Lack of water. When no rain, no work.
98. 1. Government regs. 2. Permit procedures. 3. Cost of development and exploration.

Solutions: 1. government regs - many regs are repeats of other government regs and/or are too stringent; the industry needs wholesale house cleaning of government regs and care should be taken to eliminate duplicity. 2. permit procedures - many of our permits have stipulations that we have to meet other branch specs and regs; we are trying hard to comply such as with F&G, DEC, DNR; we don't need conditions of 'if EPA regs are not met permit is null and void'! 3. development and exploration costs - to my own experience BLM prevented me from building an access road for the first 3 years; when I finally went ahead, it took 2 seasons to complete; less stringent regs would again help this problem. Also the cost of borrowing money is very high; the state could help by extending the loan life on mining loans to 15-20 years in some cases; also when a miner has to begin payback in 2 years it will in some cases put him in the

position of not doing as careful and complete exploration and development as he may otherwise do if he had more time to begin payback.

99. Problems: We don't have any problems. Only ambitions.
100. The multi-layers of government agencies and lack of a firm state commitment to encourage the mining industry.
101. The main problem is the threat from the federal government, the EPA. Our experiences with the DEC have been fairly pleasant, with a mutual spirit of cooperation. The hardnosed attitude of the EPA, however, is going to be difficult to put up with and may cause problems. We need to figure out a way for them to accept a compromise on the water quality standards, so our settling ponds could be considered legal.
102. Major problem I see is complying with the EPA requirements for settleable solids and turbidity not to mention the paperwork involved. We finally received our permit on September 22, 1983. It expires on December 31, 1983 for an effective period of some 40 days, yet one of the requirements to renew the permit is that we submit a renewal application at least 180 days before the current permit expires. Tough to do when the current permit is only good for 40 days. TYPICAL.
103. Meeting EPA standards. Mining has been part of Alaska from the beginning so why try to take it away. Nobody wants to destroy the land or water but we must be able to mine.
104. Although I have not personally been involved this past year, I think the turbidity standards are expensive and difficult to meet. Sorry I couldn't provide much info to you.
105. Paperwork, EPA especially. Bureaucratic tape, native claims, Antiquities Act.
106. We believe that a great deal of effort, time, and money should be spent to promote and enhance the mineral industry in Alaska. We have some realization of the difficulty in accomplishing the above, especially with the increasing environmental concern, inability and inconsistency shown by most governmental agencies but feel that it would be very beneficial to the economy of our state as well as the U.S. as a whole. We must not make it so difficult as to exclude the individual (small operator) the opportunity and privilege of developing Alaska's resources. [two company names], etc., etc. may be able to handle all these new and proposed new regulations, forms, etc., etc., etc., We, the small miners may very well not be able to.
107. We never experienced many problems due to the fact that we were so far from roads, people, etc. I believe and have heard from area miners that are close to used roads and towns that state and federal agencies seem to be the biggest problems. It's too bad and rather aggravating that we pay these individuals to use our money to come out and harrass the hell out of us. It will take a little more cooperation out of both parties to use the land to everyone's benefit. I believe this is one good step to solve the problem. Thanks.

108. No comment.
109. Water standards too strict. I will have to shut down operation if present standards are enforced.
110. We need money. I went to the State to get money 3 times, no luck, so finally we went broke. Kick out these people in [?] office and put some people in that are interested in working for the people. They only put out less than 15-20 loans in 1983. If that's all, close the office.
111. Inaccessible roads: access roads. EPA regulations: change regulations or get rid of EPA. Refinery cheats: closer inspection or scrutinizing of refineries, assaying by some government body.
112. Permafrost; too much water (last three years); too many regulations and restrictions.
113. 1. Non-existent mineral processing infrastructure (transportation, ore processing, etc.). 2. Generally poor exploration-economics climate (low prices, conservative attitudes, high interest rates, etc.). 3. Disreputable image of Alaska miners and mining. Solutions: Gradual, well-planned, responsible development; time; producing mines as examples (hardrock).
114. 1. Miners on upper claims not considerate of miners in lower claims, i.e., failure to build and maintain settling ponds. Better cooperation from all miners in area. 2. In many instances maximum harvest or efficient mining techniques not utilized. 3. State set basic standards as in some other mineral industrials. 4. State require proof of competency and financial ability before permits are issued.
115. #1 Problem: harrassment by people who have no vested interest in the area except to look at it. If all the rules and regs imposed on placer miners were strictly enforced there would be no mining industry in Alaska. Period. At least there would be no small operators. For all of a sudden a small vociferous group to suddenly decide that ----- Creek and similar waterway is the place that they must canoe at the expense of a whole segment of Alaska's industry is preposterous. It is essentially the same group of people that increased the cost of the pipeline nearly 10 fold. They are not interested in Saving Alaska's Natural Resources, per se. They are interested in forcing costs up in all facets of Alaska's industry and if possible forcing them out of business. The solution, back the miners, use the media (as the environmentalists did) to point out the importance of this segment of Alaska's industry. I know you privately agree with the miners, I've talked to lots of you. Make the public aware that, for instance, miners' pollution will clear up in 12 hours after mining is stopped, whereas natural erosion (i.e. 100,000 tons per 24 hours down the Tanana) goes on all the time.
116. 1. Confusing and overlapping regulations. 2. Transportation by sea, land, and air. 3. Weather, grizzlies, and mosquitoes. 4. Difficulty in resupply and outfitting locally. Solutions: 1. Miners should have more say regarding drafting of arbitrary and/or politically motivated regulations. 2. Public transportation would be a tremendous help (i.e., new

- sites for roads, not just repair the old ones). 3. Advertise the available services and repair facilities.
117. 1. High cost of production; 2. working capital; 3. uncalled for rules and regulations; 4. short working season.
118. Environmental pressures have to top the list, followed closely by an unbelievable wariness of business and financing concerns to extend credit to mining concerns.
119. Accessible only by helicopter: eventual road.
120. Our major problem at present is the lack of people in DMEM who are experienced in mining, especially Alaskan mining. It seems to be a prerequisite for working in that Department that you have had no experience in the state's mining industry.
121. I made application for all necessary permits in February, 1983 in expectation of possibly mining this location if enough drilling warranted it. I have no objection to the way the State handled the various permits, as they were received in a reasonable length of time. But, it wasn't until August 23 that I received my NPDES permit from the U.S. EPA. What made matters worse was the fact that said permit would not become effective for 30 days after the issuance date (September 22, 1983). Any miner in interior Alaska knows that you cannot depend on placer mining after September 15 of any year. What made matters worse yet was the fact that this same permit expires on December 31, 1983. I feel that with the speed the U.S. EPA operates, I am already too late to apply for the 1984 season [questionnaire received by DGGs October 5, 1983]. This is only one of many problems Alaska miners have to face but it is a significant one when we have to depend on some bureaucrat, 2500 miles away, to tell us when we can mine.
122. Regulatory government and complicated, uncertain, often overlapping, land ownership by borough, state university, and federal bureaucracies. Solution: replace the present socialist incompetent government and its bureaucrats with people that know something about the land and resource development (mainly ones who have mined, logged, farmed, etc.).
123. Availability to mine, a road to (town) would help the mining industry in the ----- district very much. The road is in, to within about 9 or 10 miles of being completed.
- I don't understand the EPA's requirements but I guess they are all right, we keep passing. If they get as rigid as they talk about it would be difficult to keep mining. We are not big operators but do have a 12 man work force.
124. Unrealistic turbidity and settleable solids standards. Being bothered by state and federal employees during meal time and when trying to sleep. Solution! Common sense.

125. EPA major problem, mostly with amount of dirt in water discharge from mining. Solution: Allow a higher content of solids in water discharge. A different classification for all mining streams.
126. Permafrost. Financing. Delays in recording mining claim information - records are more than 2 yrs behind! Paper staking and top filing.
127. I was unable to continue research on the [property name] project, due to a slight misunderstanding of state and federal laws and regulations as I was politely evicted, my gear was confiscated, cabin, cache destroyed (a decent survival cabin), and the agency (BLM) who tore down said unauthorized structures left (excuse me) one hell of a big mess consisting of insulation and visqueen, etc. scattered through camp area. Before eviction it took me 5 days to get camp presentable for eviction, now the site looks worse than when in operation and all that was done in the name of wild and scenic conservation. I say BULL S!!!

