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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

Dear Secretary Jewell:

I write to bring your attention to a frightening incident that occurred on Friday, February 14th in King Cove, Alaska. Once again, the United States Coast Guard was forced to conduct a dangerous, but, thankfully, life-saving evacuation of a resident of King Cove. A Coast Guard crew flew their helicopter into King Cove in gale-force winds and blizzard conditions, which as you know from your visit this past August, are common in King Cove at this time of year. I wholeheartedly commend the bravery of the four Coast Guard personnel who placed their lives in danger to prevent an additional name from being added to the list of 18 persons who have died trying to get into or out of King Cove. However, this incident underscores questions about why you place a higher priority on preventing even a marginal intrusion on the peace and comfort of birds above the safety and well-being of not only the residents of King Cove, but the Coast Guardsmen and women who must risk their lives to save them in the absence of land access to the all-weather airport in Cold Bay.

As a result of your December 23rd decision rejecting the proposed limited-use, one-lane gravel road through a small fraction of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, I fear the continued need for similar perilous medical evacuations in the future. It is my understanding that as of the date of this letter, your Department has not yet crafted or produced any of your promised alternatives to a road, thereby leaving the community of King Cove with only broken promises from Washington, D.C. The status quo is not working and is obviously not acceptable. I would hope that you would agree with me that the Department of the Interior should not continue to place a potential threat to birds above the very real danger to these human lives. Access to adequate healthcare is a fundamental right that is being denied by your Department, and I continue to question why you find this dangerous situation acceptable.

In this particular instance, the resident who was evacuated is now in critical condition in an Anchorage hospital and is being treated for a heart virus, pneumonia and the flu. As you saw firsthand, the clinic in King Cove is not prepared to treat a patient with heart failure, so I hesitate to even think what would have happened if not for the heroism of the Coast Guard. In this case, the Coast Guard crew was already in Cold Bay, which also raises the question of whether their mission would have been possible, much less timely, had they been forced to fly from a more distant location, such as the Coast Guard base at Kodiak, which is over 430 miles away. In any

case, this entire event could have so easily been avoided with the proposed gravel road that you rejected, and yet the residents of this remote village must continue to live in unnecessary fear. Reading the first-hand accounts of those who selflessly performed and aided in this rescue puts this type of terrifying event into proper perspective and only serves to solidify my resolve to right this injustice.

I look forward to your prompt response, and would note that I am still awaiting a response from you to my letters dated January 17, 2014 and February 11, 2014. The people of King Cove deserve a timely response.

Sincerely,

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

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator