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U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
IZEMBEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
LAND EXCHANGE/ROAD CORRIDOR
PUBLIC MEETING
for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Taken May 3, 2012
Commencing at 7:00 p.m.
Volume I - Pages 1 - 95, inclusive

Taken at
Campbell Creek Science Center
Anchorage, Alaska

Reported by: Valerie Martinez, RPR

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1 A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S
2 For U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
3 Polly Wheeler
4 Mike Boylan
5 Stephanie Brady (telephonic)
6
7 For URS Corporation:
8 Joan Kluwe
9 Jon Isaacs
10 Taylor Brelsford
11
12 Taken by:
13 Valerie Martinez, RPR
14
15
16 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were
17 taken at the time and place duly noted on the title
18 page, before Valerie Martinez, Registered Professional
19 Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of
20 Alaska.
21
22
23
24
25

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thanks, everybody, for being
3 here. The whole front row here is open. So if anybody
4 is so inclined, there's lots of extra seats up here.
5 Good evening. My name is Polly Wheeler. I'm
6 with the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National
7 Wildlife Refuge System. Thanks a lot for being here
8 tonight. It took a lot, I know, to come in on this
9 beautiful evening, but we also know that this is a
10 really important issue to everybody, so we'll try and
11 get started here.
12 Before we do get started, Joan Kluwe with the
13 URS, who is the chief contractor when we did the EIS
14 under -- the draft EIS under the guise of the Fish and
15 Wildlife Service, she's going to introduce the formal
16 cooperators. And then I'll tell you a little bit about
17 how we're going to be doing things tonight and then we
18 can get started off.
19 So, Joan?
20 **JOAN KLUWE:** Good evening. I'm Joan Kluwe
21 with URS Corporation, as Polly said. We have two other
22 URS employees with us tonight. John Isaacs is in the
23 back and Taylor Brelsford disappeared.
24 Where are you, Taylor?
25 There he is.

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1 **TAYLOR BRELSFORD:** I'm short.
2 **JOAN KLUWE:** Thanks.
3 And the cooperators, would you all stand as
4 well and I'll introduce you one by one?
5 Everybody can have a glance at who is the
6 cooperating agencies. Gary Hennigh is with the City of
7 King Cove. Della Trumble is with the Agdaagux Tribe and
8 the King Cove Corporation. Samantha Carroll is with the
9 State of Alaska. Bill Ballard is with State DOT. And
10 Bill Lushkin?
11 **ED FOGELS:** Ed Fogels.
12 **JOAN KLUWE:** Ed Fogels. Sorry. Haven't met
13 you yet, Ed. Nice to meet you.
14 Heather Boyer is with the Corps of Engineers.
15 And I think that is all the cooperators with us tonight.
16 And thank you all for coming.
17 These folks have been working on this project
18 with us side by side for a year and a half now. We're
19 headed towards two years very closely.
20 Thank you all for coming.
21 **POLLY WHEELER:** Okay. Just a little bit in
22 terms of how we're going to do this tonight. This is
23 Mike Boylan. He works also with Fish and Wildlife
24 Service, Refuge System. And Mike is going to run
25 through the PowerPoint.

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1 Now, we all know why we're here tonight. And
2 I will say in advance, the PowerPoint is 40 slides long
3 and it's got a lot of text in it. So we're not -- we're
4 going to try and hit the highlights. You could say
5 there's a lot of highlights because of 40 pages, but we
6 did make copies of the PowerPoint. It's in the back of
7 the room.
8 So we may cover some of the information rather
9 quickly, but hopefully if you have any -- you can go
10 back and take the time to look at the PowerPoint. We're
11 going to try not to read you every word on every slide
12 because we know that you're anxious to give your
13 testimony and that's really -- that's what we're here
14 for tonight is to listen to your comments and concerns.
15 So we may run through it quickly, but again
16 there's copies of that in the back. There's also copies
17 of the CD and the executive summary of the draft EIS as
18 well. And we have hundreds of copies, so please feel
19 free to take them and read them at your leisure.
20 Just as a reminder, when we get to the public
21 testimony stage, everybody got a number when they signed
22 in. I think we've got about 30, 35 people signed up
23 thus far. And we'll be looking at about three minutes.
24 If people can try and be concise in their comments. You
25 did get a number. We'll try and follow that order as we

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1 move through.
2 We do have a court transcriptionist who will
3 be getting every word. Those of us that are here with
4 Fish and Wildlife Service will also be writing things
5 down, but we'll have a word-for-word transcription of
6 the testimony, so that will help us down the road.
7 So without any further ado, I'm going to turn
8 it over to Mike who will -- turn the mic to Mike -- and
9 he will run through the PowerPoint.
10 Thank you.
11 **MIKE BOYLAN:** Thanks, Polly.
12 I'll try to go through this. Again, it's not
13 going to be death by PowerPoint, but you're probably
14 going to be injured. I would like to be able to talk
15 like an auctioneer, but I can't, so we're just going to
16 get going quickly.
17 And if you would hold your questions to the
18 end, please, when you have those. But, again, the main
19 reason is not to hear a bureaucrat talk here. It's to
20 hear from you. So that's why I'm trying to get through
21 this very quickly.
22 Okay. Starting off, the agenda tonight, first
23 of all, we will do an overview of the Public Land
24 Management Act of 2009, which directed that we do an EIS
25 for a proposed land exchange; the various cooperating

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1 agency roles of the proposed action; a little bit about
2 the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge; the purpose and
3 need for the draft EIS; issues that were identified in
4 the scoping; the five draft EIS alternatives; mitigation
5 measures; impact conclusions; the public process,
6 comment process, and how this fits in; and the next
7 steps.
8 **JOAN KLUWE:** And, Mike, I forgot to mention
9 that the cooperators -- there's also some on the phone
10 as well, but that is a muted line.
11 **MIKE BOYLAN:** There are some cooperators on
12 the phone also, but they can't -- they can't speak in.
13 They are listening in, though.
14 The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009
15 directed that we do an environmental impact statement to
16 consider a proposed land exchange directed by the
17 Secretary of the Interior; at least one road alternative
18 must have been analyzed and must be analyzed -- and, in
19 fact, there are two -- and that the Secretary of the
20 Interior will determine if the land exchange -- the
21 proposed land exchange is in the public interest.
22 The cooperating agencies. The Act identified
23 the cooperating agencies, and there's a written MOU that
24 spells out their roles and responsibilities. But the
25 lead agency is responsible for determining the scope of

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1 the EIS and issuing a record of decision. That's the
2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
3 Okay. The proposed action: A land exchange
4 for the purpose of constructing and operating a
5 single-lane gravel road between -- linking the
6 communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. The road shall
7 be used primarily for health and safety purposes and
8 only for noncommercial purposes, with the exception of
9 taxis and shared rides, like vanpools.
10 Okay. The land exchange proposed in the Act
11 was to be -- and these are rough numbers -- 206 acres of
12 the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge/Wilderness would be
13 conveyed to the State for 206 linear acres for a road
14 corridor. 1,600 acres from the Alaska Maritime National
15 Wildlife Refuge would be conveyed to the State, and
16 that's on Sitkinak Island, which is mostly State-owned
17 already.
18 43,093 acres of State land would be conveyed
19 to the U.S. and added to the Alaska Peninsula National
20 Wildlife Refuge as wilderness. Another 13,300 acres of
21 King Cove Corporation land near Mortensens Lagoon and
22 the mouth of Kinzarof Lagoon would be conveyed to the
23 U.S. And the Kinzarof parcel would be part of the
24 Izembek Wilderness.
25 And, finally, the King Cove Corporation would

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1 relinquish its selection of 5,430 acres in the Izembek
2 Wilderness, but make alternative selections outside of
3 wilderness.
4 Okay. On the map, the way this looks . . .
5 **JOAN KLUWE:** Oh, sorry.
6 **MIKE BOYLAN:** On the map, these are the two
7 potential road corridors. And approximately -- each one
8 would be approximately 206 acres of land, of federal
9 land, within the Izembek Wilderness, but only one of
10 those corridors will be picked. So those are the two
11 alternatives we'll talk about later.
12 Also, the State would be giving up
13 43,093 acres up here of State land that is proposed to
14 be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
15 **JOAN KLUWE:** I think that would become
16 wilderness.
17 **MIKE BOYLAN:** That's non-wilderness.
18 **JOAN KLUWE:** It would become wilderness.
19 **MIKE BOYLAN:** Would become wilderness, yes.
20 In addition -- the federal government, what it
21 would be giving up in addition to this 206 acres, is on
22 Sitkinak Island, a total of 1600 acres of federal land
23 proposed for transfer to the State. These two parcels.
24 As I said, most of Sitkinak Island is already State
25 land.