A local pilot whom my company employs has been to the campsite with me recently and we have photographs of the damage and refuse left of my camp. Also we were harassed by 2 [town] State Troopers who had no business up there with BLM. The troopers acted like cub scouts. They, by their actions and use of speech, were actually inciting trouble in an already touchy situation which would have been (was) settled peacefully.

Now after the eviction I have worked on my mother's broken down house and have had to bum work with former associates and am now on a hand digging mine (operation) hoping we hit pay of some kind and am still broke. I am not bitter but I learned a lot about the system that protects our fragile frozen, rocky, ice cold environment. It must be simple to sit in a warm air-conditioned office in the east and write up rules for our agencies to enforce upon a territory of hard working mostly honest, God loving Men and Women.

128. Access to claims.
129. PROBLEM: The selecting and closing to mineral entry large sections of land by the state, federal, and borough governments. I recorded 2 mining claims in 1978 and within 3 months these were declared National Monuments. The status of these two claims is still uncertain. I recorded 20 mining claims on a stream recommended by one of the pioneers. Only a very small portion of that stream is open, the remainder is closed to mineral entry. Historical records (district Clerk's Office) shows a mining history on ----- Creek. My claims were filed in 1980. Now the borough is attempting to close this area to mining. There is a large [rock formation name] deposit here and many other indications of a highly mineralized area. In 1982 and 1983 I filed on ground on ----- Creek. Now this area is being set aside for consideration of handing it to the U of A.

SOLUTION: There is an attempt being made to catalogue all the known minerals and mineral deposits and areas in the Fairbanks district. Assist these people in getting these areas identified and mapped. Then get these areas open to mining and let the governments select other grounds for their various projects.

130. Lack of significant communication between regulatory agencies and mining interests, particularly smaller operations (i.e. not Quartz Hill size). What is really required is how to obtain minimal impact at least amount of cost. Get regulatory staff off their behinds and become a service organization. If there are problems, small types don't have the cash or expertise to solve them, get the various agencies out there to solve them, generate data, assimilate it, put it in writing, and get it out to the operators and other mining interests.
131. Permitting is too expensive. Fish and Game doesn't want any mining in Alaska and they will put up any roadblocks to stop it.
132. Impossibility of EPA regulations.
133. Water Problems - We need people in the state agency with some fairness and the good sense of the working people. Reasonable fuel prices. Less paper work. State should fire or put in other places some people and hire a few dozen old miners to oversee the placer mining industry, people with at least 10 years experience mining. Stop people from paper filing - discovery should be proven.
134. The major problem is proper financing and proper equipment. The state legislature passed a State Loan program with 10% interest but that is not the solution to expand mining in Alaska where the short season of 120 days as an average is the preparation and production period. Paying 10% interest on a twelve month basis is not a low interest rate when it takes a million dollars to equip even a small mine plant. The entire loan program should be reviewed for the winter months as far as the placer miner is concerned.

It is true the environmental problems, high costs in remote areas and uncertainties in the price of gold each day are a major concern but the most important is how to survive when a poor season comes along. The history of Alaska's "Bean Peddlers" should be told some day and the part they played in financing the placer miner, the drift miner and lode miner. Each miner was an individual and his credit was based upon his ability, his word and the "Bean Peddlers'" knowledge of his property and pay. If the State of Alaska really wants to help the small miner and develop the mineral industry through a Loan program, it should be separated from all the other thousands of loans they are involved in and it should be staffed with people that know the mining industry. The Banking institutions and the State should work closer together in a program of long term and low interest with flexibility in repaying. And developing reserves by drilling and prospecting should be entirely separate and that today is where the small miner is failing because he cannot spend his winters prospecting and drilling like he used to.
135. I have not had any problems other than trying to raise money, as the 5-year requirement on state loan stops us.
136. The industry is seriously overburdened with unnecessary paperwork by the federal bureaucracy - a specific example being the EPA. Where the placer miner is doing on a local, small scale what the creek itself at flood times does on a large scale, what is all the fuss about? If they were

deliberately to set out to bring placer mining to a halt in Alaska, the bureaucrats couldn't be doing a better job of it.

