THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 21 2013

Memorandum

To: Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Secretary Ken Salazar

Subject: Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Land Exchange/Road Corridor

The Department of the Interior has a pending final decision concerning the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Land Exchange/Road Corridor as directed under the 2009 Omnibus Land Act (2009 Act).

If that decision were to approve the land exchange authorized in the 2009 Act, the Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to determine that the exchange, including construction of a road between the City of King Cove, Alaska, and the Cold Bay Airport, is in the public interest. However, the 2009 Act does not provide a process for making a public interest determination.

Over the last several weeks, Alaska Natives from King Cove have travelled to Washington, DC, and met with the Secretary of the Interior, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, and the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to present their views that a non-commercial road be authorized for medical evacuations from King Cove based on life safety concerns.

Based on their request, I believe that additional steps are appropriate before a final decision is made. Accordingly, I am directing the following actions be taken:

> Pursuant to the unique trust relationship, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs will visit King Cove to hold additional government-to-government consultations, including the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, the Beikofski Tribal Council, King Cove Corporation, City of King Cove, the Aleutians East Borough, and the Aleut Native Corporation. The Assistant Secretary will tour the area to assess the medical evacuation benefits from the proposed road, and provide a report to the Secretary of the Interior. In preparing the report, the Assistant Secretary will address whether and to what extent the road is needed to meet medical emergency requirements of King Cove. The report should specifically address, after consultation with the Indian Health Service, the emergency medical needs of King Cove. The Department will provide all necessary support for the Assistant Secretary to complete this assignment.
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> The Secretary of the Interior will also hold an official meeting in King Cove and receive written and oral testimony on the medical evacuation benefits of the proposed road.

The information gathered from the Assistant Secretary's report and the Secretary's official visit will be used as part of the Secretary's determination on the proposed land exchange/road corridor under the 2009 Act. If during these additional reviews there are significant new circumstances or if there is information relevant to environmental concerns that have a bearing on the proposed action or its impacts, the Department will conduct a supplemental NEPA process.

In reaching the Department's final decision on this matter, the Secretary will consider the full record before the Department, including the final Environmental Impact Statement of the U.S. States Fish and Wildlife Service, information presented in the Assistant Secretary's report, and the Secretary's public meeting in King Cove.

Thank you for undertaking this effort.