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1 Another 13,300 acres of land owned by King
2 Cove Corporation would be transferred to the U.S.,
3 including 5,430 acres, which would relinquish their
4 selection rights in wilderness.
5 Okay. Some of the other requirements of the
6 Act. You might call them mitigation measures. It calls
7 for a cable barrier on each side of this proposed road,
8 unless another type of barrier is required in the record
9 of decision, but at a minimum, a cable barrier. It
10 would minimize adverse impact of the road corridor on
11 the refuge; there would be a mitigation plan, including
12 avoiding wildlife impacts and mitigation of wetland
13 loss; transfer the minimum acreage of federal land
14 required for construction of the road; to incorporate
15 the existing roads to the maximum degree possible; and
16 the State lands within Kinzarof Lagoon would be
17 designated as a State Game Refuge.
18 A little bit of Izembek -- the history on
19 Izembek Refuge. It was established in 1960 as the
20 Izembek National Wildlife Range. Then it was
21 redesignated by ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest
22 Lands Conservation Act, in 1980 as the Izembek National
23 Wildlife Refuge. And ANILCA also established the
24 Izembek Wilderness.
25 Izembek is one of the most biologically

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1 significant refuges. It's one of the smallest of
2 Alaska's 16 refuges, and most of it is designated
3 wilderness. And it's got a diverse array of wildlife
4 species at the end of the Alaska Peninsula. And it
5 includes five species of salmon; furbearers, such as
6 wolf, fox, and wolverine; large mammals, such as caribou
7 and brown bear; shorebirds, waterfowl, and seabirds.
8 Some other things. It's part of the Aleutian
9 Islands Biosphere Reserve. It was designated as an
10 International Biosphere Reserve in 1976. And very
11 significantly, Izembek was designated the first American
12 Wetland of International Importance, a Ramsar wetland,
13 in 1986. And it's one of only 19 Wetlands of
14 International Importance in the United States. And it's
15 a globally important bird area as well. About 98
16 percent of the world's population of Pacific black brant
17 come to Izembek in the fall.
18 The Izembek Refuge region is rich in cultural
19 history. The Aleut people have lived there for over
20 3,000 -- since 3,000 B.C. at least, and they continue to
21 reside in the local communities. And in the 18th and
22 19th centuries, the Russians explored the area and
23 established some fur trading posts, often resettling the
24 Aleut in the process.
25 World War II remnants are still available --

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1 still visible. And depressions from military barracks
2 dot the landscape. A lot of Izembek has been cleaned up
3 of the military's debris.
4 The residents of King Cove have been
5 advocating for the proposed road for over 25 years.
6 This is nothing new. They've been advocating for this
7 for over 25 years. It shows their commitment, their
8 dedication, their concern. They have concluded that a
9 road is necessary for the health and safety of their
10 residents.
11 The proposed land exchange would transfer a
12 road corridor that would allow a construction of a
13 one-lane -- a single-lane gravel road between King Cove
14 and Cold Bay. And the proposed road is to be used
15 primarily to address health and safety issues so they
16 can get to the airport.
17 The major needs, they say, health and safety,
18 reliable and safe transportation for medical care,
19 including emergencies; second, quality of life -- the
20 ability to drive to the nearest airport, the major
21 airport, linking Cold Bay in that area, that region,
22 with Anchorage -- and, three, affordable transportation,
23 because right now the round-trip airfare is over \$200
24 between King Cove and Cold Bay on PenAir.
25 Some of the issues identified in the scoping.

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1 I'm not going to go through all those. You can read
2 them. But they involve the physical environment, the
3 biological environment, social environment,
4 socioeconomics, wilderness, threatening endangered
5 species.
6 There are five alternatives in the draft EIS.
7 The first alternative is called the no-action
8 alternative. That's just the way things are now.
9 The second alternative is a land exchange and
10 a southern road alignment. Alternative three is a land
11 exchange and what's called a central road alignment. So
12 two alignments -- two alternatives that call for a road.
13 Alternative four is a hovercraft operation
14 from the Northeast Hovercraft Terminal to Cross Wind
15 Cove over by Cold Bay. And that would be six days a
16 week. And the hovercraft is not operating. This draft
17 EIS was conceived and was begun and initiated and
18 completed really before the hovercraft was taken out of
19 operation. That's why it's -- but it's still in there.
20 And the fifth alternative is a Lenard Harbor
21 ferry from the King Cove side to Cold Bay with
22 improvements to the Cold Bay dock. So those are the
23 five alternatives.
24 Alternative one, the no action, there would be
25 no land change. We use -- the current modes of

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1 transportation would continue to work, including air
2 service, personal marine vessels, ferry service, which
3 is twice monthly in the summer, and seasonal hovercraft
4 service, three days a week.
5 In November of 2011, the Aleutians East
6 Borough announced they would not resume hovercraft
7 service in the area, so we are going to redefine and fix
8 that no-action alternative.
9 Estimated cost of the no-action alternative,
10 \$1 million annual operation and maintenance and
11 \$26.3 million over the life cycle of the project.
12 Alternative one is a revised no action. And
13 by this one, the -- in February and March 2012, the
14 Aleutians East Borough identified an aluminum landing
15 craft/passenger ferry as a potential marine
16 transportation link if the road is not constructed.
17 But, again, the no action would still continue current
18 modes of transportation and there would be no land
19 exchange.
20 Alternative two, the land exchange and the
21 southern road alignment. This would have 201 linear
22 acres for a road corridor removed from the refuge,
23 including 131 acres in the Izembek Wilderness. A total
24 of 52,500 acres would be added to the refuge; 8,092
25 acres of refuge lands and 44,500 acres designated

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1 wilderness; and 5,430 acres of Native-selected land
2 would be retained in the wilderness.
3 This would call for a road -- 19.4 miles is
4 the total road length, 12 and a half miles of which
5 would be new construction and six miles constructed on
6 existing roads and trails, and nine-tenths of a mile of
7 the existing road. The road footprint would be 107
8 acres with 3.8 acres of wetlands filled.
9 There would be a boundary adjustment near
10 Blinn Lake. A portion of the alignment would be
11 exclusive to the southern route, located only in the
12 watershed of Kinzarof Lagoon. And the estimated cost of
13 construction, about \$20.7 million; \$149,000 is annual
14 operation and maintenance; and \$23.4 million over the
15 life cycle of the project.
16 This shows the alignment of the -- these are
17 the two potential road alignments. And this is the one
18 they call the southern road alignment. And this would
19 be the northern -- central road alignment. So it would
20 be one or the other, not both. And each one is about
21 200-and-some acres.
22 Alternative three, land exchange and the
23 central road alignment. This calls for a little bit
24 larger -- 227-acre road corridor. And about the same in
25 terms of acreage added to the refuge, 52,000-something;

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1 8,000 acres of refuge lands and 44,500 of designated
2 wilderness and then the 5,430 acres of selected land
3 would be retained in wilderness.
4 And about a 21 -- a little bit longer road --
5 about 21.6 miles; 11 miles of new construction, nine
6 miles on existing roads and trails, 1.6 miles of the
7 existing road. The road footprint, 100 acres, and a
8 little bit less wetlands to fill, 2.4 versus 3.8 in the
9 earlier one.
10 Again, the two roads that we showed.
11 Alternative four, hovercraft operations from
12 Northeast Hovercraft Terminal to Cross Wind Cove.
13 Again, the hovercraft is not going to be operating, but
14 we did the analysis on it. This was proposed -- the
15 proposed action in the 2003 -- the original Izembek EIS
16 and continues that alternative.
17 There would be no construction or
18 ground-disturbing activities beyond what was authorized
19 in 2003; mainly the completion of the Northeast
20 Hovercraft Terminal and the access road; and they would
21 use the existing hovercraft and existing terminal at
22 Cross Wind Cove over on the Cold Bay side.
23 The estimated cost of construction is zero
24 because that's already been planned for and constructed.
25 And a 2-million-dollar annual operation and maintenance

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1 and a 44-million-dollar life cycle cost. And there
2 would be no land exchange under this one, continue to
3 use the hovercraft.
4 Here's where -- the last place from Lenard
5 Cove that the hovercraft operated over here. This road
6 is now being completed -- or is completed up to the
7 Northeast Hovercraft Terminal here and then it would go
8 over to Cross Wind Cove and Cold Bay.
9 Alternative five calls for a ferry from Lenard
10 Harbor. And this would be an icebreaker kind of a ferry
11 that would stand up to the weather and the waves and the
12 climate out there. And it would require a major --
13 well, it would be a Lenard Harbor ferry dock and
14 terminal. And it would require a major modification of
15 the Cold Bay dock, including a wave barrier, vehicle
16 ramp system, pedestrian walkway.
17 This would be a displacement monohull,
18 open-deck ferry with icebreaking capabilities. And it
19 would require a materials site, a disposal site, and a
20 temporary barge landing site. Ferry service estimated
21 at six days a week, as was called for in the 2003 EIS.
22 And the construction cost estimated at \$27
23 million with \$2.3 million in annual operation and
24 maintenance and a 70-million-dollar life cycle. Again,
25 no land exchange.

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1 And this is how the ferry would come out, from
2 Lenard Harbor here, close to the King Cove Airport,
3 across to the Cold Bay dock.
4 A number of the -- the draft EIS considered a
5 number of mitigation measures, including physical,
6 social, and biological environments, and these are some
7 of them: Erosion and sediment control; hydro-acoustic
8 assessment; hazardous materials, petroleum project
9 control; fish and wildlife protection -- obviously the
10 biological environment being primary -- invasive species
11 concerns, integrated pest management; road use
12 restrictions; access and disturbance.
13 And then in the social environment in terms of
14 law enforcement; fares, subsidies, and additional
15 revenues; standard health and safety practices. These
16 are some of the mitigation measures that were considered
17 in the draft EIS.
18 The conclusion, the impact conclusion summary.
19 Alternative one, the no action, what they've got now
20 with the hovercraft operation: Negligible to minor
21 effects, except moderate effects to fiscal resources.
22 The borough has estimated \$1 million a year to -- I
23 believe it is to run the hovercraft operation, which is
24 financially extremely difficult.
25 Effects generally related to the ongoing

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1 operations of the hovercraft and eventual conveyance of
2 approximately 5,430 acres in Izembek Wilderness to King
3 Cove; a seasonal hovercraft service would supplement
4 existing aircraft transportation. Although not optimal,
5 this improvement in public health and transportation
6 options may be considered a minor beneficial effect.
7 And, again, annual operation maintenance costs of \$1
8 million.
9 Now, this is going to be -- this alternative
10 one -- updated in the final EIS to reflect the borough's
11 current plans, which calls for another -- as I
12 mentioned, another kind of a landing craft that would
13 work in that environment.
14 Alternative two -- again, the impacts that
15 were summarized for the land exchange with the southern
16 road alignment -- and alternative three -- the land
17 exchange and the central road alignment -- the impacts
18 are very similar; a major beneficial effect, as you
19 would expect, to public health and safety and
20 transportation; the beneficial changes in the
21 transportation options, patterns, and costs with a
22 full-time service transportation link; and an increased
23 opportunity for King Cove residents to travel to the
24 Cold Bay Airport for access to medical services that are
25 not available locally. They have a wonderful clinic in

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1 King Cove, but that doesn't handle all their needs.
2 Major adverse effects to public use: Cultural
3 resources, fish, and essential wildlife -- fish and
4 essential fish habitat were identified as some of the
5 adverse effects of the two road alternatives.
6 Wilderness, as a -- considering the issue of
7 wilderness, fragmentation of wilderness -- why sicken
8 the wilderness with a road, basically -- would bring
9 adverse effects to natural quality, undeveloped quality,
10 and opportunities for solitude. And the beneficial
11 effects of wilderness would be that over 44,000 acres of
12 wilderness would be added to the Alaska Peninsula
13 Refuge, which is currently State land.
14 There would be major adverse effect on tundra
15 swan, brant, Emperor goose, common loon populations; and
16 a moderate effect on other breeding, migrating, and
17 wintering birds. This is the conclusion of the draft
18 EIS.
19 The draft EIS also says that there would be
20 adverse effect on caribou and bear, a potential for
21 increased harvesting pressure on the fish in the
22 streams. Mainly on the caribou. It's projected that it
23 would -- could -- the road corridor could interfere with
24 caribou migration patterns.
25 The annual operation and maintenance costs

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1 would be about \$149,000 to \$158,000 for the roads -- one
2 of the roads.
3 Alternative four, hovercraft operations from
4 Northeast Terminal to Cross Wind Cove, negligible to
5 minor effects, except a major adverse effect to fiscal
6 resources, as we've already shown; major beneficial
7 effects to public health and safety; and moderate
8 beneficial effects to transportation. The effects were
9 generally related to the ongoing operations of the
10 hovercraft and eventual conveyance of some 5,400 acres
11 in the Izembek Wilderness to the King Cove Corporation,
12 selected under ANCSA.
13 Beneficial effects, no doubt, from regularly
14 scheduled year-round transportation to the Cold Bay
15 Airport and the availability of the hovercraft for most
16 emergency medical evacuations. Adverse effects to
17 wilderness from increased hovercraft operations;
18 intermittent noise or visual disturbance; and eventual
19 conveyance of 5,430 acres. The annual operation of
20 maintenance cost of the hovercraft, estimated at
21 \$2 million.
22 And, finally, the Lenard Harbor alternative,
23 similar to alternative four; major adverse effects to
24 fiscal resources and major beneficial effects to public
25 health and safety; moderate beneficial effects to

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1 transportation; and negligible to minor effects to other
2 resource.
3 Again, the beneficial effects resulting from
4 regularly scheduled year-round transportation to the
5 Cold Bay Airport and the availability of the ferry for
6 emergency medical evacuations. Minor to moderate
7 adverse effects to other resources. That would be
8 construction of the Lenard Harbor ferry terminal and
9 improvements to the Cold Bay docks and some disturbance
10 due to ferry operations. Annual operation and
11 maintenance cost, \$2.3 million.
12 Okay. The public comment period is March 19th
13 through May 18th. This is the first public meeting, as
14 you can see, May 3rd. And then we're going from here to
15 Sand Point, May 7th; Cold Bay, May 8th; Nelson Lagoon,
16 May 9th; False Pass, May 9th; and King Cove on May 10th.
17 You may e-mail in your comments, if you would,
18 to izembek_eis@fws.gov or fax them in, 907-786-3695
19 [sic], or by mail, snail mail, to Stephanie Brady, who's
20 the project team leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
21 1011 East Tudor Road, Mail Stop 231, that's Anchorage
22 99503. And those addresses are also on the summary and
23 a bunch of the other papers that were back there.
24 And with that, the next step, we're going to
25 review the public comments, prepare a comment analysis

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1 report, and respond to the public comments. That will
2 take us through mid July. The final EIS will be
3 generated from July through -- our target date is
4 September, September 2012, and the final EIS to be
5 issued October 2012. And then the record of decision
6 would be late December of 2012.
7 And for project updates, where we are, you can
8 go to <http://izembek.fws.gov/eis> to stay informed on
9 this. And that's it.
10 We didn't -- as I said, I moved through it
11 fast. You're not here to hear an employee talk. We
12 want to hear from you. And when I last checked, we had
13 about 30 people signed up. And just keep it moving.
14 We'd like to hear from you. If you have any questions,
15 now would be the time also.
16 **JOAN KLUWE:** So we'll entertain a few
17 questions first and then we'll switch to the public
18 comment period. We'd like to keep public comments to
19 three minutes or less, as Polly mentioned at the
20 beginning. We'll start with questions.
21 **JOHN DICKENS:** Ma'am, is there any estimate of
22 how many people have died in King Cove waiting for
23 medevacs since this has all gone on? Congressman
24 Young's office said they know of 11 people that have
25 died waiting for medevacs. I was wondering if you guys

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1 had any estimates on how many have died waiting for
2 medevacs in King Cove during this period.
3 **JOAN KLUWE:** The transportation section of the
4 EIS and the health and safety section of the EIS does
5 provide an analysis. There's not an analysis of deaths
6 to date. There is an acknowledgment that there is a
7 need for public transportation to the airport.
8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Is it my understanding,
9 given what you just said, that alternative four is going
10 to go away since the borough is taking the hovercraft
11 out of service?
12 **JOAN KLUWE:** The Aleutians East Borough sent a
13 letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service indicating that
14 the hovercraft would no longer be available for the
15 route between King Cove and Cold Bay. That is correct.
16 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But to follow that up,
17 is that alternative going to be taken out of --
18 **JOAN KLUWE:** Alternative four will be retained
19 for analysis in the EIS, to the best of my understanding
20 at this point. The Fish and Wildlife Service will make
21 a final determination on alternatives at the conclusion
22 of the public comment period based on public comments.
23 But, at this point, it is being analyzed.
24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I didn't study this
25 very closely, but I wanted to know the definition of

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1 "major effect" of tundra swans and Emperor geese. I
2 mean, that seems to be the conclusion under alternative
3 two and three, that there would be a major effect. Does
4 that mean the birds wouldn't come? They would die?
5 What does that mean?
6 **JOAN KLUWE:** We have a very gross-level
7 summary that has been presented to you tonight, and I do
8 encourage you to take a look at the entirety of the EIS.
9 The effects are analyzed in Chapter 4 of the EIS, and
10 definitions are provided at the beginning.
11 The effects to tundra swans relates to the --
12 my recollection -- and, again, I'm sorry, I'm not a
13 biologist -- but my recollection of that analysis is
14 that there would be impacts to the breeding success of
15 that species. So there is definitely more information
16 on the analysis in the EIS.
17 Do you guys have any better recollection?
18 So we'll have to defer -- there is more in the
19 summary as well. But the impacts in general are
20 categorized as major, moderate, minor, negligible, or no
21 impact. And so that was rated out as the highest level
22 of rating to that species. And so, again, this is a
23 very broad summary. Sorry I can't be more specific at
24 this time.
25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah, I did read a

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1 pretty fair amount of the full EIS, and I didn't see in
2 there where you guys defined what the tundra swans --
3 whether the study was based on proximity to a road or if
4 your studies were based on historic -- seeing as how
5 there have been roads there for like 50 years.
6 Now, the breeding of those swans, was that
7 study based on historic evidence of how swans reacted to
8 the roads that are there or was that based on generic
9 ecological literature on how they react to a road in
10 general?
11 **JOAN KLUWE:** The analysis is based on the
12 location of the proposed road. And the analysis of
13 impacts based on existing roads was considered. But
14 there has not been a road that has completely crossed
15 the Izembek Refuge before or the isthmus before.
16 So it would be a new road. And the location
17 of the breeding birds in juxtaposition to the location
18 of the road, they estimated that there would be an
19 effect to the tundra swans.
20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I noticed in the
21 presentation that there was no reference to the King
22 Cove Health and Safety Act of 1999. And I also noticed
23 in the EIS, where it lists various laws that are germane
24 to this issue, and that law is not listed in the list of
25 laws. Now, it is discussed in the EIS, but it's not

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1 listed in the EIS as a law pertinent to this.
2 And not having any history of that part of
3 this puzzle is -- seems lacking, in my opinion, and
4 downplays -- downplays the history of what's gone on on
5 this issue for quite some time.
6 **POLLY WHEELER:** And, again, just as a
7 reminder, the point here tonight is to provide these
8 types of comments so that we can then consider them in
9 developing the final EIS, so I encourage everybody to --
10 to keep track of these. I mean, we have a
11 transcriptionist here. But if you want to provide
12 written public comments; we've got verbal comments. But
13 I really encourage you to include these types of
14 comments in your comments so that they can be analyzed
15 as part of the formal record and addressed in the final
16 EIS.
17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So I hear a lot of
18 discussion about analysis on the impact to tundra swan,
19 to brant, to other wildlife, but it also sounds like --
20 have you estimated the impact of death on humans over
21 the life of the project? And if so, what estimated
22 number of human deaths would occur without the road?
23 Have you estimated that and is there an analysis of
24 human death?
25 **JOAN KLUWE:** There's not an estimate of

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1 analysis of human death. There is analysis of the
2 transportation needs and the needs for public health and
3 safety. And it is clearly demonstrated in the EIS that
4 there is a need for public health and safety, but
5 there's not an estimate of the number of people that
6 will die, nor is there an estimate of the number of
7 birds that will die. It's just not that specific.
8 It is a gross-level -- it's a broad-level
9 estimate, but the basic impact topic areas are covered,
10 I believe. And if you disagree with how they're
11 covered, please provide specific comment to that.
12 At this point, unless there's any other
13 clarifying questions, I would suggest that we move into
14 the public comment period. This is the purpose of the
15 meeting that we're here tonight, so that the Fish and
16 Wildlife Service can hear your comments on the EIS.
17 So unless there's any other clarifying
18 questions, I suggest we move to the main point of the
19 meeting, which is you being able to speak.
20 So any other clarifying questions?
21 All right. With that, then we will go by
22 number order. We do request that you state your name.
23 And if your name is not something like Smith or Jones,
24 please spell your name so that the court reporter can
25 capture it accurately.