137. Red tape. US Forest Service. State land withdrawals. Sierra Club. Conservationists and preservationists. State mineral leasing program and policy. BLM is becoming less of a problem. It seems they are more amenable to helping miners.
138. State to play an active, positive role in producing transportation to proven areas of economic mineralization (i.e. Ambler Dist., Quartz Hill, Red Dog). Simplify and aid industry in acquiring permits.
139. Long term financing for equipment, etc.
140. Our main problem is transportation. The nearest road is about 90 air miles away. Supplies are via air! Moving larger equipment takes a year lead time.
141. State and federal paperwork - Agh!
142. I have had little problems in the field. I think that the people that are BLM workers in the field do a good job for the area they cover. Being a recreational prospector I have not had the contact with all the field agencies. I do feel the mining needs more help from the government. What if one tenth of our nation's military budget could be diverted to geological reports?
143. Paper work. EPA standards - too severe in most cases. Due to the large expense of transportation to and from remote locations I feel a larger percent should be acceptable toward annual assessment work. Of \$21,023.00 spent in 1982-1981, over \$8,000.00 went for air fare which was the only possible way to support our operation. None of which we claimed toward our assessment.
144. The environmental regulations regarding water standards as pertaining to small placer operations are ridiculous. The areas worked by a small dredge don't lend themselves to settling ponds, etc. Also in our area use of heavy equipment within the stream is prohibited. That's okay but how else do you build decent settling ponds? It might help if regulations took into consideration some of the smaller operations.
145. The new EPA settleable solids requirement are totally unrealistic, they were told this and they know from their own experience they can't be met. It's time for our US Rep. and Sen. to become more involved in the problems of the mining industry.

The State loan program for miners was a good idea, but the paperwork was designed for a large corporation and not the small to medium size miner. When my CPA looked at the paperwork involved he said that only a qualified accountant could possibly fill them out as required. Therefore the paperwork should be simplified as much as possible. This is a state of small and medium size miners; not large corporations.

146. We have had no major problems.

147. Securing necessary permits from various agencies with reasonable regulations. Have one permitting agency - nobody knows for sure what permits are required. Changes depending on who you contact. Have reasonable regulation for conditions in Alaska. Get people with some experience in state regulatory agencies. Get an advocate for mining in state bureaucracy.

148. Transportation: an obvious problem. Continued upgrading of existing roads and other facilities is necessary and the establishment of new access would be very beneficial.

Miners loan program: 5 yr. Alaska experience requirement for the state loan is discriminatory (and possibly illegal) and hinders small miner's programs.

Stream classification: hinders placer mining permitting. A more objective approach to stream classification should be implemented.

149. Be a lot better if we didn't have to have so many permits. Not so bad now but when we really get to work. We're still just setting up.

150. Take more time and space than I have here. Come spend a day or two with us sometimes.

151. High cost of developing a hard rock deposit. Lack of reasonable financial assistance. Restrictions by government authorities.

152. Alaska Fish and Game. Water usage on ----- River.

153. Exploration capital for proving reserves on hardrock prospects. Getting reasonable response from the Fish and Game Department in reports on the identification of salmon spawning grounds, rearing grounds, and passage routes. Currently ADFG thinks that ----- River is a continuous spawning and rearing grounds. This picture is incorrect and I find the ADFG should reassess these locations, protect these critical areas and allow the claims owners who desire to mine on the passage route to get the gold out of their creek bottom claims.

154. Inaccessibility of local parts and equipment.

155. Major problems involve bureaucratic red tape more than anything. I do believe that mining should be conducted more on a confidential basis with operator making guarantees or bonding if necessary of reasonable land restoration at completion of his operation and at economic levels where he can profit allowing reasonable consideration towards ecology, other resources, and general public.

156. Too much paperwork.

157. EPA and permits. EPA permits were applied for early in the season, and were granted in June; however, they were issued for streams 300 miles from location. I would like to see on location for all mining permits (F&G, EPA, MLUP, etc.) centrally locate these to eliminate confusion.

