

Paul Reichardt

To: DNR

I have waited until near the deadline for comments on the Manh Choh Waste Permit because I wanted to give the applicants and their supporters a chance to address the issues that have been raised about the proposed process to refine the ore. As far as I am concerned, there has been no significant response--let alone a substantive response to the serious concerns that have been raised about the ore transportation plan.

Each year I regularly travel a portion of the proposed route for hauling ore--from Fairbanks to Chitina, to the Klutina and Gulkana Rivers, to the Johnson River area. Since I live just north of Fairbanks, I regularly use much of the route between North Pole and Ft. Knox. Simply put, I consider the present Manh Choh transportation proposal as a disaster waiting to happen.

There is no way that I would feel safe as a driver on those roads as I encountered several huge ore trucks each hour. I also suspect the infrastructure degradation due to loads that were undoubtedly not considered in the design of roads and bridges would contribute to increased safety risks as time goes on. Then there's the issue of ore truck drivers--Manh Choh seems to have no appreciation for the fact that there is no army of qualified drivers sitting around in Fairbanks just waiting for the opportunity to drive these trucks through February snowstorms.

Not surprisingly, my assessment of the Manh Choh transportation plan is that it's a JOKE. By issuing a permit based on the present proposal, DNR would be sacrificing my safety and the safety of many others for the corporate profits of the owners of the proposed Manh Choh mine. Granting the permit on the basis of the situation as it exists today would simply be "dereliction of duty" on the part of DNR.

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