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1 And then we will stick to the times for a
2 public comment period. We'll have a timekeeper, and
3 they can help to let you know when your time is getting
4 close.
5 So number one.
6 **WENDY LOYA:** Can I sit?
7 **JOAN KLUWE:** You can sit, stand. Please say
8 your name first.
9 **WENDY LOYA:** My name is Wendy Loya, L-o-y-a.
10 And I'm here to speak on behalf of Friends of Alaska
11 National Wildlife Refuges.
12 The Friends group is an all-volunteer
13 membership organization that works with the Fish and
14 Wildlife Service to protect and enhance Alaska refuges
15 primarily through education/outreach activities. Thank
16 you for the opportunity to speak tonight.
17 The proposed road from King Cove to Cold Bay
18 would be extremely costly, damaging, and is unnecessary.
19 In 1998, Senator Stevens negotiated an agreement with
20 the City of King Cove and the Aleutians East Borough
21 whereby Congress appropriated \$37.5 million to solve
22 King Cove's medical and transportation needs. American
23 taxpayers paid for an ultramodern medical clinic with
24 telemedicine capabilities, improvements to the King Cove
25 Airport, a 9-million-dollar state-of-the-art hovercraft,

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1 \$26 million for a 17-mile road and hovercraft port.
2 This law specifically prohibited a road through
3 Congressionally-designated Izembek Wilderness.
4 The hovercraft safely and efficiently
5 completed more than 32 medevacs to Cold Bay that
6 averaged only 20 minutes per trip. The AEB mayor stated
7 that the hovercraft is a lifesaving machine and is doing
8 what it is supposed to. In spite of their medical needs
9 having been met, AEB terminated the hovercraft operation
10 in 2010, claiming it was too costly and unreliable.
11 Their expensive lobbying effort persuaded
12 Congress to authorize a proposed land exchange and a
13 20-mile road through the wilderness. The law requires
14 the Secretary of the Interior to determine if the road
15 is in the public interest. We do not believe it is in
16 the public interest.
17 Several significant events have occurred in
18 the last two years that make it clear that the road is
19 not about affordable, reliable transportation or health
20 and safety. First, the AEB has announced plans to use a
21 hovercraft that would carry passengers and freight
22 between Akun and Akutan across waters that experience
23 more severe weather and seas than those that occur in
24 Cold Bay. They would be transferring the hovercraft
25 given to King Cove by the American taxpayers to Akutan.

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1 We quote an AEB memo dated December 5th, 2011:
2 "We have developed a plan for the repair, installation
3 of modifications and redeployment of the Suna-X in
4 Akutan. The date by which we are expected to have the
5 craft and crew ready for their first airport passenger
6 run is September 1st, 2012." The AEB stated that they
7 will pay the cost of operation of the hovercraft and run
8 a deficit for at least five years, even though their
9 main justification for the proposed road is that they
10 cannot afford the cost of operating the hovercraft.
11 Further, at the scoping meeting at Sand Point,
12 the city manager of King Cove objected to the U.S. Fish
13 and Wildlife presentation that stated that the purpose
14 of the road was to meet health and safety concerns. He
15 insisted that it be revised to state, "The people of
16 King Cove believe that a road to Cold Bay is primarily
17 for improved quality of life and access to the outside
18 world for the residents of King Cove." This clearly
19 indicates their real justification for the proposed road
20 is for other purposes, such as personal travel and
21 commercial interests.
22 The Japanese-owned Peter Pan fish processing
23 facility in King Cove is the largest in Alaska, and AEB
24 has pursued a major marketing program to sell their
25 goods elsewhere. It would be nearly impossible to

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1 regulate commercial use of the road, including hunting
2 guides bringing sport hunters into the area, and
3 ensuring that off-road vehicles do not leave the road
4 and enter the designated wilderness.
5 One very minor point is that, as mentioned in
6 the revised alternative one, AEB has contacted the Army
7 Corps of Engineers regarding using the passenger ferry
8 and --
9 **JOAN KLUWE:** Your time has passed.
10 **WENDY LOYA:** Thank you.
11 **JOAN KLUWE:** And you can submit the entirety
12 of your comments to the court reporter. Thank you.
13 Number two.
14 **DAVID MCCARGO:** I'd appreciate it if you could
15 sort of give me a thumbs-up 30 seconds short of my --
16 **POLLY WHEELER:** I can do that.
17 **DAVID MCCARGO:** My name is David McCargo.
18 Last name is spelled M-c-C-a-r-g-o.
19 As an Alaskan for about four years, I've been
20 to King Cove and Cold Bay and Izembek. First and
21 foremost, in my opinion, a 20-mile road would constitute
22 a major intrusion into the refuge and threaten
23 wilderness and wildlife values. Looking at the map, you
24 can see that Izembek is shaped like a horseshoe with the
25 road effectively bisecting the refuge, cutting it in

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1 half. Controlling off-road access to adjacent lands
2 would virtually be impossible, with access being a major
3 threat to the refuge's wilderness values. It's simply
4 naive to think that once a road is built, that the
5 locals will not drive off of it and otherwise impact
6 adjacent lands.
7 Furthermore, there's nothing to say that
8 Congress in the blink of an eye can't loosen what weak
9 protections are being assumed here. Any supposed
10 guarantees that there would be access restrictions are
11 untrustworthy, as evidenced by the opening of the Dalton
12 Highway and adjacent lands for public access after an
13 initial agreement was made in that case. Once the road
14 is built, it can be expected that local communities,
15 given the tradition, will push the door further open, as
16 I've pointed out.
17 The proposed land exchange, especially of this
18 magnitude, would be a bad, if not horrible, precedent
19 and the Congress made a serious mistake by kicking this
20 ball to the Secretary. Wilderness is the highest level
21 of public land protection and boundary tampering should
22 be done with extreme caution, if at all.
23 In my opinion, there should be only two
24 criteria for modifying wilderness boundaries where a
25 land exchange is involved: First, there should be an

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1 overwhelming preponderance of benefit to wilderness;
2 and, two, where the failure to do so would result in
3 unacceptable offsite impacts. Neither of these
4 criterion are met in this instance. The history of land
5 exchanges in Alaska have served conservation interests
6 poorly, witness the Red Dog and Anaktuvuk land exchange,
7 both of which I'm familiar with.
8 There is a general policy matter here. In
9 addition to the moneys already spent without apparently
10 anything to show for it and short of any shenanigans
11 that apparently pertain to the diversion of the
12 hovercraft, the larger issue is one of a sense of
13 entitlement. We simply cannot pay for everybody to do
14 anything. The country is bankrupt and we don't have the
15 money, even if there is a perceived need to satisfy
16 everybody's perceived needs. The proponents of these
17 proposals often want somebody else to pay for it,
18 especially the politicians, who have really no
19 reservation about these things other than to get
20 themselves reelected. And that's how this thing sort of
21 got rolling.
22 Thank you very much. And I'll be submitting
23 detailed comments in a letter.
24 **JOAN KLUWE:** If you have anything in writing,
25 please provide them to the court reporter.

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1 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number three.
2 **FRAN MAUER:** Thank you. My name is Fran
3 Mauer. I'm here to speak on behalf of the Alaska
4 Chapter of Wilderness Watch. Wilderness Watch is a
5 national conservation organization whose primary mission
6 is to advocate for the preservation and appropriate
7 stewardship of our nation's National Wilderness
8 Preservation System.
9 The presentation that was given earlier, the
10 PowerPoint, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was
11 established more than 50 years ago for the purpose of
12 creating a refuge, breeding ground, and management area
13 for all forms of wildlife. It was also -- it is also an
14 exemplary wilderness and was recognized in 1980 when
15 Congress designated 300,000 acres as wilderness.
16 Section two of the Wilderness Act explains the
17 nation's interest in protecting wilderness qualities as
18 follows: "In order to assure that an increasing
19 population, occupied by expanding settlement and growing
20 mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas
21 within the United States and its possessions, leaving no
22 lands designated for preservation and protection of
23 their national condition, is hereby declared to be the
24 policy of the Congress to secure for the American people
25 of present and future generations the benefits of an

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1 enduring resource of wilderness."
2 To assure that this policy would be achieved,
3 the Wilderness Act specifically stated, "There shall be
4 no commercial enterprise, no permanent road, within
5 wilderness areas designated by this Act."
6 Given these powerful legal requirements, one
7 has to ask, why are we here to consider a proposed land
8 exchange and road corridor? Since passage of the
9 Wilderness Act, history has shown that there have been
10 several efforts to circumvent the Act by various
11 commercial purposes. This case is no exception.
12 And it's a strategy on -- it's part of a
13 growing list of land exchange schemes that have been
14 developed to circumvent conservation laws, such as the
15 Wilderness Act, and serve development interests within
16 the national conservation areas in Alaska. The first
17 one was the St. Matthew Island land exchange, which
18 would have transferred lands -- wilderness category
19 lands on St. Matthew Island to Native corporations that
20 would then lease those lands to oil companies for an
21 on-shore base to explore for oil in the Bering Sea.
22 There are several others of these land exchange schemes.
23 I would like to add that the Izembek land
24 exchange should be abandoned and dumped in the junkyard
25 as failed Alaska land exchange schemes where it belongs.

