In the Matter Of:
CPAI vs SOA, DNR
Oral Argument
Oral Argument
November 21, 2024
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CPAI vs SOA, DNR Oral Argument on 11/21/2024

1	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA THIRD
2	JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT ANCHORAGE
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4	CONOCOPHILLIPS ALASKA, INC.,
5	Appellant, CERTIFIED
6	v. TRANSCRIPT
7	STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES; AND OIL SEARCH (ALASKA) LLC,
8	Appellee.
9	Case No. 3AN-22-09828 CI
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12	TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL ARGUMENT
13	BEFORE THE HONORABLE ANDREW GUIDI Superior Court Judge
14	Anchorage, Alaska
15	Thursday, November 21, 2024
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3	THE CLERK: Superior Court for the state of
4	Alaska is now in session with the Honorable Judge
5	Guidi presiding.
6	THE COURT: Please be seated.
7	THE CLERK: We're on record.
8	THE COURT: Thank you, Madam Clerk.
9	Looks like we are going to pick a jury in a
10	moment here. We're on record in Case
11	No. 3AN-22-09828 Civil. ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.
12	versus State of Alaska DNR and Oil Search Alaska, and
13	this is the time set for oral argument on a motion
14	that the parties spent much of the year preparing for
15	and briefing. And I think it's finally I I
16	don't recall for sure that parties asked for oral
17	argument, but there's no debate about it. I think we
18	need it.
19	MR. LEIK: Here we are.
20	THE COURT: And let me just try to set the
21	procedure for today. First, let me identify the
22	parties present. We have I know Madam Clerk has
23	them in the record. I see Mr. Jamieson, Conoco on
24	the ConocoPhillips' table, along with Thomas Galligan
25	and Julie Hardin.

1 MS. HARDIN: Yes, Your Honor. 2 THE COURT: On your table, who will be 3 arguing today? 4 MS. HARDIN: I will be, Your Honor. 5 THE COURT: Thank you. And over at the Oil Search Alaska, and I 6 think DNR table, I think we've -- you might be a 7 little crowded. Actually, there's just three of you 8 9 Who -- we have Jim Leik. there. 10 MR. LEIK: Yes. 11 THE COURT: Mr. Leik and Elena Romerdahl, 12 and thank you. Both with Oil Search Alaska 13 representing it, and then Mary Gramling. 14 MS. GRAMLING: Yes, Honor. 15 THE COURT: DNR, right? 16 MS. GRAMLING: Yes, Your Honor. 17 THE COURT: Which parties will be arguing --18 which attorneys will be arguing on this motion? 19 assume, Ms. Gramling, you'll be arguing for -- for 20 DNR? 21 Yes, Your Honor, and the MS. GRAMLING: 22 parties actually did submit a proposal for the 23 proposed argument. 24 THE COURT: Sure. Yeah. 25 You have -- you have submitted a proposal?

Yes, we did. 1 MS. GRAMLING: 2 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Sorry I 3 didn't see it. 4 MR. LEIK: It was -- it was --5 THE COURT: I was focused on the brief, so I'm -- I'm flexible. What do you have in mind? 6 7 MS. GRAMLING: The parties -- or the state 8 proposed, and the parties didn't object, to 30 9 minutes for ConocoPhillips and then 30 minutes 10 collectively for this side. THE COURT: Well, I have three hours this 11 This is an endurance contest. This -- this 12 morning. 13 is not a short race. This is a marathon today. We'll take a break, so we can have a bathroom break, 14 15 and we'll just see, whoever is last standing wins. 16 MS. HARDIN: I like it. 17 THE COURT: No. That's fine. Except, I 18 think there's -- you know, there's quite a bit of 19 background, and I don't want the parties or the 20 attorneys -- I'll use them interchangeably -- to rush 21 through background facts that they want to cover. Ι 22 mean, I read the briefs, and I appreciate the briefs. 23 They're detailed. But I think it's effective to have a little bit of time for workup. So I'm just going 24 25 to add to it, you know, take -- for -- for your

opening time, take 45 minutes each and -- for each 1 2 side, and then 20 minute for Conoco; does that --3 that track what you had in mind, except a little bit more time? Yours was 30, 30, and what was the last 4 5 amount? I think we proposed 30 minutes 6 MS. HARDIN: for our side. 30 minutes for the DNR/OSA side, and 7 8 obviously we'll answer the Court's questions as well. 9 THE COURT: Yeah. I think we'll -- we'll 10 have that. I'll work my questions in at some point because, I mean, I have a few. So I would say, I'm 11 12 just going to expand it to -- you know, so that 13 you're not pressured. You don't have to take the 14 time, of course. And you'll be dividing the time 15 between DNR and OSA on that side, okay? 16 MS. GRAMLING: Yes, Your Honor. 17 THE COURT: And I'll let you track that, but 18 45, 45, 15 minutes for a wrap up, and I think that'll 19 be good. And that's about as long as the audience 20 can probably stand today, and, you know, some of you may have to take a break in the middle of it. 21 22 I'll take a -- I'll take a break at the 45-minute 23 mark, after the first argument. We'll take a five-minute recess, and then we'll come back in, make 24 25 it ten because we have quite a few people here in

the -- in the courtroom. And it will just take that 1 2 long, logistically, for everybody to file in and out, 3 and that way you can organize your points, and we'll 4 take another ten-minute break after the appellees 5 conclude their argument. Because contrary to what I said, it's not 6 7 really an endurance contest. I want to give you time 8 to organize your thoughts, and I -- I don't have 9 anything else on the calendar, so we've got plenty of 10 time, at least until 2:30, and we're not going that 11 long, so don't worry about it. Okay. Without further adieu, parties ready 12 13 to begin? Is there any preliminary matter before we 14 start? 15 MS. GRAMLING: I don't believe so, Your 16 Honor. 17 THE COURT: Okay. I didn't think so. All 18 Then, Ms. Hardin, you have the floor. 19 starting at a quarter after, so we'll take our first 20 recess at 10 o'clock. 21 MS. HARDIN: Your Honor, may I approach and 22 give the Court a notebook? 23 THE COURT: Sure. 24 MS. HARDIN: I will give one --25 THE COURT: I do have the excerpt of record

here, if that's what you're referring me to, but I 1 2 don't mind a notebook. 3 MS. HARDIN: Hopefully, this is going to 4 make it a little bit easier. This notebook has the 5 key regulations and stuff. 6 Thank you. All right. THE COURT: 7 Appreciate it. The problem with the court files is they -- two holes at the top with no third -- second 8 9 person to hold the pages open for you while you're 10 flipping through them, and they're pretty bulky and 11 awkward, but here we go. You have the floor. 12 MS. HARDIN: May it please the Court, Your 13 Honor. THE COURT: Uh-huh. 14 15 MS. HARDIN: Your Honor, my name is Julie 16 Hardin, and I'm here on behalf of ConocoPhillips 17 Alaska and the other lessees that are part of the 18 Caparic River Unit on the North Slope. Despite over 19 200 pages of briefing before the Court, the question 20 of law we are asking you to consider is actually 21 narrow and straightforward. 22 It's focused on DNR's authority. Does DNR 23 have the power to grant a third party the right to 24 use privately built leasehold improvements here at 25 KRU Road System simply because those improvements are

1 built on state land. For over 50 years, the answer 2 to that question has been unequivocally no. 3 doesn't have power. Even DNR concedes in the 50-plus 4 years the MLUP regulation has been in effect, never 5 before has it been used to grant a third party the right to use private improvements. Instead, DNR has 6 always required parties to enter private agreements, 7 8 if a party wants the type of access that OSA has 9 demanded here, and there's a reason for that. 10 DNR's authority comes only from the 11 legislature, and the legislature has answered the 12 question before this Court. What the legislature has 13 said is that DNR's ability to manage and control 14 improvements on state land is limited to improvements 15 belonging to the state. 16 To be clear, and I would say this is 17 important, there is no lease provision. There is no 18 enabling statute. There is no regulation. 19 no contractual provision that authorizes DNR to 20 exercise the power it did in issuing the permit. 21 and DNR know that to be true. Through their words 22 and conduct, over many years, they have repeatedly 23 affirmed that roads built on state land, I --24 lessees, during the lease term, are owned by the 25 lessee. To uphold to permit, would be to disregard

the legislative's directive, the conduct of the 1 2 parties over many years and 50 years of precedent. 3 In issuing the permit to OSA, DNR abused its 4 power and violated the constitution. So we 5 respectfully request that the Court revoke the 6 permit. So what does DNR rely on to grant OSA the 7 8 right to use the KRU Road System without consent or 9 compensation to ConocoPhillips? Well, really three 10 In large part, DNR wants to completely 11 ignore and disregard the enabling statutes. Instead 12 DNR relies on the reservation in the KRU leases, its 13 own regulation that it promulgated 96.010, and some 14 constitutional policy statements. 15 All three of those recognize DNR's power over state land, and ConocoPhillips doesn't challenge 16 17 that power, but none of the three grant DNR authority 18 over private improvements, and that's important. 19 answer the legal question before this Court with a 20 yes, the Court must be convinced that when the state 21 references state land or said land and the leases and 22 the regulations and the statutes, and even in the 23 constitution, what the state really means and what 24 the parties really mean in the lease is the land and 25 the improvements. We'll look at the lease and the

regulations and the enabling statutes because none of 1 2 them treat state land and improvements as one in the 3 same. 4 And that's not because the state doesn't 5 know the difference between improvements and land. The KRU leases reference improvements in 6 It does. paragraph 36. The Alaska Land Act, which contains 7 8 the enabling statutes that empower DNR, it contains 9 52 references to improvements. Chapter 96, which DNR 10 promulgated to carry out its duties, it contains nine 11 references to improvements, none of which empower DNR 12 to expropriate the KRU roads for OSA's benefit. 13 If the legislature wanted DNR to have the 14 authority over privately built improvements, it knew how to make that clear. Only by rewriting the lease 15 16 and rewriting the regulation and rewriting the 17 enabling statutes and rewriting the constitution can 18 DNR justify its exercise of power. And what we all 19 know is that DNR can't do that, can't go back in time 20 and rewrite the enabling statutes to trump the 21 legislature. And, frankly, even the legislature 22 couldn't write a statute that would allow DNR to 23 control private improvements without complying with 24 the constitution. So let's start with the KRU lessees and --25

leases, excuse me, and then I'll walk through each of 1 2 the leases, the statutes and the regulations. DNR's 3 primary argument, under the KRU leases, is grounded 4 in the reservation. DNR claims that its reserved 5 right to grant access to the land necessarily extends to any improvements that are placed on the land. 6 7 DNR's telling that's because improvements are -- or 8 because the land is necessarily under the 9 improvement. 10 DNR doesn't make any attempt to actually parse the language or interpret the language in the 11 12 reservation. What it says instead is that its 13 position is the only sensible outcome. What we know 14 about contract construction is that the words matter, the language matters, and what DNR claims is sensible 15 is found nowhere in the reservation. 16 17 I want to look at that reservation, and I'll 18 tell you in tab one of your binder, Your Honor, what 19 we included is each of the provisions we're going to 20 walk through. And, first, we have the provision as 21 it's actually written, and then the next page is the 22 provision as DNR -- the lease term, as DNR would like 23 it rewritten to support its power. And if the Court 24 doesn't mind, I'd like to put up these 25 demonstratives, if that's okay.

1	THE COURT: Go ahead.
2	MS. HARDIN: So what I'm putting up is the
3	reservation and the grant with the actual language,
4	how it's written, and then in yellow highlight with
5	red how DNR would have to rewrite the lease term to
6	accomplish its desired result.
7	What we know is, DNR relies on 29E for its
8	grant of power to issue the permit, but regardless of
9	which subpart you look at, what the reservation
10	provides is that the right to authorize others to
11	enter upon and use said land, that's what controls
12	all. A through E, the right to enter upon and use
13	the said land. Now, what we know is DNR wants to add
14	to that language and any improvements on said land.
15	Of course, that's not what the reservation says.
16	This begs the question of, okay, well, what
17	did the parties intend by the use of the term said
18	land. Well, we don't have to guess because the
19	parties define said land in the granting clause,
20	paragraph one. What the parties agree to in the
21	granting clause is that subject to the conditions and
22	reservations, the lessor, the state, would grant and
23	lease unto ConocoPhillips and the KRU lessees,
24	exclusively and without warranty the following
25	described tract of land in Alaska containing 2,560

1	acres, more or less, here and after [indiscernible.]
2	So what do we know from this? We know that
3	the parties specifically define said land to be just
4	the land itself. There's no reference in the
5	granting clause and the definition of said land to
6	any improvements, which only makes sense. Because in
7	1967, when the lease was executed, when it was
8	entered, there were no improvements on the land. The
9	roads weren't added for 15 years. There's would
10	be nothing on the land in terms of improvements for
11	the state to lease. And, to be fair, the state has
12	never claimed it's leasing the KRU roads to
13	ConocoPhillips.
14	Importantly, in addition to the granting
15	clause, the lease refers to said land in multiple
16	provisions. In paragraph 30, the parties refer to
17	gas being produced from said land. In paragraph 34,
18	there's a reference to wells being on said land.
19	Paragraph 36 refers to structures and equipment as
20	being allowed to remain on said land. And then
21	paragraph 26 references improvements in the vicinity
22	of said land.
23	Why does all of this matter? Well, the
24	interpretation of said land has to be the same
25	throughout the contract. It has to mean the same

1	thing in the granting clause and these other
2	provisions as it does in the reservation. So what
3	does that tell us? Because said land means only the
4	land itself and not any improvements, what the state
5	reserved to itself was only the right to do A, B, C,
6	D and E on the land itself.
7	The reservation does not allow the state to
8	exercise any control over improvements. It's just
9	not in the language, and that only makes sense. If
10	we go back in time and think about the parties'
11	intent at the time they were entering this lease,
12	which we know we are supposed to do in construing a
13	contract, no lessee would enter an agreement with the
14	state agreeing before anything was built the state
15	would forever and ever have the ability to control
16	improvements, allow other people to use improvements.
17	That could never have been the intent. It's
18	not credible to argue otherwise. The result is no
19	different under the KRU agreement which recognizes
20	the same rights and reservations as the KRU leases
21	and reinforces that improvements put on the land
22	during the lease term of the property of the lessee.
23	Bottom line, the reservation does not
24	support DNR's grant of authority. The reservation
25	does not support DNR's ability to grant OSA access to

1 the KRU lessee's improvements. It's not written 2 anywhere in the agreement. Even if somehow this 3 Court thought the reservation might be broader, we 4 have to look at 29E, because that is what DNR relies 5 on to support its authority. And what we know in 29E is that whatever the lessor is going to do has to be 6 7 authorized by law and not inconsistent with the rights of the lessee. 8 9 DNR fails under that provision as well when 10 we look at the law. The regulation that DNR relied 11 on is 96.010. As a state agency, DNR's power under 12 96.010 extends only as far as the Alaska legislature 13 has conferred via the enabling statutes. The Alaska 14 Supreme Court said it best in McDaniel versus Cory, 15 61 P.2d 82. This a quote. "Administrative agencies rest their power on affirmative legislative acts. 16 17 They are creatures of statute and therefore must find 18 within the statute the authority for the exercise of 19 any power they claim." 20 So let's look at that enabling statutes on 21 which 96.010 relies. DNR generally wants to ignore 22 those enabling statutes. There are six of them. 23 There are two which are particularly relevant here. 24 None of the enabling statutes that support 96.010 25 grant DNR the authority to control leasehold

improvements. 1 2 If you look, Your Honor, at tab three of 3 your binder, just for your benefit, that's where the 4 enabling statutes -- we included all six of them. 5 I'm going to focus on two in particular. 6 Again, Your Honor, it's important that the 7 language in yellow and red is how DNR has to rewrite 8 the enabling statute to have the power to issue 9 Enabling statute 38.05.035, which is on the permit. 10 left, is the only enabling statute that speaks 11 directly to DNR's control over improvements. 12 And critically it speaks to the precise 13 issue before the Court. Section 38.05.035 is called 14 powers and duties of the director. It contains eight 15 pages of powers the legislature has conferred on the 16 director. Eight pages. Nowhere in those eight pages did the 17 18 legislature grant the director the power to manage or 19 control private leasehold improvements. If the 20 director had such power, it would be in that enabling 21 It would be in one of those eight pages. statute. 22 It's not there. Instead, the legislature has said 23 exactly the opposite. What the legislature says in 24 35 -- excuse me -- 38.05.35 A2 is that DNR's, the 25 director's ability to manage, inspect and control

1 state land is limited to improvements on it belonging 2 to the state. DNR cannot claim power over privately 3 built improvements on leased land without completely 4 rewriting the legislature's grant of authority in 5 35.05.035. In order for DNR to have the power to issue 6 7 the permit, in order for DNR to prove to you there's an enabling statute that supports using a 8 9 miscellaneous land use permit to grant OSA the right 10 to use the KRU roads, it's got to be found in the 11 enabling statute. So what DNR would have to do is 12 completely rewrite the legislative's -- legislature's 13 directive. DNR would have to either remove five 14 words or add seven. 15 So what the legislature could have said and 16 didn't is that the director shall manage, inspect and 17 control state land and improvements on it under the 18 jurisdiction of the division. Legislature didn't say 19 that. What the legislature could have said is the 20 director shall manage, inspect and control state land 21 and improvements on it belonging to the state and all 22 roads installed on state land. 23 Legislature didn't say that either. And we 24 know, can't rewrite a statute years later for DNR to 25 have the power it claims in issuing the permit.

the legislature couldn't rewrite this law to allow 1 2 DNR ownership rights over private property without 3 running afoul of the constitution. Bottom line, Your 4 Honor, in 38.05.035, the legislature made clear what 5 DNR's power is over leasehold improvements. the legislature said is, you only have power over 6 7 improvements belonging to the state, not private improvements like the KRU roads. 8 9 Enabling statute 38.05.850 A confirms the 10 legislature's intent. That enabling statute gives 11 the director the power to issue permits. Again, DNR 12 has to rewrite the enabling statute to accomplish its 13 It has to rewrite the enabling statute to give qoal. 14 it the power it needs to issue the permit. 15 legislature intended for DNR to have the authority 16 over private leasehold improvements to be able to 17 issue a permit to let others use private leasehold 18 improvements, it would be in that statute. 19 That statute is directly on point. 20 about DNR's power to issue permits. It's not there. 21 Again, DNR would have to rewrite that statute to have 22 the power it claims here. Now, not surprising, the 23 lease doesn't have the power. The enabling statutes 24 don't have the power. So now we turn to the 25 regulation, is there some way the regulation can be

1 mirrored with the -- or -- or reconciled with the 2 enabling statutes in a way that DNR can prove it has 3 the power to issue the permit? The answer is no. 4 Pull up the regulation. 5 So here is the miscellaneous land use permit 6 regulations, what DNR cites as the basis for issuing 7 the permit. Again, as you see in the red and yellow 8 highlight, DNR has to change the wording to support 9 its authority. So as reflected in the title, 96.010 10 specifies the activities on state land for which a 11 permit is required. Importantly, because it's not an 12 enabling statute, it is not a grant of authority. 13 Like the enabling statutes, however, 96.10's 14 application is expressly limited to state land. 15 pressed DNR and we asked and said, well, based on 16 your interpretation of 96.10, which treats state land 17 as synonymous with improvements on the land, would 18 there be any limit to your authority under the provision? DNR basically said no. There would be no 19 20 limit. DNR doubled down and said, if any third 21 22 party -- parties can agree about the use of private 23 improvements, we can rely on 96.0103 to grant use. 24 Now, they say that even though it's never been used for that purpose in 50 years. In DNR's world, any 25

third party could go to a lessee and say, I want to 1 2 use your pipeline. I want to use your facility. I 3 want to use some -- some of your infrastructure and 4 offer uneconomic terms. And if the lessors -- or 5 lessee said, I'm not going to do that. That doesn't I'm not going to allow you to use my 6 make sense. pipeline for pennies on the dollar, under DNR's 7 interpretation, that party could just run to DNR and 8 9 obtain a permit and use that infrastructure for free. 10 If 96.10 actually allowed DNR to grant third 11 parties the right to use improvements, not just 12 activities on state land, it would be invalid as 13 inconsistent with enabling statutes. It doesn't say 14 It says nothing of the sort, and it does not 15 apply to the circumstances here. We know that by 16 looking at the guidance document that supports 17 96.010. That's in the record at page 702. 18 What's interesting about the guidance 19 document that supports the permit is that it's all 20 about seismic and geophysical activities on land. That's what 96.10 has been used for for decades. 21 Ιt 22 says nothing about using 96.10 to allow a party to 23 access private improvements, roads or otherwise on a 24 lessee's estate. Nothing. 25 Again, DNR would have to rewrite the

regulation as well to justify issuing the permit to 1 2 The reservation doesn't support DNR's power. 3 The enabling statutes don't support DNR's power and 4 the regulation doesn't support DNR's power. When DNR 5 and OSA stand up here, they will not be able to point you to a single provision anywhere that says DNR has 6 the right to control private leasehold improvements. 7 It's nowhere to be found. 8 9 Because of that, DNR pivots to the Alaska 10 constitution as the basis for its exercise of power under the permit. Now, to be clear, DNR doesn't 11 12 contend, because it can't, that the constitution 13 explicitly authorizes the state to grant third 14 parties the right to use private leasehold 15 improvements either. That's not found anywhere in 16 the constitution either. Instead DNR argues that 17 this never-before-used authority it claims is implied 18 in the constitution. Specifically, DNR wants this Court to 19 20 believe that, one, the constitutional mandates of 21 reasonable concurrent use and maximum benefit trump 22 any limit on DNR's authority. Two, DNR wants this 23 Court to believe that DNR can act in any way it deems 24 necessary whenever it decides, without any fact 25 finding, that the public interest is supposedly

1	threatened.
2	DNR acts like these policy statements are
3	its ultimate trump card to overcome any limits on its
4	power found anywhere else, whether it be the lease,
5	the regulations, the statute. None of that matters
6	to DNR because under the constitution, it claims all
7	it has to decide is, reasonable concurrent use,
8	public interest threatened, we get to act in any way
9	we want.
10	That's not what the law says, Your Honor.
11	There's at least three fallacies to DNR's thinking.
12	The first, the notion that DNR need only invoke
13	reasonable concurrent use or a threat to the public
14	interest to absolve its obligations to the
15	legislature or all legislative and constitutional
16	restrain is is frankly outrageous. If true, no
17	North Slope operator would ever again invest in
18	infrastructure for risk that at any point DNR could
19	decide to grant access to that infrastructure to
20	another party.
21	Second, we know the concept of reasonable
22	concurrent use, like the regulations and statutes, is
23	about use of the land. We know that because when the
24	framers talked about having these constitutional
25	provisions, the focus was the state land being able

to be used for multiple reasons. So, for example, 1 2 mining and timber. There's nothing in the history 3 that suggests reasonable concurrent use is concurrent 4 use of improvements. It's just not there. And DNR 5 has cited no case law that would suggest otherwise. Third, the notion that ConocoPhillips is 6 7 somehow preventing reasonable concurrent use of the state's resources or the state land or threatening 8 9 the public interests is demonstratively false. 10 clear, and this is important, ConocoPhillips has 11 never said that OSA can't have access to or use of 12 the KRU roads. For --13 THE COURT: Has there been any 14 administrative finding or fact finding relating to 15 the issue of -- that particular issue of whether 16 ConocoPhillips has either directly or indirectly 17 precluded or ruled out any sharing of the roads? 18 MS. HARDIN: Thank you for asking. 19 because DNR didn't conduct any fact finding and 20 readily admits that. DNR just assumed the public 21 interest was threatened. What we know about the 22 facts, and this is all in the record, is that 23 ConocoPhillips allowed OSA to use the KRU roads for free for years, for all of its predevelopment 24 25 activity for the Pikka Unit. That only changed when

OSA wanted to use the roads 24/7 for heavy access, 1 2 heavy truck access. 3 And then at that point, reasonably, 4 ConocoPhillips said, okay. Let's enter a commercial 5 agreement so that we can have fair and equitable compensation that takes into account the millions and 6 7 millions of dollars that ConocoPhillips has invested over 40 years at the tune of ten to 20 million a year 8 9 in constructing, maintaining and upkeeping the roads. 10 THE COURT: Is there any estimate in the 11 record relating to the additional financial cost of 12 added traffic to the road created by OAS's [as spoken] use? 13 14 MS. HARDIN: I don't believe there's any 15 detail in the record about what the cost with that 16 would be. And I believe what the courts would say is that the economic impact is not significant or not 17 18 material when it comes to appropriating a party's 19 right to exclude. In other words, whether OSA uses 20 the roads a lot or a little, temporary or a long 21 time, whether there's an economic impact or not, what 22 the U.S. Supreme Court has said is that doesn't 23 That's still a taking if you're taking away 24 a party's right to exclude. 25 THE COURT: But there's no dispute about the

amount of money that ConocoPhillips spends per year 1 2 on maintaining the road generally? 3 MS. HARDIN: Correct. That's not in 4 That's in an affidavit that is part of the 5 record and has not been disputed by OSA or DNR, and that figure is ten to 20 million per a year. 6 7 THE COURT: Is there any dispute about whether road traffic contributes to the need for 8 9 maintenance? Whether the use of the road, just the 10 use of the road triggers the need for additional 11 In other words, I mean, is it just maintenance? 12 sitting there, used or unused it's going to cost you 13 ten or 20 and additional use of the road won't 14 increase or change that in any way? 15 I mean, typically road use, truck use, 16 impacts roadbeds, impacts pavements. I don't think 17 these roads are paved. I assume they're gravel, 18 packed in some form, but snowplowing is required. 19 Are those the kinds of impacts that ConocoPhillips 20 typically experiences? 21 MS. HARDIN: The 20 to -- the ten to Sure. 22 20 million a year is for the ongoing wear and tear on 23 the roads and the upkeep. That's obviously in 24 addition to the original investment of building the 25 roads, but that -- that amount is going to be, if

anything, greater when you assume there's going to be 1 2 much greater use of the roads. Now, there's not data 3 in the record. I think that would come, when the Court, if it does, consider what compensation 4 would -- would be reasonable. 5 THE COURT: One last related question. 6 Ι mean, I understand the theories of your case, of --7 of your case. Is -- is there -- this is an 8 9 administrative finding. Are you alleging that the 10 breach of the lease expects -- sort of a breach of 11 the contract, the lease provision, and that's one of 12 the reasons that it's unauthorized and there should 13 be some damages that we're talking about today or 14 simply that it's unauthorized, the permit should be 15 voided? And I'm thinking that in relation to 16 contract theory simply because you also mention at 17 18 the close of your -- I think your reply brief, that 19 if there is a taking and if the Court agrees with you 20 and there's a taking, there's at least a temporary taking however many years it's been in effect and 21 22 there should be some damage for that loss of 23 exclusive use. I don't know how that would be 24 measured, but is that -- are we talking about 25 remanding for findings of that sort? What are we

talking about in relation to damage claims or -- or 1 2 is the main issue here just authorized or 3 unauthorized permit? 4 MS. HARDIN: So I think it's both. So the 5 first question is: Does DNR have the power to issue the permit? 6 7 THE COURT: Okay. And obviously we've spent a lot 8 MS. HARDIN: 9 of time walking through why it simply doesn't and 10 there's no support for it in the enabling statutes, 11 the regulations, the lease. So on that basis, we 12 submit that the permit has to be revoked. If you 13 disagree with that, we would still argue that there's 14 been a taking and that ConocoPhillips is -- should 15 receive fair, equitable compensation under the 16 takings provision. 17 What would happen, presumably, is we would 18 bring an inverse condemnation claim and go through 19 that process. We would be presumably afforded the 20 protections and due process and the procedure that that entails. Our view is that DNR doesn't have that 21 22 authority, and certainly hasn't provided 23 ConocoPhillips with the protections that ordinarily would be required if the state wanted to condemn the 24 25 roads. You asked about a breach of contract theory,

so I want to answer that question as well. Under the 1 2 ad hoc agreement, the parties did agree and OSA 3 agreed, we are going to have free use of the roads, but one of the conditions is, we're never going to 4 5 try to claim we have a right to the roads. obviously by bringing -- or by seeking a permit, 6 seeking free use of the roads, they've violated or 7 8 breached that particular provision. 9 THE COURT: If -- and I know you've got 10 about ten minutes left for this, but if the Court agrees with you on the thrust of your argument thus 11 12 far, which is that it's -- the permit was 13 unauthorized and basically not -- not appropriate, what issues do not need to be reached? The taking 14 15 does not need to be reached? MS. HARDIN: I would -- I would say it would 16 still need to be reached for a period of time, 17 18 because if the permit is revoked because there's no 19 authority, ConocoPhillips has still been under OSA's 20 use of the road for a number of years. So there is a time period in which ConocoPhillips was -- didn't 21 22 have its right to exclude and hasn't been compensated 23 for that, so there would be that piece of it. But in our mind, you know, as I started 24 25 with, this is really straightforward. They've got to

prove they have the power. Before we get to all 1 2 these other issues, DNR has got to prove to you that 3 they have the power to issue this permit which has 4 never been used in this way ever. And they simply 5 don't have it. And so that's why, in our view, that's -- that's the easy question. And then you 6 7 revoke the permit, and then it does become a question of, okay, well, there was a period of time where OSA 8 9 has -- has used the roads for free and without our 10 consent and hasn't paid for it. 11 THE COURT: Where would that issue be 12 resolved? 13 I think that we would have to MS. HARDIN: 14 bring an inverse condemnation claim and obtain our 15 compensation for that or hopefully the parties would reach some kind of agreement as to what the fair 16 17 compensation would have been. Thank you. 18 THE COURT: All right. 19 MS. HARDIN: Your Honor, to justify its 20 unauthorized exercise of power, DNR seems to suggest 21 it had no choice. It either had to issue the permit 22 or the Pikka development would be delayed or the 23 environment would be harmed. That's how DNR presents 24 this kind of Hobson's choice that exists, but that's 25 not right. There were other choices and other

1 options. 2 One, DNR could have said to OSA, if you want 3 to use the roads, like we've said for 50 years, go 4 negotiate a commercial agreement with ConocoPhillips. 5 If that didn't work, OSA -- or excuse me, DNR wasn't out of options. Now, DNR doesn't have the power of 6 eminent domain, but if the parties really couldn't 7 come to an agreement, and there was actual fact 8 9 finding that the state's interests were threatened or 10 that giving the roads to OSA was in the public 11 interest, the state could have initiated a 12 condemnation proceeding. That didn't happen. 13 Instead, DNR issued a miscellaneous land use 14 permit and gave the roads to OSA for free. And that 15 comes to the takings point that we were talking 16 about. While the state could have initiated a 17 condemnation proceeding and didn't, DNR couldn't. 18 What DNR cannot do is expropriate the roads instead, 19 and that's what they've -- they've done either 20 without compensation, without due process, without 21 the proper procedures. 22 We know that because of the Supreme Court's 23 opinion in Cedar Point Nursery, which arguably is --24 is on all fours. That's 594 U.S. 139. In the Cedar Point case the state of California issued a 25

regulation that required employers to allow access by 1 2 union organizers to their property to meet with 3 potential folks that might join the union. And the 4 employers were some nurseries, and they brought a 5 lawsuit and they said, you can't tell us, state of California, that we have to allow this -- you know, 6 7 union organizers to come on our property. It's our 8 property. We have a right to exclude. 9 And the U.S. Supreme Court spent a lot of 10 time walking through this notion of the right to 11 exclude and what a critical fundamental property 12 right it is. And what the court ended up saying is, 13 it doesn't matter that the access was limited. 14 doesn't matter that it really had no economic harm, 15 when you take away the right to exclude, you have committed a taking. And that's unconstitutional 16 17 unless you go through the process and have fair 18 compensation. 19 We -- we believe Cedar Point is on all fours 20 here and indicates and proves that the issuance of 21 the permit accomplished a taking of ConocoPhillips' 22 We talked about this a little bit, but roads. 23 although the remedy we've requested here is the revocation of the permit, as we just talked about, we 24 25 would want compensation and the right to seek damages

for the time period that the permit was in effect and 1 2 shouldn't have been. 3 Two final points, and I'll go fast. First, 4 DNR and OSA can't credibly reconcile their position with their conduct in admissions over the years. 5 DNR, OSA, the legislature, the governor, have 6 repeatedly recognized that roads built on state land 7 are owned by the lessee during the lease term. 8 There 9 are many examples of this. 10 You will remember, we were here a year ago 11 discussing with you House Bill 39, and the 12 legislature's and governor's recognition that AIDEA 13 owned the roads built on its state land. In House 14 Bill 39 the legislature and governor were willing to, 15 in effect, pay AIDEA over \$13 million to transfer the 16 Mustang Road to DNR for OSA's use. 17 We know that for 40 years the state of 18 Alaska has been taxing the KRU infrastructure and 19 facilities, which it's recognized, include the roads. 20 At one point, DNR even attempted to broker the sale 21 of the Mustang Road to DNR. At one point OSA tried 22 to monetize its Pikka roads and sell them to AIDEA. 23 I go through these list of facts, not 24 because the facts in and of themselves are 25 particularly important as much as what they prove.

What they prove is that there's no debate about the 1 2 law. Whether it be the legislature, the governor, 3 OSA, DNR, ConocoPhillips for 40, 50 years it's been 4 the accepted reality that roads built on state land 5 belong to the lessee during the lease term. Last point. Standard of review. 6 I expect 7 most of what you're about to hear from DNR and OSA will be plea for deference. When it comes to DNR's 8 9 authority, the appellees want you to take their word 10 for it. We know that's not what the law is. the law says is that this Court should exercise its 11 12 independent judgment and conduct a de nova review 13 when it comes to interpreting the constitution, which 14 they agree. But also when it comes to statutory 15 construction and contract construction. So when you're considering the enabling 16 17 statutes and you're considering the lease provisions, 18 your adjudicative power comes to bear and you can 19 exercise and should exercise, we submit, your 20 independent judgment. There is nothing about the 21 term state land or said land that requires agency 22 expertise. There's nothing about those words that 23 would indicate the definition changes over time. 24 There is no basis to apply a lesser 25 standard. This Court is particularly able to

interpret contracts and statutes. That's what courts 1 2 do every day and your independent judgment controls. 3 The same is true about interpreting the regulations, 4 while oftentimes a regulation interpretation might be 5 subject to a reasonable basis review, that's not the case here. 6 That's not the case here because the 7 8 argument is DNR has inappropriately applied the 9 regulation to issue the permit. What ConocoPhillips 10 is challenging is DNR's authority under a permit, and 11 in those circumstances the case law is clear, that 12 your independent judgment rules the day and 13 reasonable basis standard doesn't apply. 14 Ultimately, DNR's request or demand that 15 this Court cede its adjudicative power to DNR is no 16 different than its demand that the legislature cede 17 its power to DNR. It's one and the same and Alaska 18 law doesn't allow it. But even a generous standard 19 review, even a reasonable basis of review, would 20 still mean the permit must be revoked because there is literally nothing in the provisions that would 21 22 justify DNR exercising the power in the way that it 23 has. 24 Your Honor, if DNR actually had the power to 25 grant permits for use of third-party improvements, it

would not have been a secret for 50 years. 1 There 2 would be expressed terms in enabling statutes. There 3 would be a quidance document. There would be a 4 regulatory and statutory scheme, regime. It wouldn't 5 be authority that DNR has never used before this We know there isn't. There's nothing that 6 permit. 7 supports their power because DNR unequivocally 8 exceeded its power in issuing the permit, it must be 9 revoked. 10 Thank you, Your Honor. 11 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Amazing 12 how we took exactly 45 minutes. 13 MS. HARDIN: That was planned. 14 THE COURT: Let's take a ten-minute recess. 15 We'll come back for the response. 16 THE CLERK: We're off record. Please rise. 17 Court is in recess. 18 (Off record.) 19 THE CLERK: Superior Court is in session. 20 THE COURT: Please be seated. We do that 21 sometimes just for your exercise and enjoyment. 22 All right. We're pretty much on track. 23 we'll stick to the original plan. Forty-five minutes 24 divided between the two appellees. I assume you have 25 an internal agreement on that. All right.

Figured it out. 1 MR. LEIK: 2 THE COURT: Thank you. 3 Ms. Gramling, you're going to start with the 4 It's a little noisy. state? 5 MS. GRAMLING: May it please the Court, Mary Hunter Gramling representing the state of Alaska, 6 Department of Natural Resources. I'd like to 7 8 acknowledge the many client representatives from the 9 Department of Natural Resources in the gally behind 10 me as well. 11 So the state will be splitting time with the 12 permit holder and intervener in this case, Oil 13 So I'd like to reiterate for Your Honor that 14 this case is an appeal of a final agency decision. 15 It's on an administrative record. And so, really, 16 the -- the question before the Court today is whether 17 the DNR commissioner's decision is reasonable, and there's facts at issue whether there's sufficient 18 19 evidence in the record to support the facts in that 20 decision. 21 So that's the -- the context of this case 22 This is not a trial. This is not a -- you today. 23 know, under the civil rules. This is a case that is 24 under the appellate rules and the jurisdiction of the 25 Court is under those rules, as well. So the state's

1 argument focus today will be on the statutory and 2 regulatory authorities for the permit, the broad 3 reservations of rights to the state in the KRU 4 leases, and the limited grants in those KRU leases 5 and then the takings argument and some of the standard of review. And it will also address some of 6 the points that Your Honor asked questions of Conoco 7 and the -- some points that Conoco made as well. 8 9 So turning to the permit at issue here, this 10 is a permit that grants nonexclusive access and use of corridors within the KRU, and those corridors 11 12 contain about 75 miles of gravel roads that have been 13 placed decades ago. And so the permit happened after 14 the parties were unable to reach an agreement for 15 reasonable concurrent use of state lands that contain 16 a road. The record before the division and the 17 18 commissioner reviewing the permit shows that Conoco and Oil Search had been negotiating for over a year 19 20 on the use of the state land and the road. And in 21 the record, it also shows that Conoco sent Oil Search 22 a notice of breach of the existing agreement that the 23 parties had and indicated that the parties -- that it 24 might terminate that existing agreement. And the 25 agreement was also called an ad hoc agreement

implying that it was, you know, a temporary 1 2 agreement. And so the state's briefing at pages four 3 through six discusses the commissioner's findings on 4 those and the -- the relevant record cites for Your 5 Honor. So, turning to the permit itself. So the 6 7 permit itself is not without many, many conditions 8 that I think are important to this case because they 9 go to, what does reasonable concurrent use look like 10 and how does the department manage reasonable 11 concurrent uses of state lands when there are 12 multiple uses of those lands. 13 So, first, the permit requires Oil Search to coordinate with Conoco on use of the land containing 14 15 those roads, and the permit itself recognizes that 16 Conoco, or the KRU lessees, the KRU lessees have primacy of access because the purpose of the roads 17 18 and Conoco's use of the land is to develop the oil 19 and gas resources underneath those leases. 20 So the -- the purpose -- the only reason 21 that Conoco was able to construct the road and the 22 only purpose of the road is all as part -- the 23 limited surface use that oil and gas lessees have 24 owing to the exclusive subsurface rights to produce 25 the oil and gas. So the only reason that the road

exists at all is it's a limited surface use of that 1 2 land necessary to produce the oil and gas. And so, 3 that was one of the conditions of the permit, was 4 that Oil Search, they would have to coordinate with Conoco. And so it could be that from a timing 5 standpoint, if Conoco is using the road and can't 6 accommodate whatever trucking is going on, then Oil 7 Search, that that would be a cost to them potentially 8 9 in their operations. But they would have to, you 10 know, coordinate with Conoco to accommodate that use. 11 Secondly, the agreements -- the permit 12 stipulations mirror many of the conditions that were 13 in the ad hoc road use agreement that the parties 14 presumably already thought were reasonable 15 conditions, and the state included those in the 16 permit conditions. And so in addition to 17 coordination, the -- the permit stipulations require that Oil Search take action to avoid unreasonable 18 19 interference with Conoco's operations in addition to 20 recognizes the priority of use. And then that Oil Search reimburse Conoco 21 22 for damages that may be caused by their use and the 23 The conditions also included indemnification 24 provisions in favor of the state, because it is a use 25 of state land. The insurance and bonding were also

high other than -- or were pretty high, and those 1 2 were in favor of the state additionally as well. 3 so those are facts that show how the department 4 manages reasonably concurrent use of state land. 5 so it recognized that there was an existing oil and gas lease, and that oil and gas lease has limited 6 surface rights and the -- the road is a use of state 7 land that's a limited surface right. 8 9 THE COURT: I -- I follow your argument. 10 The argument of the other side is, this is not purely state land. It's infrastructure constructed by the 11 12 lessee, and you're basically controlling or basically giving rights in it to some third party. So how do 13 14 you address that argument? 15 MS. GRAMLING: Certainly, Your Honor. So, 16 first, the -- the road itself only exists as a 17 limited surface right. So the only expectation that Conoco ever had about this road was that it could 18 19 build it and use it for the purposes of its oil and 20 gas exploration. The -- the road doesn't exist in a 21 way that -- there's no authority that Conoco can cite 22 of any right to exclude from that. 23 THE COURT: Since you're on that point, I 24 appreciate it, one of the hypotheticals they posit is 25 that if it was a pipeline constructed by Conoco and

you said OSA could tap into it or share that 1 2 pipeline, how would that be any different? 3 MS. GRAMLING: So pipelines have different 4 authorities on them, as well. Sometimes they're 5 common carrier and there's different right of ways and different authorizations for pipelines. And so 6 the main point is, that's not the fact before this --7 this is a -- not fact pattern before the Court. And 8 so in the state's view, the Court doesn't need to 9 10 opine on the entire extent of the world of reasonable The case --11 concurrent use. THE COURT: No, but a precedent would be set 12 13 by this decision. And if -- according -- at least 14 Conoco is saying, this is setting a precedent that a 15 future party interested in a -- leasing state land may be deterred because whatever they construct at 16 17 their own expense is going to be given away for free, 18 let's say, to someone who didn't take the risk. 19 That's the argument. 20 Yeah. So there are -- the MS. GRAMLING: 21 framework of oil and gas leasing in Alaska, in the 22 constitution and in the Alaska statutes, and in the 23 leases themselves, is that it is a limited grant 24 solely for the purposes of oil and gas leasing, the 25 subsurface. And then the -- any surface uses are --

are limited related to those purposes. So that's 1 2 their -- the only reason that Conoco is able to build 3 a road is due to state authorizations. And, then, as 4 far as some sort of limiting principle, there's -- I 5 think roads are different. And here you have a gravel road that is routinely used by others, and so 6 roads are one of the most suitable things for 7 reasonable concurrent uses of state lands. 8 9 And the -- it's within the department's 10 authority to consider the uses and benefits and 11 costs, you know, to the state and anyone that is 12 looking to use state land. And so --13 THE COURT: Well, I mean --14 MS. GRAMLING: -- when you're talking about other facilities --15 16 Talking about the convenience, I THE COURT: 17 would think that obviously sharing the road -- not -if -- if OSA doesn't have to build its own roads, it 18 19 can -- it may have an economic benefit, not just to 20 OSA but also to the state through the value of the 21 lease that it's giving OSA. I would think to the 22 extent the lessor doesn't have to -- excuse me -- the 23 lessee doesn't have to build infrastructure, that 24 would be an economic benefit for the parties that are in that lease because it would label it to be more 25

profitable. 1 2 So maybe the pipeline is not such a bad 3 analogy because if you let the lessee use an existing 4 pipeline and they can pay you more under the lease, 5 because they don't have to build their own pipeline, 6 then the state would benefit from it just as they benefit from the road. That -- you know, that's --7 8 that's part of the argument that, you know, you're 9 spreading costs to a party that isn't profiting from 10 the agreement you're making with OSA. 11 MS. GRAMLING: So when Conoco built the 12 roads decades ago, it had no reasonable expectation 13 under its leases that Oil Search would come along or 14 that -- the purpose it built the road for was to 15 develop its own oil and gas leases. It had no 16 reasonable expectation that it would be able to 17 exclude the state from authorizing other uses of that 18 land just because the road is there. So the --19 THE COURT: What do you make with the 20 language, less -- lessor does hereby grant and lease 21 unto lessee exclusively without warranty, et cetera, 22 et cetera, in the -- in the grant? 23 MS. GRAMLING: Yeah. So that is exclusively 24 as in, they have an exclusive lease for that oil and 25 gas -- for the purposes of that oil and gas, and that

the state would not lease it, that same lease, to 1 2 someone else. But it's well established in mineral 3 leasing, and in the reservations in the leases and 4 the Alaska constitution and Land Act that state 5 leasing is subject to reasonable concurrent use of the land. And so, here the parties have a dispute 6 about reasonable concurrent use of the land. 7 state's position, big picture, is that the -- the 8 9 state's authority to manage land exists regardless of 10 what is on the land. 11 And the improvements, or not, the state's 12 authority to manage that land and control and inspect 13 that land exists regardless, but that brings us to 14 other provisions that, if you're asking about limiting principles, those are that it's to allow 15 16 reasonable concurrent use. So whether or not the use 17 in somewhere else is reasonable might vary by, you 18 know, if it's a road versus if it's a facility versus 19 if it's a pipeline. 20 And then you would also have to take into 21 account, if it's a use of state land and you have 22 competing uses of state land, you know, what are the 23 authorizations in place? And so, an oil and gas 24 lessee has exclusive rights for its oil and gas 25 operations on those leases. So that right is, you

know, higher than the limited temporary permit for 1 2 the use of the road. And so that's how some of the, 3 you know, conditions come into play. So the state's 4 authority to manage that use of the land is not 5 diminished just because there is improvements of any What happens is whether the state's action in 6 scale. 7 that management, if it happens at all, you know, that goes to the reasonableness of whatever the conditions 8 9 are. 10 So that, I think, gets to some of your 11 questions about, you know, do I have to adopt some 12 sort of limiting principle. And the state's position 13 here is that, no, you don't. It's -- this is a use 14 of state land, and it's a road, a gravel road that's 15 been there for decades. Conoco has the --16 THE COURT: Well, the road, you agree, 17 was constructed by the lessee, right? 18 Yes, and it was constructed MS. GRAMLING: 19 subject to the limited surface use for the purposes 20 of developing their oil and gas reserves, and that's 21 the only purpose that they can use that land for. 22 They can't do other things on that land, but the 23 purpose of the leases is limited to the development 24 of that oil and gas. THE COURT: Well, I don't -- we're not 25

talking here about a case where Conoco is accused of, 1 2 you know, doing a gambling casino on the property. 3 They're using everything there for development of oil 4 and gas. So how does the -- how does that language 5 tie in, I guess? As long as they're using the road exclusively for the development of oil and gas, 6 they're within the -- they're performing within the 7 meaning of the lease, right? 8 9 MS. GRAMLING: Yes. And the state's 10 position is that that exclusivity for oil and gas 11 does not allow them to exclude the road -- the use of 12 state land for other purposes. So here there's 13 another oil company that has significant lease holdings and, you know, significant revenue 14 15 potentially to the state from development of those neighboring lands. But miscellaneous land use 16 17 permits are issued for many other things, and so it 18 could have just as easily been, you know, a hiking 19 quide or someone else who wanted to use the road. 20 And the problem with Conoco's position is 21 that because they -- it would limit the state from 22 being able to allow reasonable concurrent uses. 23 so -- just because there is a road. 24 THE COURT: What would you say is the 25 language that you think most clearly expresses the --

the DNR's interpretation, I quess, or position that 1 2 improvements constructed by the lessee are within the 3 control of the DNR to authorize third parties to use? 4 MS. GRAMLING: So the state's reservation of 5 rights over the land. And so the reasonableness of how it exercises those rights may very well change, 6 7 depending on the improvement. But here we have a gravel road, and roads are treated differently in the 8 9 leases and in the unit agreements and in kind of 10 the -- kind of history of Alaska was concerned about 11 access. And so there's provisions on the lease about 12 entry and access to state land. 13 And the only way to use state land that has 14 a road on it, just that -- looking at that land, is 15 to use the road. That's how you use that land. so the only reasonable concurrent use of state land 16 17 that has a road is to cross the road. 18 THE COURT: Which part of the reservation 19 would you rely on? Looking at paragraph 29 if that's 20 what you're looking at in the lease. 21 MS. GRAMLING: Yeah. So in paragraph 29, 22 has that the state reserves the right to dispose of 23 the surface of said land to others and to authorize 24 by permit, you know, conditions subject to prevention 25 of unreasonable interference, to enter upon and use

1 And the only way to enter upon and use said land. 2 said land that contains the road is to go on the 3 road, so I think that's squarely within the 4 reservations. And then also the reservation clause 5 had a catchall that for any purpose, now or hereafter authorized by law not inconsistent with the rights of 6 the lessee. And, again, the rights of the lessee 7 here are limited to production of their oil and gas, 8 9 and that's the purpose that they built the road. 10 And so there's no, you know, exclusionary 11 rights for other purposes in that grant. Also, 12 Conoco -- some of their arguments about the Mustang 13 and HB39, that was a different grant of authority and 14 different situation because that was an easement. 15 THE COURT: We won't go there right now. Ι have enough cases to worry about besides that one. 16 17 But -- so on this thing, said land, Conoco argues 18 that that's defined in the lease, contrary to your 19 interpretation. That the lease defines land as a 20 2,560, or however many acres, and the road wasn't in 21 effect so the road is not part of said land. 22 MS. GRAMLING: So the state's position is 23 that the said land argument or Conoco's said land 24 argument doesn't really make sense because the state 25 has the authority to manage state land regardless of

what's on the land or any activities that are 1 2 happening on the land. And then as far as Conoco's 3 argument that said land, if it has improvements, it's 4 somehow not part of the grant, that would imply that 5 because they built a road, or if there was an existing -- you know, some other improvement on state 6 7 land, that then the state couldn't lease the subsurface. And so that just -- that argument isn't 8 9 consistent with set -- the use -- the use of said 10 land in that grant and in the reservation is just referring to the -- the area, generally. It's not --11 12 THE COURT: So under your --13 MS. GRAMLING: So it doesn't matter what's 14 there. 15 THE COURT: So really, then, your position is that anything constructed within the raw area of 16 17 the 2,560 acres, any infrastructure is subject to the control of DNR? 18 19 MS. GRAMLING: Not the infrastructure, the 20 land. And then the control, if there is 21 infrastructure on there, it is that -- you know, then 22 the state is looking at what the reasonable uses of 23 that land are. And so the reasonable use of land 24 with a road when someone wants to, you know, traverse 25 state land is to use the road. And so the state's

authority over state land, because this is all state 1 2 land, it's really looking at, if there are, you know, 3 other improvements, here it's a gravel road, the 4 reasonableness of the uses and the -- and the 5 preexisting authorizations. So in some cases, there could be easements. 6 There could be right of ways. There could be other 7 miscellaneous land permits. And the state has 8 9 authority to manage its lands for reasonable 10 concurrent uses and that includes that there might be multiple uses of same land. And so the idea that 11 12 placing an improvement on the land just nullifies the 13 state's broad authority, the state very much rejects 14 that argument. 15 But the -- Your Honor is asking about, you know, other things. That would go to the 16 17 reasonableness and whether there's unreasonable 18 interference. And so that is, I think, a fact by 19 fact kind of equation that's really not before the 20 Court. Right now what's before the Court is a gravel road that was built under a limited surface use to 21 22 facilitate particular oil and gas development. It's 23 not an all-purpose road. 24 And, importantly, Conoco can't sell the It would have to sell all of its lease 25 road.

interests in order to sell this road. This road is 1 2 not built under an easement. It is just a limited 3 surface right that they have by virtue of the oil and gas lease. So Conoco can't sell the road independent 4 5 of the lease. Conoco can't really change much about the road without various DNR approvals at the end of 6 7 Conoco's oil and gas leases. Whether or not it can 8 remove the road or the road remains on the land is up 9 to the state. 10 So the road in and of itself doesn't exist in the way that maybe other roads or other easements 11 12 do exist. It is a creature of the oil and gas lease 13 and the limited surface rights on that lease. 14 the state, in granting this permit, looked at the 15 reasonable use of state land that was being requested to go over a road, and then whether or not that use 16 17 was consistent with the leases that had broad 18 reservations and limited grants. 19 And so that is really kind of the core of 20 the state's argument and Conoco's arguments about 21 said land. The state's position is that there is no 22 need to add any of that language that's on the 23 displays over there because its -- authority over the 24 land regardless of what's on it. So that's how the 25 state addresses that point. Turning to Conoco,

the -- the focus of their argument today, and in some 1 2 extent, the reply brief seems to be about 38.05.035 3 A, specifically A2. And the state's position is that 4 that statute does not deprive DNR of any authority to 5 manage reasonable concurrent uses of land. First, the -- kind of the state's position 6 7 is that the statutory and historical context of that statute is important, and that it is really just an 8 9 organizational statute as to the jurisdiction between 10 different state agencies. And so that statute has 11 been in place since 1959, and the prior versions of 12 that statute pre-statehood included different 13 divisions of how land would be managed. I think 14 there would be a commission. 15 And then in 1959, it was that -- there was 16 the -- the division of lands. And so -- and the 17 state's position is that that statute and the 18 reference to improvements, its improvements --19 THE COURT: Belonging to --20 MS. GRAMLING: -- belonging to the state and 21 the jurisdiction of the division as opposed to the 22 jurisdiction of the department of transportation or 23 education or something like that. So the state's 24 position is that that is a kind of organizational 25 state statute. It doesn't deprive DNR of its

broad -- broad land management expertise and 1 2 availability to grant reasonable concurrent uses. 3 THE COURT: Where does DNR get the power, 4 then? MS. GRAMLING: So the other sections within 5 that same statute also provide broad authority to 6 DNR, and I would turn your attention to: 7 director shall, subject to conditions and limitations 8 9 imposed by law and the commissioner, issue deeds, leases, you know, disposing of land, resources 10 property and any interest in them. 11 12 So that's in paragraph six of that same 13 Paragraph seven also has broad jurisdiction statute. 14 over state land with an exception for, again, some 15 organizational purposes that were important at the time of statehood, apparently. But then that 16 17 sentence ends with, you know, that the department 18 shall, you know, perform duties necessary to protect the state's rights and interests in lands including 19 20 taking all necessary action to protect and enforce 21 the state's contractual and other property rights. 22 So that's in 035. And then the department 23 also has broad authorities that are found in 38.05.020, subparagraphs, I think, A1 and A2, that, 24 25 you know, the department -- sorry. Skipping around

with the questions. So, yeah, the department has --1 2 sorry, it's B1 -- is that DNR has the ability to 3 carry out procedures for the Alaska Land Act, 4 exercise all powers and duties to carry out the 5 purposes of the chapter. And then as particular for oil and gas leasing, in administration of oil and gas 6 7 leasing, the department is to maximize economic 8 recovery and physical recovery of resources, 9 encouraged maximal competition and try to minimize 10 adverse impacts for other uses. 11 And then the 38.05.285 specifically says 12 that disposal and use of state land shall conform to 13 the constitution of the state of Alaska and the 14 principles of multiple purpose use consistent with 15 the public interest. So the idea that there will be concurrent uses of state land, and that it's up for 16 17 the department, you know, to balance that reasonableness of that land's use is well established 18 19 in the Alaska constitution. 20 THE COURT: But those all presuppose that 21 it's something that you can regulate. So they don't 22 really help me. If mean, if -- if we've gotten to 23 that point, then no one is arguing that the 24 commissioner has the power to coordinate and, you 25 know, deal with it. The question -- the preliminary

question is: 1 Is this something -- this improvement 2 that the DNR has the ability, the power to, you know, 3 to, in this case, require the -- the lessee to share 4 or allow a third party to -- to participate in. 5 think the -- the guidelines you're talking about, I -- they're there. You know, that's not the 6 The initial authorization is the challenge. 7 problem. What's the most explicit and expressed language you 8 9 would point me to again for the authority of the DNR 10 here? 11 So I do think that the MS. GRAMLING: 12 reservations clause is -- when it talks about enter upon and use said land, that is -- you know, reserves 13 14 the right to use said land. And that is broad 15 language, and that is actually a requirement for oil 16 and gas leasing in the Alaska constitution, the 17 article eight, you know, requires oil and gas leasing 18 to allow for concurrent uses, and then contemplate so 19 there will be disputes about what those uses look 20 like. 21 And so the -- the -- you know, the 22 department should create conditions for that. 23 the permit itself authorizes the use of state land, 24 and then it's up to the department to determine what the reasonable conditions are and whether it's 25

reasonable to allow concurrent uses. 1 And in some 2 cases, the department doesn't allow concurrent uses, 3 but this is a gravel road used by many people. 4 Conoco -- I think Conoco's course of conduct also 5 suggests that it's recognized for decades that it doesn't have a right to exclude or to try to extract 6 7 rent from, in this case, a potential competitor because it's allowed free use of the road for 8 9 You know, that from a corporation is, I decades. would say, unusual, if they thought for decades that 10 11 they had had use of the road. 12 And so I think, also, the argument that Oil 13 Search breached the agreement by applying for the 14 permit, that presupposes that the -- you know, the state has the authority. You wouldn't draft that 15 provision in a contract unless you were concerned 16 17 about it. And so that, I think, also suggests that 18 the parties were well aware that, if needed, the state could allow for reasonable concurrent uses like 19 20 it granted in the permit. 21 The existence of the regulation itself 22 contemplates that usually parties can agree on 23 concurrent uses, and it's more efficient, probably, 24 for them to do so. There's, you know, a certainty in 25 that, but if they don't, if -- the state can use its

authorities for reasonable use of state land so that 1 2 the state's broader interests in, you know, 3 maximizing recovery economically and in resources 4 isn't delayed or impaired. 5 You know, so the fact that here, there's another oil company, I think that goes to maybe the 6 conditions of the permit and some of the -- the 7 balancing in the permit. But the state's position is 8 9 that it has the authority to grant the sort of permit 10 for any purpose that is a reasonable use of state 11 land that it would need to. And then what the 12 conditions are would depend on, you know, who is 13 questioning it. 14 So here it just happened to be an oil 15 company, but the state's position is that it has the 16 authority to grant reasonable concurrent uses of 17 state land like embodied in this permit. And, you 18 know, the reasonableness of it may depend on the 19 conditions which Conoco here did not actually object 20 to any of the conditions, which makes sense because they were very similar to the ones that the parties 21 22 had agreed on previously. 23 THE COURT: Are we at the time limit? 24 MS. GRAMLING: Yeah. I think -- I think I'm 25 going to let --

1	THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Gramling.
2	MS. GRAMLING: Well, I'll just close real
3	briefly that the permit effectuates reasonable
4	concurrent use for the maximum utilization of state
5	resources. There's no takings in this permit because
6	Conoco never had the right to exclude. It only had
7	the limited surface right.
8	And then the department's position is that,
9	again, this is an appeal so really the only decisions
10	that are being made are, you either affirm or, you
11	know, vacate and remand for whatever reason. It's
12	not a damages consideration here.
13	THE COURT: All right. Thank you.
14	Mr. Leik?
15	MS. GRAMLING: Oh, thank you.
16	THE COURT: Thank you.
17	MR. LEIK: Give you copies of that.
18	THE COURT: All right. Thank you.
19	Whenever you're ready.
20	MR. LEIK: All right. Thank you.
21	Jim Leik for Oil Search Alaska.
22	This appeal is about the state of Alaska's
23	ability to develop and manage its resources. And, in
24	particular, the vital oil and gas resources on
25	Alaska's North Slope. To underscore a central point,

1 the state owns these resources, and it operates under 2 certain constitutional and statutory mandates, both 3 of which the department is obligated to follow. 4 includes the obligation to make maximum use of the 5 state's resources to allow reasonable concurrent use of the state's resources, and that's specific to its 6 7 leasing power. Under section 180, which is in the handout I 8 9 gave you, AS38 -- I'm sorry -- I'm referring to 10 article eight, section eight of the Alaska 11 constitution. And, also, a third, a mandate to 12 minimize adverse impacts on state land. And so when 13 the commissioner looked at this issue, it enforced 14 and applied each of those mandates. First observing 15 the importance of the resource and the need to get 16 maximize use of the state's resources by allowing 17 access to the Pikka Unit. 18 Second, by stating what is almost the 19 obvious that you couldn't reach the Pikka Unit and 20 develop that resource unless there's access to it. 21 And, third, and applying the mandate to 22 avoid undue -- to avoid adverse impacts to state 23 land, that the -- the solution to obtaining access 24 and following that statutory mandate was to allow use 25 of existing roads and not create some sort of

duplicate road system. So all those mandates, which 1 2 are statutory and constitutional, had bearing on 3 the -- on the director's approach to this. So the 4 outcome was, of course, that they -- the -- to give effect to the mandate of reasonable concurrent 5 In this situation, the -- the commissioner 6 turned to the regulation that's in place. 7 8 Now, in the first instance, that regulation 9 leaves it to the parties to sort out their own 10 arrangements for reasonable concurrent access. 11 That's in the specific language of the -- of the 12 regulation. DNR becomes involved only if they are 13 unable to agree, and that's what happened here. 14 so that's at the point when the regulation kicks in. 15 And --16 I quess I want to ask you about THE COURT: 17 It wasn't clear to me from the record whether 18 they really were unable to agree or the process got 19 short circuited by a request for a permit from the --20 to the state. 21 MR. LEIK: Oh, I think it's clear, and I --22 I can't give you precise cites from the record, but I 23 it's clear that they exchanged offers over a period 24 of time. I think that is in the record. I know it's 25 in the record. And at some point they reached

It wasn't short circuited --1 impasse. 2 THE COURT: Conoco says that they offered 3 the same terms to OAS that -- what were the -- I 4 think that -- anyway, that they were economically 5 competitive terms consistent with what had been offered, I quess, I don't know if it was Mustang Road 6 7 or some other situation, but they were -- in other 8 words, they weren't onerous terms. Has that been 9 adjudicated? 10 I hasn't been adjudicated. MR. LEIK: 11 It's -- and -- and under -- under the way this works, 12 that isn't part of what the commissioner adjudicates, 13 but it's not correct. I mean, the -- the -- it's in 14 the record, and in detail in our brief of what the back and forth was, and the -- the conditions that 15 were demanded by Conoco were -- were not similar to 16 17 anything that's ever been applied elsewhere. 18 In fact, the history on the North Slope was 19 that -- was that unit roads of this kind were used by 20 operators without charging each other, and they would 21 have agreements for use of the road, but they would 22 deal with things like indemnity and risk allocation, that kind of thing, but there weren't charges. 23 24 was innovative, I guess you could call it that, on the part of Conoco to -- to demand this kind of 25

compensation for use of roads on state land. 1 2 that's when, after that exchange, which is fully set 3 out in the briefs, that's when the parties came to impasse and had to go to DNR to -- and -- and say 4 5 that they couldn't agree. And I don't think there's an agreement 6 that they -- I don't think it's in dispute that they 7 8 couldn't agree. 9 THE COURT: Well, I mean, what -- I mean, 10 since we're -- you -- I mean, is the choice -- if the negotiation point was, one party is offering zero, 11 12 and the other is asking for some share of the ten to 13 20 million of the maintenance cost --14 They were somewhere between. MR. LEIK: 15 THE COURT: All right. Well, is the outcome 16 of zero appropriate? 17 MR. LEIK: The commissioner is in a position 18 where it, I don't think, has -- is -- is in a 19 position to sort of say who's right and who's wrong 20 about that, right. The commissioner --21 commissioner's objective, from the perspective of the 22 state, is to say, you haven't agreed. It's in the 23 state's interest to move this project forward, so 24 here's what -- what we're going to do. And that's 25 within the discretion of the state and what terms it

sets for that. 1 2 THE COURT: Okay. 3 MR. LEIK: Okay. I think I want to go now 4 to one of the really key points, I think, that --5 that underlies this argument, and it's kind of at the heart of their claims. I think early -- in earlier 6 7 versions of the argument it was that the roads are ConocoPhillips' personal property. And as personal 8 9 property, they have the exclusive use of it, and --10 and the state doesn't have any business telling them 11 how to use their personal property. 12 They now acknowledge that this -- these are really leasehold improvements, which is important 13 14 because putting them in the context of the lease is a really crucial point. Reviewing the status of what 15 16 ConocoPhillips has on this land, number one, it is 17 state land. There's no dispute about that. It's the 18 state's land. The state hasn't conveyed ownership of 19 any of its land to ConocoPhillips, including the road 20 corridors. 21 It hasn't even given ConocoPhillips an 22 easement, which would be a different kind of property 23 right that ConocoPhillips could claim. The only 24 place that ConocoPhillips has any rights is under the 25 lease. So it has the rights of a lessee under the

That's all they have. So it's the old, you 1 lease. 2 know, law school teaching of -- of the bundle of 3 They -- the state has its bundle of sticks 4 which is the land. It's given a limited amount of 5 limited sticks to ConocoPhillips, which are in this situation, precisely just the lease. 6 7 ConocoPhillips has rights as a lessee on the state's land. 8 9 The state has retained everything else, 10 including the things that it specifically reserved to 11 itself under the lease. And, thus, the reservation 12 clause in the lease is -- is important to that. 13 That's -- that's the language that you went over with 14 Ms. Gramling, which includes the state's specific 15 reservation of its ability to grant -- grant use and grant permits to others for use of the -- of the --16 of the state's land, reasonable concurrent use. 17 So 18 that, in the context of lease, means reasonable 19 concurrent use of what we lease to --20 THE COURT: Well, I don't -- I don't want to collapse land and improvement, but that's what your 21 22 argument is essentially doing. You're saying there's 23 no difference between said land and all the 24 improvements on it. 25 MR. LEIK: Yep.

1 THE COURT: So if this had been a building 2 constructed of a ten-acre plot, the building maybe 3 was only 1,000 square feet. Conoco builds the 4 building on the property. That's subject to -- the 5 state could say, you've got to share the office space with OAS for free? 6 7 MR. LEIK: It's subject to whatever is in 8 the lease. You know, lease terms, of course, govern, 9 and so whatever the lease terms provide. 10 THE COURT: Same lease terms but it's a 11 building on the property. 12 MR. LEIK: Sure. Yeah. I -- in theory, if 13 it's -- if it's on the state land, and -- and the 14 lease terms are the same, then in theory, the state 15 has authority to authorize reasonable concurrent use, but that's subject to limitations. But in practical 16 17 terms, the -- of course, the case that's before us 18 today is what the state did with roads. And I think 19 that's -- that's an important distinction. 20 I mean, any decision like this, that's made by the state of Alaska, in this context, is being 21 22 reviewed in an appeal situation for reasonable 23 exercise or discretion. So what we have here is 24 reviewing the commissioner's reasonable exercise of 25 discretion to allow reasonable concurrent use on a

Are there other situations? Of course, there 1 2 could be, and we could screen out hypotheticals, but 3 each one of those would have to be evaluated on its 4 Here the question is roads. And roads are --5 since that's what's before us, we look at roads. Why would the commissioner exercise its 6 discretion to allow use of roads? I -- I have four 7 things that are especially applicable to roads. 8 9 roads are uniquely attached to and part of the land. 10 That's just their characteristic. Two, roads are 11 essential to access to the state's land and adjoining 12 land. And they -- that goes to the mandate of 13 reasonable concurrent use, which is set out in the 14 Alaska constitution. 15 Three, roads are uniquely capable of reasonable concurrent use. It's not hard to say how 16 17 you can share a road. There -- there are agreements 18 that can govern the sharing of a road, and it's not a 19 complicated thing. Now, if you were sharing some 20 kind of production facility or some -- some sort of 21 technology that's on the leasehold, that might be a 22 whole different thing, where it's not very easy to 23 share and maybe it wouldn't be allowed. 24 And the last thing I would say is that roads 25 have historically been used to access other units on

the North Slope. As I said, that's been the 1 2 practice. And so when -- when ConocoPhillips says, 3 well, DNR has never ever done this before in 50 4 years. Well, that's because the practice was that 5 the operators didn't ever come up with -- didn't ever have this situation. They reached an agreement among 6 themselves to allow reasonable concurrent use without 7 8 charging each other and just had those agreements to 9 allocate risk. 10 An example is the ad hoc agreement between ConocoPhillips and -- and Oil Search that governed 11 12 until -- until ConocoPhillips insisted that Oil 13 Search pay more. So the circumstance of this case --14 THE COURT: How are the factors you just 15 listed -- how do they differ if this was a pipeline? 16 MR. LEIK: Well, those could all be 17 different -- any one --18 THE COURT: And the pipeline would be 19 attached to the land. 20 MR. LEIK: True. 21 THE COURT: It would save the -- you know, 22 that you could have concurrent use of the pipeline, 23 would save development costs, would presumably make it more profitable. And, therefore, the state 24 25 could possibly recover more. I mean, profit could

pass on up to the state. And it seems to me that --1 2 you know, that that principle -- I mean, this -- your 3 position -- I'm looking for a limitation that -- and 4 whether it's a pipeline or a building, they're 5 equally attached to the land. MR. LEIK: Sure. Well, like I said, I 6 think -- I don't know exactly how pipelines would 7 function in this situation, but I don't know that 8 9 it's as easy to say, you know, you can use the road 10 early in the morning and you can use it at night or 11 whatever -- whatever the different rules of the road 12 are. 13 But I don't know that you would have the 14 same ability to do that with a pipeline. I'm not a 15 pipeline expert, but I -- I think that's something 16 that's in the discretion of DNR to figure out is if 17 that has -- that kind of use of another facility has similar characteristics and also warrants reasonable 18 19 concurrent use. 20 THE COURT: But you think DNR has that authority? 21 22 MR. LEIK: Pardon me? 23 THE COURT: But you believe DNR does have 24 that authority? 25 Yes, and I can come to that. MR. LEIK: The

other thing that's relevant there -- there that I'll 1 2 brief just -- I'll mention just really briefly is 3 that the -- you know, they have a lease, and there's 4 language in the lease that protects -- can 5 potentially protect against the -- not -- no pun intended, slippery slope argument here, is that -- is 6 that the language of the lease, the exclusion -- the 7 reservation that we're talking about, has language 8 that says, it -- that the use by others has to be 9 10 under such conditions as will prevent unnecessary or 11 unreasonable interference with the rights of the 12 lessee and the operations under this lease. 13 So if someone felt -- if someone thought 14 that the concurrent use that DNR was contemplating 15 would interfere with its operations, it could make that case to DNR, using that lease -- the language of 16 17 the lease. As far as the authority goes that you 18 asked me about, I think there are -- they focus --19 that Conoco's -- focused almost entirely on AS30 --20 38.05.035 A2, but that's not the only authority. 21 And I've included AS 38.05.035 in the 22 materials that I gave you. But, number one -- well, 23 there are other provisions as well along with A2 that 24 give the -- the commissioner authority. Let me get 25 my copy here. They include most -- they include,

excuse me, a specific statute that authorizes the 1 2 director to issue permits. That's section AS 3 38.05.850. And other provisions in AS 05.035 include 4 section A3, which authorizes the director to execute 5 laws, regulate rules, regulations and orders adopted by the commissioner. 6 And here the -- here the director was -- was 7 executing the regulation that authorizes this -- this 8 9 permit. And as the state mentioned, A7. But back to 10 A2, since that's what we focused on here. 11 authorizes the director to manage, inspect and 12 control state land. And as -- as you perceive from 13 my prior argument, state land includes the state's 14 rights, including its rights to control and manage --15 control and manage the improvements that are placed 16 on the state land. 17 Again, that's -- this is state land. 18 state is the owner, and it is the lessor. 19 grant clauses and reservation clauses of the leases, 20 the state retained its rights and interests as owner 21 and lessor. Those are state land, and the DNR has 22 the right to manage and control its retained and 23 reserved rights as owner and lessor, including the 24 rights that are retained under the reservation clause that's been discussed. 25

Is the language and improvements 1 THE COURT: 2 on it belonging to the state applicable here? 3 MR. LEIK: I think that state's explanation 4 for that makes sense, but I -- I think that's almost 5 surplus as far as the issue we're facing here. key is, this is state land and it falls in that 6 first -- first clause, the state is --7 THE COURT: Well, if anything built on state 8 9 land is state land, what's the purpose of the 10 language and improvements on it belonging to the 11 state? 12 MR. LEIK: I think that simply clarifies an 13 additional aspect of it, but it doesn't exclude 14 improvements that are made by -- by persons other 15 than -- by persons other than the state. And it may, as the state suggested, be to clarify, you know, a 16 17 unified part of that second part to clarify that 18 they're talking about -- they're differentiating 19 between state facilities that are managed by DNR and 20 ones that are managed by others. I'm, I think, at the end of my time. 21 There 22 are couple other things that --23 THE COURT: Well, go ahead, Mr. Leik. 24 interrupted you a few times. Give you a little extra 25 time. Go ahead.

Okay. I'll try to be brief. 1 MR. LEIK: 2 There was an argument that if this is the 3 rule, no one would invest in infrastructure. I don't 4 think that's realistic. The -- parties invest in 5 this infrastructure because it's in their economic interest to develop the oil. That's what they're 6 7 doing out there. And the idea that they're not going to build roads to extract the oil from the KRU Unit 8 9 because someone else might use those roads, I don't 10 think stands up to much analysis. 11 THE COURT: I guess the argument would be 12 that if -- in the state sells you a cow and you raise 13 the cow and you feed the cow and you take the cow to the vet, why would anybody buy the cow if they have 14 15 to give the milk away to somebody else for free? Well, the milk here is oil, and 16 MR. LEIK: 17 ConocoPhillips has gotten all the -- all the milk 18 that it expected to get. Now is -- its expectation 19 when it built the roads. It built those roads to 20 serve this -- to serve its operations at the KRU. Ιt 21 didn't build them or permit them in order to make 22 money from other people. And it got what it -- it 23 got what it expected. It's been able to operate, and 24 the -- it's very clear, and ConocoPhillips doesn't 25 argue otherwise, that under either the permit or the

prior agreement, both of those fully protect Conoco 1 2 in -- in its use of the roads. They have priority to 3 the use of the roads. Both -- the permit expressly 4 says that -- that Oil Search cannot interfere and it 5 must cede priority to Conoco. Oil Search has to pay for any damage that occurs to the road. 6 7 So if ConocoPhillips -- and ConocoPhillips 8 doesn't argue anywhere that its use of those roads 9 has been impeded in any way. And so I think that's 10 important to understand. ConocoPhillips said 11 something about Oil Search wanting to use the roads 12 24/7, and that -- that just isn't borne out by the 13 record. 14 Conoco, they had an existing agreement that 15 had restrictions that are essentially the same as 16 what's in the permit. Again, giving ConocoPhillips 17 complete priority in the use of the road, and that's 18 what -- that's how they would have continued to 19 The -- the sticking point was the -- the 20 amount of fees that ConocoPhillips wanted to charge 21 for use of the road. 22 So I -- I think that's -- let me just --23 I -- I would just echo what the state said about the 24 nature of this case. This is strictly an appeal from 25 the permitting decision. If -- if ConocoPhillips

claims a taking or if it claims damages or any of 1 2 those other things, those are things that it would do 3 in a different proceeding. The only question before the Court is whether the permit was properly granted 4 5 by DNR in the context of an appeal. THE COURT: Can I ask -- this is a 6 background question I don't know the answer to. 7 When -- I assume that your client, OAS, did on this 8 lease -- was it a precondition of -- that they were 9 10 supposed to use the road or were they -- was it --11 was it basically at their risk as to whether they 12 would have to build a road or have access to a road? 13 MR. LEIK: It -- I know we went through the 14 history in our brief where it was in permitting for 15 the -- for this unit. There was full disclosure, if you will, that Oil Search would use the existing 16 17 roads. And that's even a kind of -- you know, it's outlined in the brief, but that's the kind of --18 19 THE COURT: So it was sort of 20 contemporaneous of obtaining the lease that your 21 client obtained? 22 I can't speak specifically to the MR. LEIK: 23 timing, but it's -- it's back there somewhere. But 24 the -- the -- that's the kind of -- the kind of 25 proceedings that we talk about in the brief are ones

where -- where there's an opportunity to notice --1 2 to -- there's notice and an opportunity to commit. 3 THE COURT: Uh-huh. 4 MR. LEIK: And, you know, ConocoPhillips 5 didn't come forward and say, what? You plan to use the roads on the KRU Unit? Because that's common 6 7 practice and it always has been on the North Slope. Companies use those roads to each other units. It's 8 9 no surprise to anybody. The surprise was attempting 10 to extract money from the use of the roads, and 11 that's what -- that led to this. 12 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. 13 MR. LEIK: Thank you. 14 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Leik. All right. Let's take a final ten-minute 15 recess, and we'll come back for 15 minutes. 16 17 THE CLERK: We're off record. Please rise. 18 Court is in recess. 19 (Off record.) 20 THE CLERK: Please rise. Superior Court is 21 in session. 22 THE COURT: Please be seated. 23 THE CLERK: We're on record. 24 THE COURT: All right. Ms. Hardin? 25 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

almost certainly promise I'm going to jump around a 1 2 little bit, but I'm going to try to respond to some 3 of the points made by OSA and DNR. And I feel 4 obligated to start by giving a little color to those 5 You might have gotten the impression these are, you know, country roads that people drive on 6 that maybe have a little bit of gravel and dirt. 7 That couldn't be further from the truth. 8 9 They are gravel roads that are eight-feet 10 They are 30- to 40-feet wide. The 75 miles of 11 KRU roads includes 12 bridges. Suffice it to say 12 these are substantial structures that cost over a 13 billion dollars to construct. And over time, as we've already talked about, ten to \$20 million per 14 15 year just to maintain. You heard a lot of commentary from I believe 16 both DNR and OSA about Conoco hasn't said that its 17 18 use of the roads is being interfered with or that 19 somehow it's being impeded, and that ConocoPhillips 20 is fully protected here, and that is the ultimate 21 cart before the horse. Whether Conoco can still use 22 the roads or how it uses the roads or whether OSA has 23 had to buy insurance is completely irrelevant to the 24 issue before the Court, which is, does DNR have the 25 authority to grant the permit in the first place.

know the answer to that is no. 1 2 I'm not going to retread all the ground 3 through the regulations and enabling statutes and 4 leases to say why, but I do want to come back to the 5 question you have asked over and over and to which you've really gotten no clear answer, in our view. 6 And that is: What is the limiting principle here? 7 If DNR interprets the lease, the statutes 8 9 and the regulations to mean that state land or said 10 land also means improvements, how can they limit the permit to just the roads or their authority to just 11 12 the roads? And you've asked that a number of times. 13 And the reality is, there is no limiting principle. 14 They haven't been able to identify anything, any constitutional -- I mean, contractual provision or 15 wording in the statutes or regulations that would 16 17 somehow say, well, you get to do this for roads but 18 nothing else. 19 If state land includes It doesn't exist. 20 improvements, which is what DNR must say to get to 21 their power, then it includes all improvements and 22 all infrastructure is forever at risk of a party 23 coming in and saying, I'm going to offer you ten 24 bucks to use your building, your facility, your 25 kitchen, whatever it may be. And if the party says,

well, that's not fair, you just run to DNR and ask 1 2 for a permit. Now, that had never happened before in 3 50 years, but we know it's happened now. And we know 4 that that precedent has been set going forward unless 5 the permit is revoked. The fact that DNR can identify no limiting principle in the language proves 6 7 just how outrageous their exercise of power here is. 8 There was an argument that was made that 9 ConocoPhillips couldn't have had an expectation when 10 it leased the KRU acreage, that it couldn't have had an expectation that its roads wouldn't be subject to 11 12 use by other parties. I can assure you that the 13 truth is just the opposite. When the Court is 14 interpreting a contract, of course, it has to consider, what were the facts and circumstances at 15 the time and what was the party's intent at the time 16 they entered the lease? 17 18 And it is not credible to argue that it was 19 ConocoPhillips' intent, the KRU lessee's intent, when 20 they entered that lease, that whatever infrastructure 21 they put on that land, would be up for grabs from any 22 other party that wanted to use it with a magic wand 23 by DNR and a permit. It is simply not credible to 24 argue that was ConocoPhillips' expectation. It most 25 certainly wasn't, and it never has been since. Wе

know that because, again, for 50 years, DNR has never 1 2 used the permit to do this, and instead what they've 3 said over and over is, if you want to use somebody's 4 infrastructure, you've got to go reach a commercial 5 agreement. You heard some commentary that nobody ever 6 7 charges for use of roads. That's not in the record because it's simply not true. There is a history of 8 9 charging for road use. What is true about these 10 roads and OSA's use, which is in the record, is that 11 the use was going to be or is far greater than other 12 use that has been requested by parties whether it be 13 the KRU Unit or other units. 14 At first, ConocoPhillips was willing to 15 allow OSA to use the roads for free, for its predevelopment activity. But to actually operate and 16 17 construct the Pikka Unit, no. It -- it wouldn't even 18 make sense to suggest that should be free use of 19 billion dollar roads that require millions and 20 millions of upkeep. There was a lot of talk about 21 reasonable concurrent use of the land, and to be 22 clear, ConocoPhillips doesn't contest the state's 23 right or interest and reasonable concurrent use of 24 the land. But what's so critical here is, we're not 25 talking about concurrent use of the land. We're

talking about concurrent use of private improvements. 1 2 The permit isn't for the land, and I know that both parties, DNR and OSA, want to -- I'm trying 3 to think of a good word. They don't really want to 4 5 engage with the notion of, they're assuming in the lease the regulations and the statutes that land 6 means improvements, but that is what they're 7 assuming. And there is no authority in the 8 9 constitution or the lease or anywhere else about 10 reasonable concurrent use of improvements. 11 What I find probably the most interesting is 12 the response on the enabling statutes. It goes 13 without saying, and the Court certainly recognizes 14 this, that whether it's the statutes or the lease, 15 there is an assumption by DNR and OSA that state land or said lands includes improvements. And what we 16 17 know from the enabling statutes 38.05.035 is that the 18 legislature has said just the opposite. 19 What we heard from DNR in response to your 20 question of: How do you square this? What do you 21 say about the statute? Was: Well, this is just an 22 organizational statute. Your Honor, this is the 23 enabling statute for the regulation they relied on to issue the permit. It is nine pages of director's 24 25 duties, none of which give DNR the authority over

private improvements. The very specific language 1 2 that addresses the state's rights, specifically says, 3 your rights over improvements are limited to those 4 belonging to the state. There could not be a more 5 direct comment on DNR's authority than what is in the precise language in the enabling statute that 6 supports this permit. It clearly says, DNR can't do 7 what it's trying to do here. 8 9 The other enabling statute that is on point, 10 38.05.035 talks about DNR being able to issue They had no response for the argument 11 permits. 12 that's clear on the face of the plain language. It. doesn't say in there that you get to issue a permit 13 14 for improvements. It says you can issue a permit on state land and then lists all kinds of things that 15 16 has nothing to do with improvements. Those are the two very specific enabling 17 statutes that tell us what DNR is authorized to do. 18 19 When you look at cases, when the court's assess is 20 DNR acting outside of its authority, but those --21 every single one of the cases starts with, okay, 22 let's look at what they did, under what regulation, 23 and then let's go and look at what the enabling 24 statute says, and is DNR acting within or consistent 25 with those statutes. The answer here is so

unequivocally no. They still haven't each identified 1 2 anything that would support this exercise of power. 3 I was somewhat confused. I thought the 4 argument was: Well, said land and the reservation 5 has to include roads because to use the land you have to be able to use the roads. I think that's what I 6 heard. But what we know, and this is in the record, 7 8 is each time DNR approves some type of permit or some 9 type of use, it's said to the parties, if you want to 10 go use the roads, go enter a commercial agreement. 11 That has been the history and practice on 12 the North Slope. If you want to use someone's roads, 13 you've got to have an agreement, until today, or I 14 guess now, until two years ago. 15 I'm going to summarize what I believe this 16 Court has to conclude in order to affirm the permit. 17 There are five things, and you've got to be convinced 18 of all five of them. First, you must be convinced 19 that the parties jointly intended, not just the 20 state, but ConocoPhillips as well, via the 21 reservation, that the state could enter upon and use 22 not just the land but improvements installed on the 23 land by the KRU lesses, even though the reservation 24 doesn't say that. Second, you've got to be convinced 25 that granting OSA use of the KRU roads is a purpose

that is authorized by law and not inconsistent with 1 2 the KRU's lease rights as required by 29E. 3 the subsection that DNR relied on for its power. 4 know that not to be the case because we've looked at 5 the law. Third, you must be convinced that DNR can 6 use 91.010, the regulation it relied on to grant the 7 permit, even though that regulation applies to land, 8 9 not improvements, and even though in 50 years no one 10 has ever used a miscellaneous land use permit to 11 grant a third party the right to private 12 improvements. 13 Fourth, you've got to be convinced that the 14 enabling statutes on which 91.010 is based actually authorizes DNR to exercise control over the roads or 15 16 improvements even though it says the opposite. And, 17 fifth, you have to be convinced that DNR's 18 expropriation of the care, lessee's rights to exclude 19 others isn't a violation of both the U.S. and 20 Alaska's constitutions, which the U.S. Supreme Court 21 has told us it is. 22 During our -- our discussion, my sense is 23 maybe you were -- you were getting at: What happens 24 now? Where does this go? What does ConocoPhillips 25 We believe that the only answer here is for want?

the permit to be revoked, and then for the Court to 1 2 give the parties direction to follow the rules, for DNR to follow the rules. What we expect will happen, 3 and we know this, in part, that OSA agrees, because 4 5 as we included in our reply brief, I gave some testimony to a Senate hearing committee earlier this 6 year and said, if the permit is revoked, we think, 7 you know, the parties will be able to work something 8 9 That's what we expect as well. 10 While the permit and authorized permit is still in place, there's really no incentive for OSA 11 12 to negotiate. There's emails and other things in the 13 record I won't -- I won't get into now, where 14 everybody kind of accepts that when the choice is 15 nothing or paying, DNR or OSA is protected at this They get to still use the roads for free, but 16 point. 17 once the permit is revoked, which we respectfully ask 18 the Court to do, we think the parties will be able to 19 negotiate some type of agreement. 20 Your Honor, I don't have anything else unless you have any questions for me. 21 22 THE COURT: No, no further questions. 23 Thank you so much. MS. HARDIN: 24 THE COURT: All right. Now comes the part 25 where all the gallery gets to vote on the outcome.

I'm -- that would be the easy way, and nothing 1 2 about this case is terribly easy except I will say 3 this, in all honesty, I thought the case was a lot 4 more complicated when it first came up. I just don't 5 think it's that complicated now. I do find myself -- and it's rare that 6 7 I'll -- you know, in a case of administrative appeal -- I'm just going to share my perceptions --8 9 that I find myself lopsidedly in agreement with one 10 side versus the other. And in this case, I do find myself lopsidedly in agreement with ConocoPhillips. 11 12 There isn't any particular argument they've made that 13 I -- I'm not persuaded by, and I'm just not persuaded 14 by the arguments that have been made on behalf of DNR and OAS. It's no fault of counsel. 15 16 It's just -- I really did expect that it was a stronger case. I just don't see it that way. 17 18 is no -- I will say, having been on the job about 14 19 and a half years, you know, with I guess some track 20 record to look back on with the Alaska Supreme Court, that is -- should not inspire great confidence for 21 22 anyone. 23 In the immortal words of Judge Sanders, I am 24 in the position of being a speed bump on the way to 25 the Alaska Supreme Court. I think it was Judge

1 This case could end up there. I would urge Sanders. 2 that you try at least one more time, hard, to work 3 out a compromise. But I do find myself in pretty 4 much complete agreement with the position by Conoco, and for that reason I don't want to draw out the 5 agony of this case. It's gone on a long time. I 6 7 think you need a prompt decision. This is my decision. I'll ask -- the formal 8 9 decision will be when -- since given my limited time 10 left on the bench, and the fact that my calendar is 11 completely packed because everybody needs to get 12 something decided before I'm gone, I will ask Conoco 13 to prepare an order of whatever length they think is 14 necessary to encapsulate their arguments. 15 I'll review it, and I expect that, in large part, if not in whole, that will be the order of the 16 17 Court. I appreciate the quality of the briefing by 18 both sides, very interesting. All 200-something 19 pages of it. I don't remember who counted all the 20 Not to mention all the -- the record. But 21 you need a decision, I don't want you to wait longer 22 That's my decision. for it. 23 Any clarification, Counsel? 24 MR. LEIK: Yes. For purposes of calculating 25 deadlines that are triggered by your --

```
1
                           It will be when the written
               THE COURT:
 2
      order is signed, Counsel. Thank you.
 3
               MR. LEIK:
                          Okay.
                                 Thank you.
 4
                          Yeah.
                                  I think I'm expressly
               THE COURT:
 5
      saying on the record that the written order will be
      the Court's decision.
                             I think we need to -- I don't
 6
 7
      want to start deadline for appeals and all that, or
      whatever may happen in the case. We'll wait for the
 8
 9
              If you can do it while the -- you know, my
10
      only advice is, strike while the iron is hot and my
11
      attention span hasn't been completely diverted.
12
               Counsel?
13
               MS. GRAMLING:
                              I would like to object to the
14
      idea that Conoco will be drafting your proposed
15
      order.
              This is an appellate case, so how would Your
      Honor feel if you were in practice and the Alaska
16
      Supreme Court was like, oh, Party A, you draft our
17
18
      decision?
                 That's -- I don't think that's an
19
      appropriate use of the Court's power.
20
                           It's appropriate if I fully
               THE COURT:
21
      agree with the decision, and as I just articulated, I
22
      don't disagree with any of the arguments that Conoco
      has -- has laid out. Now, I may take issue with
23
      particular language, and I will review it.
24
                                                  And
25
      I'll -- if so, if I find myself in disagreement with
```

any particular language, I think it's overbroad or 1 2 goes outside the record, it's not uncommon for me to interlineate, cross out, strike all paragraphs. 3 4 Ultimately, I'm responsible for that decision. 5 And so the drafting party is just -- it's a proposed order, just as any other case. And, you 6 know, I think it's rule 53, 58. I don't remember, 7 but it permits parties to submit proposed orders. 8 9 could have an order that says, for the reasons argued 10 by appellee or appellant in this case, I'm reversing the -- the DNR in this case, a couple of sentences 11 12 and be done. 13 I'd rather have a more detailed order in the 14 record, just so that the Supreme Court tracks the 15 reasoning and doesn't have to go read through 100-plus pages of appellant's brief to figure out 16 17 what the basis for my decision is. MS. GRAMLING: 18 I would argue that it's not 19 in the appellate rules and then also that does burden 20 shift the attorney's fees in that you're giving work to one party that isn't contemplated under the rules. 21 22 What's contemplated under the rules is briefing. 23 THE COURT: Well, you can argue that in 24 objecting to any attorney's fees. I appreciate it, 25 but it's -- I can assure that you I think you're

better off with a decision sooner than later, and the 1 2 decision won't get written, if I'm writing it. I'm 3 effectively done on the bench December 20th, and I 4 don't see an opportunity to write the decision from 5 scratch in that time frame, Counsel. So, yes, this is how we're going to do it. Your objection is 6 7 noted, however. Mr. Leik? 8 9 Excuse me. You referred to one MR. LEIK: of the civil rules, and I know which one you're 10 talking about, that says if there's a proposed order, 11 12 you can object to it or -- or, you know, within a 13 short time. 14 THE COURT: You certainly can. If you have 15 specific aspects -- and thank you for bringing that up, Mr. Leik -- of the -- of the proposed order that 16 17 you take issue with. Now, you know, you can 18 certainly submit -- I'll give you ten days. Actually, I can't make it -- if we're going to get 19 20 the proposed order in ten days, that would still be 21 fine. We have time, ten calendar -- ten calendar 22 days for any objections. 23 MR. LEIK: Thank you. 24 THE COURT: As long -- or whatever --25 obviously not on a weekend, but if -- the next -- the

```
next business day --
 1
 2
               MR. LEIK: Okay.
 3
               THE COURT: -- after that period.
 4
               MR. LEIK:
                          Thank you.
 5
               MS. HARDIN:
                            Your Honor, just to --
      administrative note, would it be your preference for
 6
 7
      us to submit a proposed order but also email it to
      the Court?
 8
 9
               THE COURT: Yes.
10
               MS. HARDIN:
                            Okay.
11
                           Both. Yeah, submit it to the
               THE COURT:
12
      law clerk, 3amlaw03@akcourts.gov. You can call my
13
      law clerk and get the detail --
14
               MS. HARDIN: Okay. Thank you, Your Honor.
                           Thank you-all. We'll go off
15
               THE COURT:
16
      record.
17
               THE CLERK: We're off record.
18
               (Off record.)
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
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1	TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE		
2			
3	I, Sandra A. Ventura, hereby certify that the		
4	foregoing pages numbered 1 through 91 are a true,		
5	accurate, and complete transcript of the		
6	above-referenced proceedings, transcribed by me from a		
7	copy of the electronic sound recording to the best of		
8	my knowledge and ability.		
9	I further certify that I am a disinterested party		
10	to said action.		
11	er c To		
12	November 24, 2024 Sandra Ventura		
13	Sandra A. Ventura, Transcriber		
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