158. I have no problems. We do it just for fun!
159. Lack of existing infrastructure.
160. Finding people who will work, give a day work for a day pay. Too many gives non-days. Who needs to work???? Had three crew this year, even had an operator. Had to make a few trips to get things straightened out with USFS and had to take time to make [?] at worktime. This should have been a good year but wasn't, low water, clear, good weather, better equipment maybe next year. If could do it all myself would be "rich" only worth \$350,000.
161. Other than all the paper work for the federal claims (which they're trying to eliminate in some ways), I think one of the major problems is knowing whose claim is where around yours. Instead of having to look on other people's marking posts I think it would be better if somebody would make big Alaska maps (that are accurate) showing where each claim is specifically and showing the difference between state and federal land masses. That blue map (that most people use now) with all the little squares, dots, and triangles is no good.
162. 1. Getting patent on federal lands. 2. Myriads of paperwork. 3. Unnecessary paperwork in conjunction with start up each spring. 4. Trespass! Solutions!? If the state gets any federal land that has existing claims then the state should allow the existing claim holders to (a) either continue patent process with the state or (b) allow the existing claim holders to purchase the land from the state and (c) don't make any more paperwork i.e. applications, permits, etc. that don't already exist.
- P.S. I like the 1 person contact (concept) at the Division of Minerals in the Frontier Building in Anchorage - VERY VERY HELPFUL!!
163. The Park Service limiting or prohibiting us from cutting timber [or] camping on park areas as previously. Another priority is use of mining roads by issuing Park permits for subsistence hunting (people that never hunted before). Wheraten people hunted a district before now several hundred hunt now under the permit system.
164. 1. Excessive government regulation. 2. Lack of investment capital available. 1. To encourage mineral development federal agencies need to do just that, not strangle or harass the few producers to closure. The State of Alaska is doing a very credible job I feel.
165. The major problem we perceive is the actions of government at all levels. The actions of government agencies seem to be more tuned to political developments rather than a rational/stable policy to wisely develop and use our natural resources. The mining industry needs a stable/long term policy at all government levels to encourage responsible people to work in the industry. Reputable, established concerns will enter the field if it is possible to project their physical/financial efforts into the future. To do business you must make a profit. To develop resources wisely, make a profit and return the land to a state where the environmental lobbies are satisfied will require a long term investment of time

and resources. For people/companies to make this commitment, they need to have a stable regulatory body in place, functioning in the interest of all the people, not just the well financed/vocal sections. Today it appears that the regulatory agencies at all levels are working at a level to insure the environmental lobbies don't criticize their particular office, and they are doing it each in his own separate manner. The Tri-Agency form was a giant step forward. Now, let's get together and coordinate regulation. I hope to see the state mining commission.

166. Single largest problem is the inflexibility of most small miners to adapt to the ever increasing role of government in everything they do. The pattern is plain to see. Anticipating this is similar to anticipating market conditions.
167. USFS limiting access to claims. I don't know how to solve the problem. This is the first year I have owned the claims and been mining.
168. Fish and Game officials.
169. Major problems are Municipality of Anchorage regulating extraction of a natural resource.
170. Am not into outside mining problems as I have no contact with others in these fields. Our [gravel] pit is just a small, local pit used primarily for driveway topping, etc.
171. We wish to sell our acreage so someone else can make a handsome and profitable living. We are senior citizens and time is of the essence.
172. High cost of labor and doing business in Alaska.
173. Land status - present uncertainty about native selections and state selections; final selections for state and native corporations should be expedited rather than postponed repeatedly.

Federal land closures - especially its effect on proposed ground transportation corridors. Development of large mining operations in Alaskan interior will require significant expansion of surface transportation infrastructure. Therefore, federal government should formulate policies for planning corridors across protested lands as soon as possible.
174. Excess paperwork re environmental studies, permitting for small operators. Costs are killing small projects - even though these have minimal impacts. Should have "fast track" permitting system for small mines, i.e. 50 employees or 200 tpd operation.
175. The known areas of concern are permits and length of time obtaining them. Also, many of the permits have the same concerns thereby creating duplication. An all Alaska team of experts would be most helpful and a reviewing team of mining oriented specialists would enhance the overall mining industry in our state.

