Annie Conger speaks to a group in Brevig Mission's multipurpose building on May 16, 2026 at a meeting regarding Graphite One's proposed mine, located 17 miles from Brevig Mission. Ben Townsend/ KNOM

Brevig Mission pushes back against accelerating graphite project

January 27, 2026 • Ben Townsend

By the end of the decade, a massive new graphite mine on the Seward Peninsula could enter operations. The critical mineral has numerous industrial uses and currently, the United States doesn't produce any of it.

Thousands of miles away in Washington D.C., politicians have gowrote millions of dollars to help get the project off the ground. Last June, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) put the project on a fast-track, potentially slashing years off its permitting timeline.

But in Brevig Mission, an hour boat ride from the project site known as Graphite Creek, some regional residents have a different perspective on the proposed mine.

As the last bits of daylight disappeared over the Bering Sea on Jan. 14, four wheelers and snowmachines parked outside Brevig Mission's multipurpose building. Inside, 56 people stopped by a sign-in sheet and filled rows of tables facing the front of the room.

"In May we were told that it would be a two or three year process for the permit, but they changed it," Keith Conger, a Nome resident and consultant for Brevig Mission's city, tribe and corporation told the room. "Federal government gave them a way to get it shortened, and so now it's down to one year or less."

Keith Conger addresses people gathered for an informational meeting regarding Graphite One. Ben Townsend/ KNOM

Back in November, over 150 Brevig Mission residents were in the same room for what Keith Conger hopes was just the first of many meetings. The group is forming a coalition of residents from nearby villages and environmental experts to oppose Graphite One, the Canadian company behind the project.

The November meeting coincided with a public comment deadline for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit application. KNOM has submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the comments.

This time, the group drafted letters for a state permit to stop Graphite Creek from ever beginning construction on the mine can begin.

"I've talked to people for a long time, and people have told me their feelings, but if those feelings only stay right here in the village, then nobody finds out," Keith Conger told the room. "And the idea is to get the rest of the state, the rest of the country, to listen to you."

Keith Conger led the group through a refresher on the project, with an emphasis on the massive hole the open pit mine would leave in the side of the Kigluak mountain range. When Graphite One released its feasibility study in early 2025, it doubled the width of its original pit design from about a half mile to just over one mile. Graphite One said the confirmed presence of valuable, high-grade graphite economically justified the expansion.

Brevig Mission
Graphite Creek
Kigluak Mountain
Proposed Mine Site
Proposed Tailings Storage Facility
Proposed Waste Rock Storage Facility
Proposed Ore Stockpile
Proposed Mine Access Road
Proposed Port Site
Proposed Port Access Road
Proposed Power Line
Proposed Fuel Line
Proposed Fuel Storage Facility
Proposed Fuel Barge Offloading Facility
Proposed Fuel Barge Offloading Facility
Proposed Fuel Barge Offloading