

Introduced By: Mayor Cleworth
Introduced: February 25, 2013

RESOLUTION NO. 4565

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A LAND EXCHANGE FOR A LIMITED ACCESS ROAD TO PROVIDE SAFE AND RELIABLE ACCESS TO THE COLD BAY AIRPORT FOR THE RESIDENTS OF KING COVE, ALASKA

WHEREAS, the 950 residents of King Cove, Alaska, need safe and reliable surface access to the Cold Bay Airport for health, safety, and quality-of-life reasons; this access would be a single-lane, gravel road with cable barriers on both sides of the road and would traverse a small portion of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, which surrounds King Cove and Cold Bay; and

WHEREAS, the *Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009* (Act) authorized a land exchange to provide for this road with an unprecedented offer of 56,000 acres from the State of Alaska and King Cove Corporation to the federal government for 206 acres that would be used to construct this modest access road for 10-15 vehicles on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, of these 56,000 acres offered to the federal government, over 45,000 acres will be added as wilderness designations to the Izembek and Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuges as the first addition of new federal wilderness lands in Alaska since ANILCA; and

WHEREAS, this issue has been a long-standing controversy between the federal government and the Aleut residents of King Cove and the State of Alaska involving three decades of clashes over the positive and negative "impacts" of this road in consideration of the area's unique natural and human environments; and

WHEREAS, the Act provides Interior Secretary Ken Salazar the final authority to approve the Izembek land exchange through a Public Interest Determination provision in the Act; Secretary Salazar has agreed to meet with King Cove officials in the near future,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRBANKS, that Interior Secretary Ken Salazar is urged to use his Public Interest Determination authority to approve the Izembek land exchange so the residents of King Cove can have safe and reliable transportation access to the Cold Bay Airport for health, safety, and quality-of-life reasons.

PASSED and APPROVED this 25th day of February 2013



JERRY CLEWORTH, MAYOR

AYES: PASSED and APPROVED on the Consent Agenda
NAYS: _____
ABSENT: Eberhart
APPROVED: February 25, 2013

ATTEST:

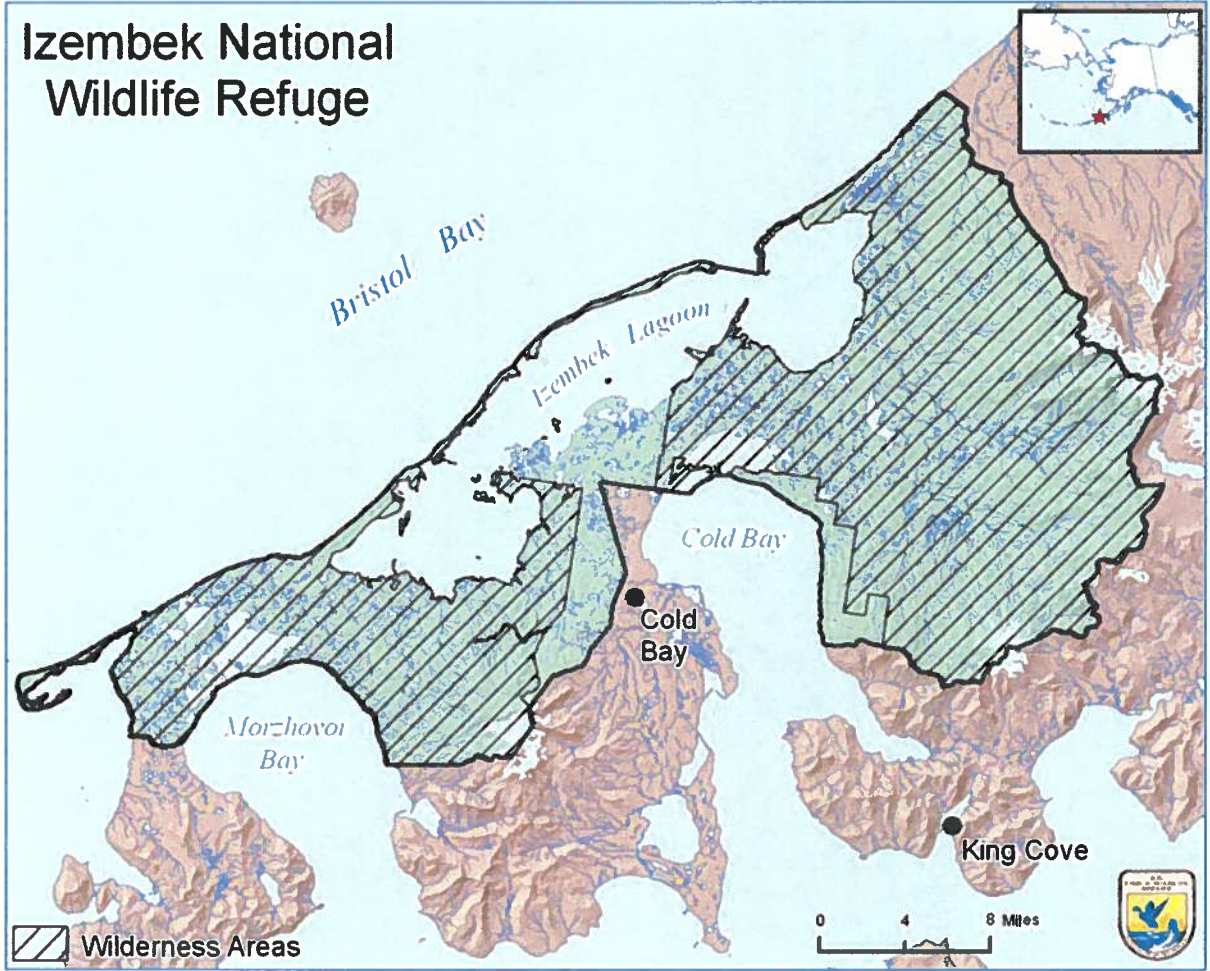

for JANEY HOVENDEN, CMC, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



PAUL J. EWERS, City Attorney

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge





PRESS RELEASE:

King Cove Residents Outraged over USFWS Recommendation to Reject Proposed Land Exchange, Road Corridor

King Cove, AK – Feb. 5, 2013 – King Cove tribal and community leaders are offended by the federal government’s decision to recommend against building a small gravel road corridor linking the remote Aleut community to the Cold Bay Airport. The single-lane road would have provided the 950 residents with access to better health care and quality of life. Today, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced that it has chosen the “no action” alternative rather than a proposed land exchange and single-lane road corridor that would traverse a small section of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. The USFWS recommendation was made during the environmental impact statement (EIS) of the land exchange and proposed road corridor.

“This is an outrage,” said Della Trumble, spokeswoman for the King Cove (Native) Corporation and Agdaagux Tribal Council of King Cove. “This recommendation is completely unfair and insensitive to the indigenous people who have been stewards of this land for thousands of years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is clearly biased against the Aleut people. This demonstrates that the federal government believes the Aleut people matter less than the tundra swan and the black Brandt.”

The land swap would have given the federal government 56,000 acres of pristine land (43,093 acres of state land and 13,300 acres of land owned by the King Cove Corporation). In exchange, 206 acres would have been removed from the refuge for a single-lane gravel road. The federal government would have also received 1,600 acres from the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on Sitkinak Island south of Kodiak.

“Fish and Wildlife Service hasn’t listened to us throughout the EIS process,” said Aleutians East Borough Stanley Mack. “The Service refused to consider the information we provided to them and instead moved forward with this biased recommendation. We have tried on six different occasions to meet with Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and we were turned down every time. We’re still hopeful he will do the right thing and overturn this recommendation.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommendation will be published tomorrow (Feb. 6, 2013) in the Federal Register. On Feb. 15, 2013, the EIS becomes final. It will be followed by a 30-day comment period. A final record of decision will be published within 30 days. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior will then decide what's in the public's interest.

"This isn't over," said King Cove Mayor Henry Mack. "We're not giving up. We're not going to stop fighting until we get the road that the Aleut people so desperately need and deserve."

For more information, visit <http://www.izembekenhancement.org/> ,
<http://www.kingcoveview.com/> and <http://www.aleutianseast.org/> .

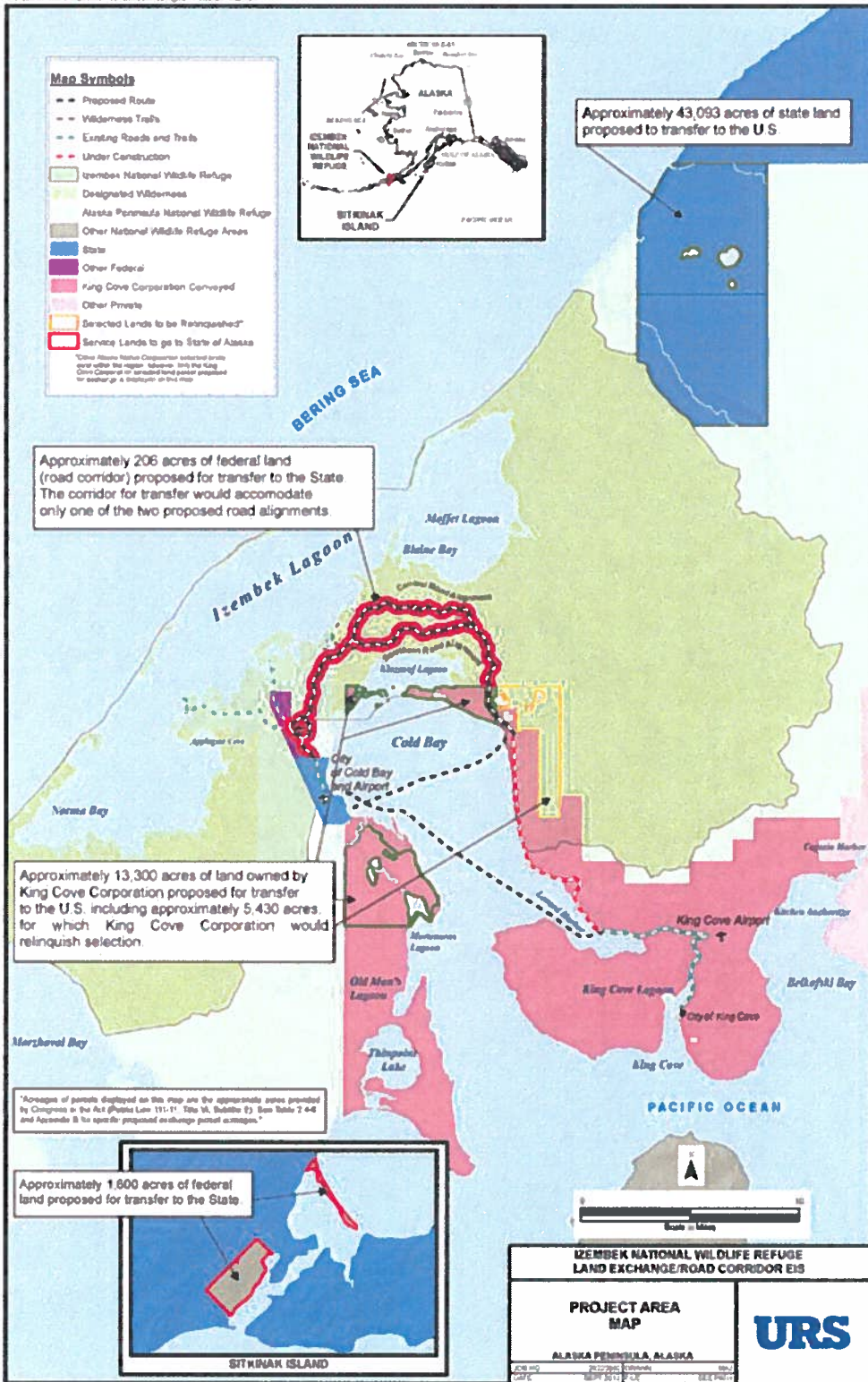
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Contacts:

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Salazar to discuss proposed refuge with King Cove

Dan Joling / Associated Press | Posted: Friday, February 15, 2013 3:19 pm

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Interior Secretary Ken Salazar will meet with members of a remote Alaska community to discuss a proposed road through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

Interior Department spokesman Blake Androff says by email that the meeting was scheduled at the request of King Cove residents and Alaska's U.S. senators, Democrat Mark Begich and Republican Lisa Murkowski.

King Cove residents want to make the case in person for a one-lane gravel road cutting through the refuge that could transport King Cove residents to emergency medical care by way of an all-weather airport at nearby Cold Bay.

The road through the wilderness area is bitterly opposed by environmental groups.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last week rejected a land trade that would have led to construction of the road.