176. 1. Environmental agencies. 2. Water quality restrictions. 3. No cooperation from state and federal agencies. 4. Radical environmental groups that don't realize importance of raw material utilization.
177. Access: need more roads; logistics: 1. need more motels/roadhouses; 2. need more refueling points.
178. Excessive government regulation; too many permits by agencies with no knowledge of the industry needs. Totally unfair EPA water quality regulations for discharge control; no land status for mining use classification! Lack of cooperation for access across patented ground; mineral surveys that received patent in the early 1900's are denying access to existing miners, i.e. [a certain company's patented holdings]. Lack of well-trained state and federal personnel with knowledge of regulations, land status determination, etc. Anti-mining attitude of the ----- Ranger District; individual ranger interpretation of Forest Service and mining regs; lack of consistency and knowledge of regulations, strong anti-development of the ----- Ranger District.
179. Duplicated permitting by state and federal agencies and their delays has caused me excessive financial losses. All permitting should be under one department with reasonable delay limitations.
180. Government survey(s) are not pragmatic nor are they up to date. A huge amount of the country is not mapped and this is retarding expansion. For instance, what is the survey doing dating volcanic ash near Circle City in the midst of an economic recession. This sort of study when the state is not mapped is foolish!
181. 1. Access--The ----- Creek area is serviced by air flights only during the summer season. All equipment and supplies must be freighted in on winter (frozen) ice roads. An all-weather access road would reduce freighting costs as well as camp service costs during the operating season. 2. Permits--Multiple agencies requiring multiple permits of the operators is time consuming, costly, and unnecessary. Permits from the State of Alaska are numerous: 1. Department of Revenue; 2. Department of Natural Resources; 3. Department of Fish and Game; 4. Division of Land and Water; 5. Department of Environmental Conservation; I realize that some combination efforts have been accomplished. The U.S. government agencies that must be appeased are: 1. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; 2. U.S. Bureau of Land Management; 3. U.S. Corps of Engineers. 3. Water Discharge Specifications--The discharge limits for solids and color should be adjusted according to individual district and deposit conditions.
182. The lack of access (transportation infrastructure) is still the number one problem facing the mining industry in Alaska today. This problem could be, in part, solved by state support and funding for the needed infrastructure. Such infrastructure development will not only be essential for developing a sound mining industry in the state but will also result in employment opportunities for rural Alaskans, the diversification of the state's economic base, and other development opportunities in the state.

Land withdrawals and excessive regulations are other problems encountered by the mineral industry in Alaska today. These problems, in part, result from the lack of an established state "minerals policy"; the state must commit to a sound minerals policy if they want to encourage mineral development in the state.

These problems are exacerbated by the inherent high cost of doing business in Alaska. Where projects are going ahead, exceptional circumstances of grade, mineability, or access are present. For Alaskan deposits in general to be economically competitive with outside producers, both better grades and active participation in infrastructure development will be required.

183. Improper philosophical approach to Alaska's developing (struggling) hardrock resource industry by a state government overloaded by short-sighted posse sniffers. That goes for the feds too. Formal recognition of a mining resource advocacy group at or on the state departmental level with attending powers of persuasion and blackmail added to present state departments.
184. Government Red Tape - the old runaround. A recognized mineral industry advocate is badly needed. Establish a single office where the mining public can go to find out needed information.
185. Weather, transportation, short season - No practical solution.
186.
 1. Lack of transportation infrastructure - road, railroad, and port facilities required plus development of Yukon and Kuskokwim river routes. State aid required to develop a statewide transportation system. Other solutions include establishing a raw material market in the Orient and additional oil discovery requiring onshore transport and storage facilities.
 2. Need for a stable investment climate - current taxation policies are reasonable, but some assurance by the state that it will not increase taxes as more mines become developed is needed, a situation experienced by the oil industry since the initial discovery at Prudhoe Bay.
 3. Land status - too much unevaluated land is still locked up preventing exploration and/or access to high potential mineral land. A softening of federal restrictions is required and less obstructionism regarding known deposits in or near federally restricted land. Continuing education of the public that mining does not equate to wholesale rape and pillage of the land is required.
 4. Government restrictions - current environmental restrictions, regulations, and permitting procedures imposed by a number of federal and state agencies add greatly to the time and cost required to bring a deposit into production. The threat of mineral leasing by the state also inhibits exploration and development. Reforms are required to simplify, stabilize, and make more consistent the process and eliminate duplication by the wealth of agencies involved. The state should be the leader in this if the mineral industry is to flourish in Alaska.

187. Elimination of all water requirements. I know after 40 years that the water from a miners sluice box does not hurt anything. But it does supply a lot of jobs for dim wit experts whose sole aim in life at government expense is to place all placer miners on the food stamp and welfare rolls. The EPA should be abolished and the help discharged. Alaska for a century got along without them.

To show your disdain for expense you put a 37¢ stamp on your envelopes when 20¢ would do.