

Alaska Wilderness League ♦ American Rivers ♦ Blue Goose Alliance ♦
Clean Water Action ♦ Defenders of Wildlife ♦ Earthjustice ♦
Environment America ♦ Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges ♦
League of Conservation Voters ♦ National Audubon Society ♦
National Wildlife Federation ♦ National Wildlife Refuge Association ♦
Natural Resources Defense Council ♦ The Sierra Club ♦
The Trumpeter Swan Society ♦ The Wilderness Society

April 8, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The undersigned 16 organizations request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our strong opposition to a road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on the Alaskan peninsula.

One of the bills included in the omnibus public lands package states the Secretary of Interior must issue a public interest determination regarding a proposed land exchange and subsequent road through the biological heart of the Izembek NWR, a wetland of global importance.

A road through the Izembek NWR is unnecessary and not in the public interest. The transportation, health, and safety needs of King Cove were met by Congress in 1998, when it passed the King Cove Health and Safety Act which appropriated \$37.5 million to solve King Cove's medevac needs, including a state of the art hovercraft with a 100% success rate. This law also specifically prohibited a road through Izembek's federally protected Wilderness. The proposed road would cost U.S. taxpayers many more millions of dollars—for a solution that would be far less safe and more uncertain than the hovercraft already has proven to be.

Despite this already substantial investment of American's tax dollars, a ruling that the road is in the public interest would sacrifice quality—206 acres of critical, internationally recognized wildlife habitat—for quantity. The 61,000 acres of proposed exchange lands do not offer comparable protection or habitat for the important wildlife species at Izembek and for the designated Wilderness that would be lost or irreparably harmed by the construction of a road.

Established in 1960, Izembek NWR was recognized by the Reagan Administration in 1987 as the first site listed by the United States under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Significance. Virtually the entire populations of Pacific black brant, and Steller's eiders—a Threatened species—rely on the refuge as an important resting and feeding ground.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss the issue and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Cindy Shogan, Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Rebecca R. Wodder, President
American Rivers

Don Redfearn, President
Blue Goose Alliance

John DeCock, President
Clean Water Action

Rodger Schlickeisen, President
Defenders of Wildlife

Trip Van Noppen, President
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Margie Alt, Executive Director
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John Flicker, President
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Evan Hirsche, President
National Wildlife Refuge Association

Frances Beinecke, President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Carl Pope, Executive Director
The Sierra Club

John Cornely, Executive Director
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Willam H. Meadows, President
The Wilderness Society