
April 26, 2008**EDITORIAL**

Mr. Young Wants Another Road

Under normal circumstances, building a one-lane, nine-mile gravel road would not seem much of a problem. You have to be suspicious, though, when its chief sponsor is Representative Don Young, second only to Senator Ted Stevens in bringing pork-barrel projects to Alaska. And you'd be right. This road would bisect an extraordinary wildlife refuge in the middle of federally protected wilderness.

In a moment of carelessness last week, the House Natural Resources Committee approved the road by a voice vote — reversing a 1998 law expressly prohibiting the road and clearing the way for up to \$50 million in wholly unnecessary spending. The Senate should kill it.

Mr. Young says the road — which would run from the isolated village of King Cove to the town of Cold Bay, which has an airport — is needed so King Cove residents can be ensured of ground transport in medical emergencies. The road would cause havoc in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, one of the richest wildlife feeding and breeding grounds in America. Further, it would set a bad precedent that could lead to road building in other protected wilderness areas.

For these reasons, Congress killed the idea in 1998. It also provided more than \$30 million in federal aid to various local projects, including an improved airstrip, a new medical facility and a state-of-the-art hovercraft to move people to Cold Bay in emergencies.

Mr. Young still wants his road. Mr. Young always wants his roads. As Republican chairman of the House Transportation Committee, he sponsored the Bridge to Nowhere in Alaska, Florida's Coconut Road connection that may soon be the target of a criminal inquiry and a high-speed rail link between California and Las Vegas coveted by some of his big campaign contributors.

Mr. Young's patience has been rewarded by a House committee that seems to have lost its sense of history. The project is no more attractive than it was 10 years ago. The Senate should say no.

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