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The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1949 C. Street NW, Room 7229
Washington, DC 20240-0002

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to support the State of Alaska's recent inquiry and related priority land conveyance request to the Interior Department that is being impacted by a boundary dispute over the exact location of the western boundary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in northern Alaska.

This issue centers on what waters are part of the Canning River, which has long been designated and reaffirmed as the western boundary of the Arctic coastal plain. President Truman's 1952 Public Land Order, President Eisenhower's public land "range" designation, and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) each lead to this result.

The State believes that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has effectively re-designated the separate Staines River, which empties into the Beaufort Sea several miles from the Canning River, as a channel of the Canning, thereby shifting nearly 20,000 acres of the coastal plain lying between the streams into the refuge. That would prevent the land from being conveyed to the State of Alaska as part of the State's still pending Statehood Act land conveyance request.

I believe a field trip earlier this summer between State and Federal officials that reinforced the complexities of reconciling maps – some based on Sir John Franklin's original mapping of the northern coast of Alaska in 1826 – with today's satellite-based coordinates, supports the state's claims that the Department is currently misidentifying the western bank of the Canning River.

That is preventing Alaska from benefitting from its 2011 oil and gas lease sale in the area – far from a theoretical issue given the value of the Point Thomson hydrocarbon field, just a few miles away.

Naturally, the Department could take a major step toward resolving the controversy simply by producing the map that defines the "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge dated August 1980" that was incorporated into section 1002(b) of ANILCA. In 2005, the last time I requested the original 1980 map, the Department could not produce it. Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator