



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

JUL 15 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your letter dated June 10, 2015, regarding the most recent King Cove, Alaska medical evacuation (medevac). I recognize that the City of King Cove, like many rural communities throughout the State of Alaska, is faced with health and human safety challenges and I am very sympathetic to the individuals, medical personnel, and families involved with emergency rescue and transportation.

To that end, as you are aware, the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, contracted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assess three transportation options between the City of King Cove and the City of Cold Bay Airport that do not include a road through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and associated designated Wilderness. Enclosed is the completed study titled *King Cove – Cold Bay: Assessment of Non-Road Alternatives*.

This assessment provides a high-level overview of the three non-road-access options for medevac from King Cove to Cold Bay and on to Anchorage: (1) ice-capable marine vessel, (2) fixed-wing aircraft/new airport, and (3) helicopter/heliport. Variations within each alternative address the location of the facilities and, to a lesser extent, type of equipment and facilities. This assessment does not provide a formal recommendation, but presents new and valuable information on the locations, cost, risks, and dependability of each.

I believe this assessment will be a useful planning tool for the community of King Cove and Aleutians East Borough as they consider the range of transportation options that are available to them. The options presented in the assessment warrant serious consideration. As you will see, several options offer a very high degree of dependability in all weather conditions and may have significant benefits to King Cove in addition to providing reliable emergency response capacity. I look forward to working with you and the local communities on further exploring these viable and beneficial alternatives.

As always, I appreciate your commitment to the people of Alaska and look forward to working with you on our many areas of shared interest. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Sally Jewell

Enclosure