

LISA MURKOWSKI
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0203

(202) 224-6665

(202) 224-5301 FAX

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510 L STREET, SUITE 600
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501-1956
(907) 271-3735

101 12TH AVENUE, ROOM 329
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-6278
(907) 456-0233

800 GLACIER AVENUE, SUITE 101
JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 586-7277

805 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 105
KENAI, AK 99611-9104
(907) 283-5808

1900 FIRST AVENUE, SUITE 225
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-6059
(907) 225-6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307
WASILLA, AK 99654-7142
(907) 376-7665

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Room 7229
Washington, D.C. 20240-0002

Secretary Jewell,

I write in support of the attached request from the residents of King Cove that you reconsider your recent decision regarding the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Proposed Land Exchange/Road Corridor, pursuant to Public Law 111-11, and to formally make the same request for reconsideration myself.

We often times use the term “matter of life and death,” and it is often a figure of speech, but this road will have a very real and tangible impact upon the lives and well-being of the residents of King Cove. We have documented for you and your predecessor the 18 residents and rescue personnel who have died, as well as the others who have been injured, in transportation related accidents in the past due to the lack of adequate surface access in and out of the community.

As I outlined to you in my previous correspondence, as well as during our trip together to King Cove and Cold Bay, I firmly believe that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that has been prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is fundamentally flawed. Not only does the EIS impermissibly evaluate a “no action alternative” to the road, failing to meet the “purpose and need” as guided by the 2009 legislation, but it does not assign appropriate weight to the health and safety of the village residents of King Cove. It was my hope that when you visited and heard first-hand the testimony of King Cove residents and saw the conditions that they face, that you would approve the land exchange that would allow the construction of a one lane, gravel, non-commercial road. Our State is a young one, and as a result is often lacking in basic infrastructure, so where many rural areas in the Lower 48 have transportation access, even in and around public lands, in Alaska that is generally not the case. King Cove is distinct, because it is only a few short miles from an all-weather airport, and it is therefore outrageous that we would allow an artificial government designation to block this community’s access to modern transportation infrastructure and adequate medical care.

Further, you have failed to take into account the Trust Responsibility that the United States government has for the health and safety of our Nation’s first peoples. In his March 21, 2013 Memorandum, Secretary Salazar directed the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, among other things, to determine whether rejecting the land exchange and blocking the road is consistent with “the unique trust relationship.” Further, the Memorandum also directed the Assistant Secretary to “specifically address... the emergency medical needs of King Cove.” Unfortunately, the resulting October 28, 2013, report from the Assistant Secretary of Indian

Affairs was entirely inadequate and in my estimation did not adequately fulfill the Department's trust responsibility.

In addition, the arbitrary nature of the decision is underscored by the fact that there has not been any substantive response to the attached comments that I previously filed on the EIS, nor my most recent correspondence to Assistant Secretary Washburn. I respectfully request reconsideration on this basis, as well.

In short, I ask that you reverse your decision to reject this life saving road. The health and safety of all Alaskans is of the utmost importance to me and I want you to know that I will not stop advocating for them until a safe, reliable emergency access is secured for King Cove. You alone have the power to change forever the lives of these Alaskans. I hope that you will remember the King Cove residents that you met and your responsibility to give them at least as much, and one would hope more, consideration than you have given to the wildlife.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Murkowski", with a stylized, flowing script.

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator