



THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

Alaska Federation of Natives

1/22/18

9:30-11 am

Department of Interior

Action Officer: Micah Chambers – micah_chambers@ios.doi.gov – 202.208.5348

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this event is twofold
 - a. Formal Swearing in ceremony for Joe Balash (ASLM)
 - b. Sign formal agreement to initiate the land exchange that will commence the King Cove Road

- II. **BACKGROUND:** The community of King Cove has worked for more than three decades to get a road corridor linking their community to the all-weather Cold Bay Airport, located 25 miles away. The small stretch of road (approximately 12 miles) would connect to existing roads in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. In 2009, Congress and the President approved the road and swap (61,000 acres from the State and the King Cove Corporation) in exchange for a small single-lane gravel road corridor to the nearby all-weather Cold Bay Airport. Former U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell rejected the road on Dec. 23, 2013 because she needed to “listen to the birds and animals, because ultimately, I’ve got to speak for them.” This a critical issue for the Congressional delegation and the Governor. Chairman Murkowski asked the Secretary about this issue during his confirmation hearing and the President discussed this personally with Sen. Murkowski during the Tax Reform celebration at the White House. Both Sen. Sullivan and Rep. Young have pushed for this issue in their perspective committees as well. Press has already reported that the event will be happening on January 22, 2018.

Joe Balash was confirmed in the Senate in December and recently started at the Department. He is already sworn in, but has not had an official ceremony. This will be done while the delegation (including his former boss, Sen. Sullivan) and the Alaska Natives will be at the Department.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Internal:

- Secretary Ryan Zinke
- Joe Balash, ASLM

External

- Chairman Lisa Murkowski
- Sen. Dan Sullivan
- Rep. Don Young
- Gov. Bill Walker
- Della Trumble, King Cove
- Admiral Paul Zukunft, Commandant, USCG - Tentative

IV. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

9:30am Secretary Zinke Coffee Reception with Speakers and VIPs

Location: Secretary's Office
 10:00 Welcome: Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior
 Location: Auditorium
 10:05 Ceremony/Oath for Joe Balash, Newly confirmed, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, U.S. Department of Interior
 10:07 Comments by Joe Balash
 10:10 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator
 10:13 Admiral Paul Zukunft, Commandant, USCG
 10:16 Alaska Governor Bill Walker
 10:19 Honorable Don Young, Congressman for Alaska
 10:22 Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator
 10:25 Della Trumble, King Cove
 10:30 Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of Interior
 Signing
 Press availability
 5:00pm Reception at the US Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Note: Should the WH have interest in POTUS attendance, the schedule will obviously shift to accommodate.

V. PRESS PLAN: Press will be invited and set up in the auditorium. Depending on timing and availability, some AK television stations may stream/record the ceremony live for the morning shows. After the ceremony, King Cove, AFN and the Alaska Delegation will be available for a press availability. Sec. Zinke is currently not expected to do press after the event. Joint release with the delegation and their quotes will be sent after the event. No advance interview is currently planned with the Secretary.

VI. REMARKS: TBD

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. King Cove Fact Sheet
- b. Renewed optimism under Zinke's Interior Department for King Cove
- c. Proposed Alaska Road Pits Villagers Against Environmentalists
- d. In Alaska, a Deal Is Made for a Controversial Road Inside a Refuge