



Amidst Shutdown Chaos, Trump Administration Gives Away Public Land in Alaska

Heart of Globally Important National Wildlife Refuge Illegally Exchanged to Allow for Foreign Company's Profits

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Washington, D.C. Today while millions of government workers are furloughed without pay, officials in the Trump Administration's Department of The Interior were hard at work giving away hundreds of acres of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to allow for the construction of a road to haul fish for the Japanese owned, Peter Pan Seafoods, as recently reported by [CNN](#).

“The Trump Administration is showing their true colors – first by opening the Arctic Refuge to line the pockets of oil and gas corporate interests and now giving away wilderness in the Izembek Refuge,” said Geoffrey Haskett, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. “This shady public land giveaway is about economic development for a selected few and a fair and open debate should be had for all Americans to hear, and weigh in.”

For decades, officials in King Cove, Alaska, have been pushing to build a gravel road across the narrow strip of land that separates their 989 residents from Cold Bay, where they say it is the only way for residents to safely reach Cold Bay's all-weather airport during emergency medical evacuations. They'll tell you that a road is needed...*to save lives*. But a paper trail dating back more than 30 years suggests that the real motivation behind the road has always been...*to haul fish*.

“Secretary Zinke touts himself as a ‘Theodore Roosevelt Republican,’ but he bears no resemblance to Presidents Roosevelt and Eisenhower, who are rolling in their graves at this blatant public land giveaway to corporate interests,” said Dr. David Raskin, President of the Friends of Alaska Refuges. “President Roosevelt fought the greedy excesses of corporations, and President Eisenhower created the Izembek and Arctic Refuges in December of 1960 to protect two of the most important wildlife areas on the planet. This administration isn't fit to utter their names.”

In 1994, the City of King Cove [passed a resolution](#) stating that such a road would link North America's largest salmon cannery in King Cove with one of Alaska's premier airports at Cold Bay.

A year later, when speaking about the release of a state transportation plan, the State of Alaska's official position was that they [favored "a 20-mile road between King Cove and Cold Bay"](#) on the Alaska Peninsula for transporting salmon to a community with a runway that could handle large planes."

In 2011, [Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski said](#), "The decades-old push to get the road built between King Cove and the Cold Bay Airport so that we can have greater access for transportation is going to be a critical ingredient in that thriving economic future going out for the next 100 years."

Even Alaska Governor Bill Walker, [stated in a letter to President Trump](#) that a road would allow "access to health services and movement of goods and people between King Cove and Cold Bay."

Exhaustive scientific studies for decades have all concluded that a road would irreparably harm one of the most significant wetlands and wildlife habitats on Earth. The Trump Administration's stealth efforts to push through this destructive land giveaway without any public process threatens not only the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System, but the Wilderness Preservation System and all public lands in our great nation.

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The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries that secure its ecological integrity. For more information, visit www.refugeassociation.org or contact [Desiree Sorenson-Groves](#).

The Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges educate the public and decision makers on local, national, and international levels about Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges; assist the refuges in accomplishing their missions through wildlife management and habitat improvement projects; and fund refuge-oriented projects through grants, memberships, donations, and other activities. For more information, visit www.alaskarefugefriends.org or contact [Dr. David Raskin](#).