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1 The proposed action, as proposed, would obliterate the
2 integrity of the Izembek Wilderness, essentially,
3 forever. It would inflict permanent irrefutable impacts
4 to wildlife through habitat fragmentation, degradation,
5 persistent impacts, et cetera. We recommend the
6 no-action alternative, and I'd like to end with one last
7 statement --
8 **JOAN KLUWE:** Sir, your time is up.
9 **FRAN MAUER:** Okay. Thank you.
10 Read the first sentence in the Wilderness Act.
11 **JOAN KLUWE:** Sir, your time is over. Thank
12 you.
13 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number three -- number four.
14 **BETH PELUSO:** My name is Beth Peluso. It's
15 P-e-l-u-s-o. And I represent Audubon Alaska, which is
16 the state office of the National Audubon Society. We've
17 had an Alaska office since 1977. And Audubon and our
18 membership have been actively engaged in issues
19 concerning the conservation of the important bird and
20 wildlife habitat in Izembek for more than a decade.
21 Audubon Alaska supports alternative one, no
22 action. Since 1997, Audubon has maintained that there
23 are marine transportation options that would meet the
24 concern for medical emergency transportation for the
25 community of King Cove. When in service, the existing

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1 hovercraft system successfully completed more than 30
2 medical emergency evacuations, proving that a marine
3 option sufficiently addressed this problem without
4 compromising the integrity of the Izembek Refuge.
5 Since 1985, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6 has consistently found that a road across the narrow
7 isthmus between Izembek and Kinzarof Lagoon would be
8 incompatible with the purpose for which the Izembek
9 Refuge had been established and would cause significant
10 long-term damage to important fish and wildlife habitat.
11 Izembek and Kinzarof Lagoon, separated by a
12 narrow isthmus, make up the ecological heart of Izembek
13 Refuge. The refuge is known for its world-class
14 waterfowl and shorebird populations and habitats,
15 supporting hundreds of thousands of birds that migrate
16 to the Lower 48 and to other continents. The lagoons'
17 complex provides wintering, breeding, molting, or
18 resting grounds for the following: Nearly the entire
19 Pacific Coast population of brant, including birds from
20 Canada, Russia, and Alaska; more than half the world's
21 population of Emperor geese, which have a range limited
22 to Alaska and parts of Russia; up to 70 percent of the
23 world's population of Steller's eiders. The Alaska
24 breeding population is listed as threatened on the
25 Endangered Species Act; many species of other

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1 shorebirds, including Pacific golden-plovers, rock
2 sandpipers, dunlins, and also a resident population of
3 tundra swans. Many of the avian species using
4 Izembek -- including dunlin, brant, and Steller's
5 eider -- are recognized on Audubon's Alaska WatchList of
6 declining and vulnerable bird populations.
7 The isthmus between Izembek and Kinzarof
8 Lagoon is the only path between the west and east sides
9 of the refuge for such wide-ranging species as brown
10 bear and caribou. Low levels of human disturbance have
11 helped maintain the high habitat value of this area for
12 brown bears.
13 Construction and use of a road would impact a
14 wide range of avian species year-round, with major
15 effects on nearly the entire brant population of the
16 Pacific flyway, more than half the global population of
17 Emperor geese, and on tundra swan and common loons.
18 Concern about impacts on subsistence harvest extends
19 beyond the Izembek area to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta,
20 where many Alaska Native residents are dependent on
21 brant as a key subsistence resource. Negative effects
22 of the road are compounded by the narrow isthmus, so it
23 would be difficult for wildlife to avoid the road.
24 The proposed exchange lands in alternatives
25 two and three would not provide habitat comparable to or

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1 compensate for the loss or degradation of the
2 Izembek-Kinzarof lagoons complex. Fundamentally, this
3 is not an issue that can be resolved on the basis of
4 acreage. No amount of exchange lands could compensate
5 for the unacceptable and irreversible impacts of a road
6 on globally significant and unique wildlife habitats.
7 **POLLY WHEELER:** That's what I like to see.
8 Number five.
9 **GARY HENNIGH:** That would be me.
10 Good evening. My name is Gary Hennigh,
11 H-e-n-n-i-g-h. This is my 23rd year working for the
12 City of King Cove as the city manager. It's a great
13 community I have the honor of working for. I've already
14 heard some statements tonight giving credit for things
15 that I don't have a clue what they're talking about.
16 I have a lot to say, but I'm going to keep
17 most of it to myself and express it in written comments
18 or at the public meetings next week out in the region.
19 I would say at this time my primary focus is to make
20 sure that the King Cove group, which includes the
21 Aleutians East Borough, the Agdaagux Tribe in King Cove,
22 the Belkofski Native Council, the King Cove Corporation,
23 and the City of King Cove, have the necessary resources
24 and expertise to do everything possible to help the
25 service make the final EIS as fair, factual, and honest

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1 as possible.
2 And given the current status of the EIS, this
3 is a challenge. This DEIS is substandard, biased in
4 many cases, either scientifically or factually
5 incomplete or inadequate. It is not fair for the
6 residents of King Cove in the Izembek region and the
7 American public for the Secretary of the Interior to use
8 this document as it is to make this public interest
9 finding as the final decision to this land exchange and
10 road decision. So instead of excessively whining on
11 this concern, we are focused on helping the federal
12 government make the EIS a respectable process and
13 document.
14 I must also comment that being listed as a
15 cooperating agency needs to be taken with a grain of
16 salt. The service knows that the cooperating agencies
17 were not involved in all those bogus impact evaluations
18 that they are talking about, and we are very upset about
19 being excluded from that process.
20 I also learned to better tolerate simply by
21 ignoring those who oppose the land exchange or any array
22 of environmentally hyped-up statements, some like I've
23 heard here tonight.
24 I have directly heard respectful scientists
25 testify in Congress that there is no room for compromise

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1 between Izembek, black brant, and the Aleuts of King
2 Cove on this issue. That's a very sad statement.
3 Anyhow, I'm just going to leave it at that.
4 All I can say is -- to all of us -- the truth does
5 matter. And if you want to make your statements, you've
6 got to have the scientific facts to back them up. Some
7 of what I've read in the paper recently and have heard
8 are not scientific facts that can be backed up.
9 You have not heard the last from the City of
10 King Cove and its 900 residents. Thank you.
11 **HENRY MACK:** Good evening. My name is Henry
12 Mack, and I'm the mayor of King Cove. I am also a
13 grandfather, a father, a King Cove Corporation
14 shareholder, a tribal member, and an Aleut. Tonight I'm
15 here on behalf of my community.
16 Mr. Kinzarof, along with many other Native
17 folks, lived in the Izembek isthmus prior to 1960 when
18 the service came and made it a refuge. Not one of those
19 families was ever contacted, the Kinzarofs, the
20 Nevzaroffs, the Dushkins, the Kuzakins, the Samuelsons,
21 the Goulds, that we're going to come and we're going to
22 take this piece of property that you folks are hunting
23 on and living and we're going to burn your cabins down,
24 which they did. Not one of those folks. There's 100
25 Kinzarofs there in my community today and Nevzaroffs and

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1 Dushkins, and Kuzakins that lived off this land. Not
2 one of them were asked, we're going to come and change
3 your land.
4 And this forum that you folks are in today is
5 a forum that they were denied. And it just hurts us
6 that the service has done that to us. I have more here
7 to say, but I'm going to turn it in. Thank you.
8 **JOHN DICKENS:** Since it's so easy to go over,
9 I brought my stopwatch. Okay. I'm starting.
10 My name is John Arnold Dickens, and I came
11 here from Bethel because -- at the request of my wife,
12 who's an Eskimo, and her family. We wanted to convey
13 the solidarity that the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim
14 Delta feel for the people of King Cove and support them
15 in their struggle for the safety of human life.
16 I'm a volunteer fireman. I've been a first
17 responder for over 30 years. I'll tell you, it's really
18 sad when you're in a Bush clinic and you run out of
19 oxygen and your patient is going to die. We asked a
20 legitimate question: How many people in King Cove have
21 died waiting for a medevac? Now, Don Young's office
22 said they know of at least 11. I suspect there are many
23 more.
24 Also, how many tears have been shed, how much
25 blood had been spilt, by these good people whose land

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1 was taken away from them? This isn't just about King
2 Cove. This is about all of rural Alaska.
3 You know, a lot of people in the Fish and
4 Wildlife Service that I meet are really nice people.
5 They don't seem to be racist. They don't seem to be
6 fascists. Yet the results of their activities are often
7 perceived that way by Alaska Native people.
8 I ask you green-peacer types here tonight, if
9 it was your family member that was suffering, I bet
10 you'd have a different tune. If it was your family
11 member that died waiting for a medevac, you would have a
12 lot different tune. I'm sorry, I know you mean well,
13 but I see a lot of hypocrisy in your statements.
14 My wife and I have driven the haul road
15 several times on vacation. I looked for the
16 environmental holocaust when I got to Deadhorse.
17 Couldn't find it. I guess they put it away because they
18 heard I was coming.
19 You know, we live in Bethel, the biggest city
20 in the Bush, inside of YKNWR, and we have the same
21 problems. We have people get shot seven miles away.
22 The air ambulance is up on another shooting, we might as
23 well be on the dark side of the moon for us to get
24 there. Human life is precious.
25 I have been to the Izembek Wildlife Refuge

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1 many times in the Coast Guard and working for NOAA. And
2 I must respectfully disagree that this road would be the
3 end of the world, because that is not true. It wasn't
4 true when there was a giant base at Cold Bay and it's
5 not true now.
6 I ask you a question, my friends, how many
7 good people are going to die? How many tears are going
8 to be shed? How many people are going to suffer
9 needlessly before this road is built? It must be built.
10 It must be built now. And the Fish and Wildlife Service
11 should hang its head in shame for resisting this road
12 and stalling. We all are going to die, but I sure hope
13 none of you have to suffer needlessly like the people in
14 King Cove have. Thank you.
15 **CARL PORTMAN:** Good evening. My name is Carl
16 Portman. I'm the deputy director of the Resource
17 Development Council. RDC is here tonight to support a
18 proposed land exchange.
19 Although there is no industry that would
20 benefit from a land exchange, RDC supports the proposed
21 action because it is the right thing to do. For over a
22 decade we have consistently advocated for a road link
23 between King Cove and Cold Bay. RDC strongly believes
24 that a road corridor from King Cove to the all-weather
25 airport at Cold Bay is in the public interest.

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1 In our view, this is a public safety and human
2 rights issue, which should be given the highest
3 priority. Specifically, RDC supports alternative two
4 and encourages the Corps of Engineers and Fish and
5 Wildlife Service to adopt this option as the preferred
6 alternative. This alternative would provide safe,
7 reliable, and affordable transportation for King Cove
8 residents.

9 Clearly, the land exchange outlined in the
10 DEIS would provide a net gain for the National Wildlife
11 Refuge System while providing a vital public health and
12 safety corridor for King Cove residents. The road would
13 be narrow and unobtrusive. It would be used primarily
14 for health and safety purposes and would be closed to
15 commercial traffic. Mitigation strategies will allow
16 the road, the environment, and wildlife to coexist.

17 There is adequate existing information to
18 allow for a final EIS to proceed, a record of decision
19 issued, and for the Secretary of the Interior to make a
20 public interest finding that meets the intent of
21 Congress and of course equitable treatment for the Aleut
22 people.

23 The road would solve the community's perennial
24 problem with access to the outside world, especially in
25 poor weather conditions. The proposed land exchange

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1 would provide for a long-term, safe, and reliable
2 year-round transportation system between King Cove and
3 Cold Bay. The marine life between the two communities
4 has not solved King Cove's transportation challenges in
5 reaching Cold Bay and its airport. The community has
6 not found the hovercraft to be an effective solution to
7 their problems, which is why King Cove and tribal
8 leaders are united in their support of a road link.

9 Affordable, reliable, and practical
10 transportation is not available to King Cove residents.
11 Air transportation is limited by weather, availability
12 of aircraft, and the topography constraints of the King
13 Cove Airport. Cost for the air travel is also an issue
14 for many residents. The hovercraft has proven expensive
15 and more difficult to keep in service than originally
16 expected. That option was attempted in good faith, but
17 it has now been shut down. The road has always been the
18 community's first choice because it provides residents
19 with the greatest amount of security.

20 The King Cove Corporation is giving up
21 20 percent of its land for a single-lane gravel road.
22 That demonstrates how much of a priority emergency
23 access to the airport in Cold Bay is to local residents.
24 Residents of King Cove have been waiting for over 20
25 years to build a service transportation link to the

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1 airport, and the proposed action is a big step in the
2 right direction. Thank you.

3 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number nine.
4 **ED FOGELS:** Thank you. For the record, my
5 name is Ed Fogels. I'm the deputy commissioner of the
6 Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Last name is
7 spelled F-o-g-e-l-s.

8 On behalf of the State of Alaska, I'm here to
9 express the governor's support for a land exchange to
10 construct a road connecting the cities of King Cove and
11 Cold Bay.

12 Access to the Cold Bay Airport for the
13 residents of King Cove has been a longstanding struggle
14 as the community continues to fight for an improved
15 quality of life. The City of King Cove's decades of
16 perseverance and determination to get this road built
17 speaks volumes to their character and strength, and the
18 State of Alaska stands with you and applauds your
19 resilience.

20 A road linking the City of King Cove to Cold
21 Bay Airport would provide safe and dependable
22 transportation to emergency health services in crisis
23 situations, which is most often complicated by harsh
24 weather conditions limiting other modes of
25 transportation.

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1 The current situation for King Cove residents
2 is life-threatening, and this EIS is taking a critical
3 step towards providing the infrastructure needs of this
4 community. The importance of this project to the State
5 of Alaska and the local residents is evident by the
6 unprecedented 50,000 acres of land the State of Alaska
7 and the King Cove Corporation is willing to exchange for
8 a 206-acre road corridor to Cold Bay. For the 131 acres
9 of land that will be removed from the wilderness
10 designation, 44,000 acres will replace it and become
11 designated the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge
12 Wilderness.

13 In good faith, residents have fought for and
14 have implemented other non-road options to improve
15 health services in the area. Unfortunately, those
16 efforts have not proved to be feasible or economical;
17 therefore, the only viable option to resolving this
18 longstanding problem is to build the road.

19 I would like to encourage Alaskans to get
20 involved, express your opinions about why a road is
21 needed to protect the residents of King Cove. Thank you
22 very much.

23 **POLLY WHEELER:** If I could remind people that
24 if they have written testimony, if you could leave it up
25 here. You can also submit your comments through the

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1 various means that we listed earlier. But if you have
2 written comments, if you can leave them up there, we'd
3 appreciate it.
4 **ED FOGELS:** We'll submit some later.
5 **POLLY WHEELER:** Okay. Thank you.
6 **JOAN KLUWE:** Whatever you presented tonight
7 will help the court reporter with the transcription,
8 though. If you have any written comments, it would be
9 very --
10 **POLLY WHEELER:** Yeah. She's doing her best,
11 and I'm sure she's going to catch everything, but
12 there's always those little words here and there that
13 are problematic. So if you have written testimony, if
14 you can provide it to her, that would be great.
15 Number ten.
16 **DAN ROWLEY:** I would like to just hand my
17 comments in and yield my time to number 11.
18 **POLLY WHEELER:** Duly noted.
19 Number 11.
20 **DELLA TRUMBLE:** Good evening. My name is
21 Della Trumble. Some of you don't know me. I've been
22 involved in this road issue for the majority of my life.
23 Trust me, this has been a very long road.
24 Today, you know, we're all here for a very
25 good reason. You understand why we're here, many of

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1 you, because of the same transportation issue between
2 King Cove and Cold Bay. Congress directed the Secretary
3 of the Interior to prepare an environmental impact
4 statement under the National Environmental Policy Act
5 and conduct an analysis of a proposed land exchange
6 among the State of Alaska and the King Cove Corporation
7 in the potential construction and operation of a road
8 between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay, and
9 that is why we are here.
10 That also requires that the EIS contain an
11 evaluation of a specific road corridor through the
12 refuge that is identified in consultation with the
13 State, the city, the tribe. And the Secretary of the
14 Interior delegated the coordination of this EIS to Fish
15 and Wildlife. We all know that. That's why we're here.
16 Imagine my reaction when a friend shared with
17 me recently, conservation organizations have been making
18 great strides for recognizing that protected areas must
19 respect the rights of indigenous people as enshrined in
20 international law, including the right to give or
21 withhold their free, prior, and informed consent to the
22 establishment of new protected areas in their customary
23 territories. Yet, in practice, these organizations
24 often continue to exclude local people from using
25 forests and other resources.

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1 Imagine if the federal government about four
2 years earlier had contacted us and asked us when they
3 drew those wilderness boundaries. We would not be here
4 today. We would have this road. We would not have lost
5 the lives that we have or contributed to the health of
6 many of the people in our community.
7 For over 15 years I've sat through hours of
8 testimony by road opponents. I've heard about the
9 dangerous precedent, the blow to the heart of the
10 wilderness, a scar on a world-class refuge. And in one
11 particular instance, after that House hearing, we
12 were -- a comment was made, this is like cutting a baby
13 in half, referring to the area between the two lagoons,
14 when we are trying to save the lives of babies.
15 I'm here to testify to the terrible example
16 already set by the federal officials who failed
17 completely to consult with us when this refuge was
18 created. And I'm here to testify that no refuge would
19 have ever been possible without the ways of the Aleut
20 people who walked lightly on these lands.
21 People in King Cove have lived this road issue
22 for way too many years of our lives, and we continue to
23 stand back and watch the hardship and the lives that are
24 put in jeopardy day by day. And, at this point, enough
25 is enough. I thought when the Izembek land exchange

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1 passed that we were truly on our way to make this
2 happen. Now three years later we are here once again to
3 testify again to all the communities. Time after time
4 after time the people have been put through this.
5 I ask why a conservation group stated that the
6 value of the land that we are giving up are not enough
7 when the State and the King Cove Corporation are putting
8 up over 60,000 acres of land? I ask why a conservation
9 group comes to the King Cove Corporation to purchase
10 Mortensens Lagoon to give to the Fish and Wildlife? How
11 do you say that the lands we're giving up are not enough
12 when they are adjacent to the wilderness areas? The
13 lands we're giving up, the 5,400 acres, include the hot
14 spring areas.
15 We will not stand silent for this. There is
16 no reason why we cannot work together to make this work,
17 and we will continue this fight for as long as it takes
18 to get a road between these two communities. For the
19 well-being of the people in King Cove, we have given up
20 enough. And what have you given? What have you given?
21 Thank you.
22 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number 12.
23 **JENIFER SAMUELSON-NELSON:** Good evening. My
24 name is Jenifer Samuelson-Nelson, and I'm here on behalf
25 of the Aleut Corporation. And I thank you for the

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1 opportunity to testify tonight.
2 Also on behalf of the Aleut Corporation. But
3 I was raised in King Cove and now live here in
4 Anchorage. I serve as the vice chairman of the board
5 for the Aleut Corporation, the chair of the shareholder
6 affairs committee. I'm also a King Cove Corporation
7 shareholder, as well as an Agdaagux tribal member.
8 I, like many others you'll hear from tonight,
9 have had my share of turbulent flights, seasick boat
10 rides, and have felt the anguish when loved ones have
11 been denied access to urgent medical care due to a lack
12 of reliable transportation or when people with medical
13 conditions can't go to King Cove to visit family or are
14 forced to leave the community they live in because there
15 is not a reliable means of transportation for them to
16 get out.
17 When I was about four months pregnant with my
18 twin daughters, I asked my doctor, you know, "Can I
19 travel?"
20 She was like, "Oh, yeah. Go ahead." She's
21 like, "Where are you going to go?"
22 I said, "King Cove."
23 She goes, "No. You can't." She said, "I've
24 been waiting for a patient from there for ten days.
25 There's no way you can go there."

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1 So being told from my own doctor that I was
2 forbid to go he home to visit my family was pretty
3 heart-wrenching.
4 As we all know, the road from King Cove to
5 Cold Bay has been an issue for decades. The Land
6 Exchange Act in 2009, the King Cove Corporation, the
7 State of Alaska, proposed over 60,000 acres in exchange
8 for 206 acres, on which to construct a single-lane
9 gravel road. Although at face value this may not seem
10 like an equitable trade, the 200 acres really represents
11 the missing link needed to allow transportation between
12 King Cove and the Cold Bay Airport.
13 I'll share a few points, but then I'll sit
14 down to allow others to -- time to share their thoughts.
15 We all agree that it's tough to get in and out of King
16 Cove. There's no air service at night due to local
17 topography and weather. A road is a simple,
18 uncomplicated solution to a very real need and a large
19 problem. And other more complicated expensive solutions
20 have been tried, such as the hovercraft at a cost of
21 over \$1 million per year.
22 We feel that alternative two in the EIS is the
23 preferred group that would provide safe, reliable, and
24 affordable transportation between the City of King Cove
25 and the Cold Bay Airport. Alternative two would result

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1 in a construction of a 19-mile long, all-weather gravel
2 road on 227 acres of land. However, we also would
3 support any of the options as long as it results in a
4 road built that connects the communities, and that is
5 our goal. Thank you.
6 **POLLY WHEELER:** Okay. Number 13.
7 **ADAM BERG:** Hi. My name is Adam Berg. The
8 last name, B-e-r-g. Under your -- just passing on a
9 brief comment from my boss, Representative Bryce Edgmon.
10 He's the State representative for the King Cove/Cold Bay
11 area.
12 And here it is: As the State representative
13 who sponsored the legislation confirming Alaska's
14 agreement to the land exchange authorized by Congress, I
15 would like to encourage U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
16 and the Army Corps of Engineers to select either
17 alternative two or three as outlined in your draft EIS.
18 The intent of both Congress and Alaska is to
19 permit the construction of a road across a small area of
20 the refuge in order to establish a safe and reliable
21 transportation route between King Cove and the Cold Bay
22 Airport. The focus has always been on improving health
23 and safety for King Cove residents who again and again
24 have been cut off from Cold Bay's airport during medical
25 emergencies.

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1 The comprehensive information in the EIS shows
2 the land exchange as tens of thousands of acres of
3 pristine fish, waterfowl, caribou, brown bear, and
4 endangered species habitat to the refuge. This study
5 reaffirms my conviction that the major health and safety
6 benefits that a single-lane road will bring to the
7 nearly thousand residents of King Cove will far outweigh
8 its limited environmental impacts.
9 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number 14.
10 **THERESA FIORINO:** Thank you for the
11 opportunity to comment on the proposed land exchange and
12 road corridor through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.
13 My name is Theresa Fiorino, F-i-o-r-i-n-o, and I am the
14 Alaska representative for Defenders of Wildlife.
15 Defenders have long been involved in this
16 issue for more than a decade. We strongly oppose the
17 land exchange and road corridor through Izembek Refuge,
18 as these actions would set a harmful precedent for
19 public lands, damage the ecosystem, and cost taxpayers
20 millions of dollars.
21 The proposal to build a road through a
22 designated wilderness area within Izembek requires an
23 exchange of land that would remove not only the area's
24 classification as a National Wildlife Refuge, but also
25 its wilderness designation. Besides eroding the

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1 effectiveness of the Wilderness Act, the additional
2 acres offered by the State of Alaska and the King Cove
3 Corporation under the exchange are ecologically inferior
4 to those that would be lost and, therefore, provide no
5 net benefit to the refuge.
6 Designated as a Wetland of International
7 Significance under the Ramsar Convention, Izembek Refuge
8 is home to one of the largest eelgrass beds in the
9 world. These beds support abundant plant, animal, and
10 sea life on and around the refuge, including hundreds of
11 thousands of waterfowl.
12 The proposed road corridor cuts through
13 sensitive terrain that would make road building costly
14 and difficult and potentially dangerous to drive due to
15 the region's extreme weather. The isthmus along which
16 the road would be constructed is dotted with hundreds of
17 wetlands and depressions.
18 In the best of weather, travel to Cold Bay by
19 this road would take an hour and a half. But high winds
20 are common throughout the year and in winter snow
21 blowing from wetland depressions will not only further
22 increase maintenance costs, but will make the road
23 extremely dangerous for travelers.
24 Constructing and maintaining this road would
25 cost the State and federal taxpayers millions of

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1 dollars. The road's development continues to be pursued
2 despite there already being a transportation system that
3 has been proven safe and effective. In 1998, U.S.
4 taxpayers paved \$37.5 million to improve King Cove's
5 medical facilities, build a connecting road from the
6 village to a new marine terminal, and purchased a
7 state-of-the-art 9-million-dollar hovercraft. The
8 hovercraft is capable of transporting an ambulance to
9 Cold Bay in as soon as 20 minutes and has been proven
10 successful in all medical evacuations for which it has
11 been used.
12 Despite its success, the AEB suspended
13 hovercraft service between King Cove and Cold Bay in
14 2010. However, AEB has plans to move this hovercraft
15 for use between Akutan and an airport on Akutan [sic]
16 Island, and has committed to paying for its operation
17 there for the next 20 years. AEB's preparations for
18 this transfer also include the addition of de-icing
19 equipment. Given that the problems that led the AEB to
20 halt the hovercraft's service for King Cove have been
21 resolved, it appears that the need for an alternative
22 form of transportation no longer exists.
23 Pursuing the proposed road and land exchange
24 would remove a unique and fragile area from the public
25 conservation estate and subject it to degradation that

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1 goes along with construction and increased motorized use
2 and repeated maintenance of the road.
3 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number 15.
4 **BARBARA WINKLEY:** My name is Barbara Winkley,
5 and I'm a 45-year resident of Alaska. And I would just
6 like to make a couple of comments.
7 This critical wildlife habitat of eelgrass
8 beds of Izembek Lagoon and surrounding areas for the
9 migrating brant and other migrating waterfowl is even
10 more critical today than when it was studied and
11 declared a wildlife refuge in the early '70s.
12 As wildlife habitat areas diminish in North
13 America, we need to protect the wildlife refuges
14 established under the Wilderness Act of 1964. I urge
15 you not to bisect this contiguous wilderness area, which
16 gives refuge and a food source to marine mammals, such
17 as otters and Steller sea lions in the surrounding
18 inlets, as well as the protected, undisturbed resting
19 place and food source for migrating waterfowl.
20 The 20-minute hovercraft trip between Cold Bay
21 and King Cove, put in place in 1998, is a much shorter
22 time than it would take to drive a patient over a rough
23 expensive road. I testify today to oppose the
24 construction of this unnecessary road.
25 **THE REPORTER:** Can I have your name again?

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1 **BARBARA WINKLEY:** Barbara Winkley,
2 W-i-n-k-l-e-y.
3 **POLLY WHEELER:** Sixteen.
4 **MICHAEL CHRISTENSEN:** My name is Michael
5 Christensen. That's spelled Christ-e-n-s-e-n. I'm the
6 executive director of Eastern Aleutian Tribes, the CEO
7 of the organization responsible for health care in both
8 Cold Bay and King Cove.
9 I want to first let everyone, including the
10 Secretary, know that on Tuesday this week the tribal
11 health directors of the State of Alaska unanimously
12 voted in favor of a road for the health of the people in
13 King Cove. On Wednesday, the Alaska Native Health
14 Board, responsible for all health care for tribal health
15 in the state, voted unanimously in support of a road
16 from King Cove to Cold Bay, indicating that they have
17 strong support for continued saving of life by utilizing
18 a road.
19 I also have with me letters from the medical
20 director, who is responsible, particularly, for the King
21 Cove Clinic, Dr. Cotten, and the doctor who is assigned
22 to the clinic in King Cove, who also wanted to be here,
23 but both of them are providing health care. They asked
24 that we read their letters. And in three minutes, that
25 would be impossible, so I want to read just some

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1 highlights from those two letters.
2 The first, which comes from Elizabeth Clawson,
3 who is the physician in charge of the clinic in King
4 Cove, indicates, "I think the road from King Cove to
5 Cold Bay is a complete medical necessity, particularly
6 since the road is only to be used for emergency/medical
7 travel and not for private use. That means the road
8 cannot be used for individual financial gain.
9 "Currently the King Cove Clinic is
10 well-equipped with personnel and supplies. The clinic
11 is not equipped to handle continuing care for lengthy
12 treatment of any patient, nor are there providers."
13 I want to read now a statement from
14 Dr. Cotten's letter. She says, "I am writing to
15 encourage you to take a proactive stance on the King
16 Cove to Cold Bay road. The road would be a major step
17 towards ensuring safety and best possible care for the
18 village residents of King Cove."
19 She says, "On average, we lose one to two
20 patients a year due to transfer delays. We have lost
21 children and adults. We have had pregnancy disasters
22 and major trauma. We have a challenge keeping health
23 care providers in a stressful environment." She goes on
24 to give an example of her own experience where she
25 nearly lost her life in the last medevac she

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1 participated in.
2 On behalf of the health care providers and
3 those responsible, we strongly encourage that human life
4 be considered and a road be allowed. Thank you.
5 **POLLY WHEELER:** Seventeen.
6 **BETTY SMITH:** My name is Betty Smith, and I'm
7 here for myself. I was a resident for a time in Cold
8 Bay. And you would have to be deaf and blind and
9 heartless not to recognize the terrible situation the
10 residents of King Cove find themselves when they're
11 unable to travel back and forth to their village.
12 I have seen emaciated people in the airport
13 that I would be shocked to know that they survived. I
14 have had people come to my house when they had to stay
15 overnight in the airport for days because a boat could
16 not come into Cold Bay to pick them up.
17 And it is ridiculous to think that a narrow
18 road across the Izembek Refuge is going to affect
19 wildlife in any way. God gave bear and caribou legs.
20 They can walk right across it like they do all the other
21 roads. They gave birds wings -- God gave birds wings.
22 I have seen millions, it seems, hundreds, thousands of
23 birds fly across the bay and up over the edge of the
24 bay. They don't crash into anything. They just keep
25 going. There's a huge refuge there. They will find a

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1 place to nest and breed.
2 And the time that I spent in Cold Bay, I did
3 not insure my car because every time I drove it, I never
4 saw maybe one other car maybe really close to the store.
5 It just was ridiculous to think that you would ever meet
6 another car on the road. So how can that one car that
7 might travel between King Cove and Cold Bay affect
8 anything? It's just ridiculous.
9 And I just am here mainly to say, I wrote to
10 Clinton, President Clinton, in -- years ago. And to
11 find out last week that this road doesn't exist, it --
12 it just amazed me that we have waited this long to give
13 people a road that they need.
14 **POLLY WHEELER:** Eighteen.
15 **BETHANY MARCUM:** Bethany Marcum, M-a-r-c-u-m.
16 And I'm just here to speak in support of alternative
17 numbers two and three in terms of building a road, both
18 for the health and safety reasons that have been cited.
19 One other person earlier mentioned the cost
20 concerns. And you can see by the analysis that the cost
21 of the other alternatives in the long run will certainly
22 within 20 years or so exceed -- meet and then continue
23 to exceed the cost of the initial outlay for the road.
24 So the road in the long run is actually going to be a
25 better fiscal consideration.

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1 But the other thing is, that's the main
2 purpose of our government, is to provide infrastructure
3 so that our citizens have the ability to get the health
4 and safety that they're supposed to be provided by our
5 government. That is what the government is supposed to
6 be spending money for, not many of these other programs
7 that they're spending it for. So let's make sure that
8 we invest the money in the proper things, the
9 infrastructure that will last, that will allow our
10 citizens to have the health and safety they deserve.
11 **SAM COTTEN:** My name is Sam Cotten. And in
12 the interest of full disclosure, I used to be an
13 employee of the Aleutians East Borough and currently
14 have a contractual relationship with them as a fisheries
15 consultant.
16 The road to Cold Bay should be an easy
17 decision. In my opinion, there's no significant impact
18 on the habitat, no loss of eelgrass. The birds and
19 animals are used to people and vehicles, as evidenced by
20 the existing roads, activities, and hunting that
21 currently takes place in and around Cold Bay.
22 And a lot of that is by folks from Anchorage
23 and other parts of the United States who have a lot
24 easier and safer access to the area than the people in
25 King Cove. So what's the problem?

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1 In my opinion, the land is designated as
2 wilderness and is in a National Wildlife Refuge, a
3 designation similar to the Arctic Refuge. My feeling is
4 that there's a concern about precedent -- and I've heard
5 that mentioned here many times tonight -- and that
6 shouldn't be a reason when the merits and the logic are
7 overwhelmingly on the side of the road.
8 You've heard about the merits, including the
9 health and safety issues, as well as the convenience for
10 the residents of King Cove. The people living there
11 feel strongly about this and with good reason.
12 Mr. Christensen mentioned my wife earlier. I
13 was going to say something, too, though. She works in
14 King Cove obviously and has some written testimony. One
15 point she had really struck home with me. She related
16 an incident where a patient needed to leave King Cove
17 and the weather was terrible, but the pilot was willing
18 to fly anywhere. He was willing to take a risk. It was
19 a terrible night. And he said he just felt it wasn't
20 his time to die. Luckily, they made it to Cold Bay.
21 Her point was, you shouldn't have to rely on luck to get
22 safe access to Cold Bay Airport in a medical emergency,
23 or for that matter any reason.
24 I wasn't sure I was going to talk about my
25 friend Ruth Croxton. But I met her in college at the

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1 University of Alaska Fairbanks many years ago. She
2 became a pilot, flew the King Cove route. She died
3 there.
4 And sometimes I've -- I've been on flights
5 where you're sort of white-knuckling and you're flying
6 sideways next to the mountain to stay out of the middle
7 of the pass where all the real wind is, and I think --
8 and the pilot, that day that was really terrible, we
9 were flying sideways. He said he would have never done
10 that, but -- had he known the weather was going to be
11 that bad. But there's just no way to know. It can come
12 up pretty quick and you're already in the air and it can
13 be bad.
14 Thirty seconds. Okay.
15 So I'll conclude by saying the reluctance of
16 the United States government to allow this road is a
17 good example of a bad decision to presume a one-size-all
18 land designation should trump the logic and merits of
19 this particular project.
20 And I just wanted to say that I heard a few
21 things tonight that I guess I haven't been exposed to.
22 Some of the people have been following this issue for a
23 long time. But to think that this is a shenanigan or a
24 scheme or a strategy to circumvent the Wilderness Act, I
25 couldn't believe what I was hearing. Thank you.

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1 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty.
2 **WADE WILLIS:** My name is Wade Willis,
3 W-i-l-l-i-s. I'm here to speak as a former resident of
4 Cold Bay, a hunter in Cold Bay, and somebody who
5 believes in preserving Alaska with the standards that
6 we've enjoyed since statehood.
7 I'm astonished to hear that this is an issue
8 of quality of life for Cold Bay -- King Cove. Every
9 rural village in this state suffers the exact same thing
10 that you guys are suffering, every single one. They all
11 do. Some worse maybe. Some are more remote.
12 False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, where are they?
13 Why are they not here going, "Oh, well, if King Cove
14 gets a road, by golly, we've got to have something
15 special, too, because we suffer too. When is the spur
16 going to go up to Nelson Lagoon?"
17 And the State comes and says, "We promise
18 we're not going to have commercial use of that road,"
19 but we all know that once it becomes State land, it's a
20 given it's going to be commercial use, because the State
21 will call the shots and the State always goes with
22 commercial use. And a road to that side of the
23 peninsula is highly beneficial for commercial use.
24 And I also say, when did quality of life mean
25 that the quality of life for caribou, black brants, and

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1 all the wildlife that the Native people have lived on
2 for millennium become second-class citizens?
3 I want you to know that this 40,000 acres
4 that's supposedly going to get transferred from the
5 State to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, well,
6 that's the camping grounds of the southern Alaska
7 Peninsula caribou herd. Now, you've all enjoyed and
8 fought strong and hard for predator control in those
9 areas -- right? -- because you say caribou are important
10 to your way of life. Well, there won't be any more
11 predator control there. Right? So you're giving that
12 up.
13 And as a hunter, who's hunted in Cold Bay, I
14 have stalked geese and black brant and I have pulled up
15 next to that Izembek Lagoon and I've taken one shot and
16 I've sent tens of thousands of birds to flight. I
17 hunted on that lagoon one time, and I said morally I
18 cannot do this to these birds who are here in a critical
19 moment in their life cycle to get fed so they can fly
20 nonstop to Mexico. This is an asset for all Americans.
21 This is an asset for all humans.
22 And for you guys to think that sport hunters
23 from around the world would not negatively impact the
24 wildlife resources by opening up this road is crazy. I
25 support option one.

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1 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number 21. We've got two 21s?
2 **ERNIE WEISS:** My name is Ernie Weiss. I do
3 work for the Aleutians East Borough. I've got comments
4 I'll pass in on my own behalf. I'm here to read
5 comments for the mayor of the Aleutians East Borough,
6 Stanley Mack. He wanted to be here. He was not able
7 to, but I believe he's listening in.
8 So his statement is: "I was born in King
9 Cove, have lots of family there. I go back there a lot,
10 and this is personal. I can't even remember how many
11 times I've stood up in front of this many people or
12 testified in front of Congress and tried to get them to
13 see why this road is so important, not just for King
14 Cove, but when you go there, you'll see that it's a big
15 deal all over the borough. And now here we are in
16 Anchorage, many hundreds of miles from home, and we're
17 still talking about if we should get a road and not
18 when. But we Aleuts have learned to be patient.
19 "There is no one to speak up for our survival
20 except us, so please choose either alternative two or
21 three and let us move into the circle of Americans
22 instead of feeling we are on the outside looking in. We
23 need to know that our government really thinks our lives
24 count. At the moment, all that is for sure is that if
25 we would have waited for someone to ask us what we want,

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1 we would wait forever.
2 "We know for sure that our cabins got burned
3 to the ground without so much as a form letter from our
4 government. We also know for sure the government never
5 asked us what we thought about them creating the Izembek
6 Wilderness in our backyard and how that would impact our
7 transportation access to the Cold Bay Airport.
8 "We also heard local U.S. Fish and Wildlife
9 Service staff tell us there is no way a road should be
10 built through the Izembek Refuge. Recalling these
11 events continue to make me sad and bewildered as to why
12 my federal government does not respect us and our need
13 for this simple road connection so that we can have
14 safer and more dependable transportation access to the
15 outside world.
16 "It is true that we've been at this road issue
17 for many decades and have spent long hours away from
18 home to reach this point. So even though I'm tired of
19 talking, I know that being able to discuss this draft
20 EIS report is some progress and I'm glad for that. Let
21 me say again, without any doubt, either alternative two
22 or three is the way to go.
23 "We know at the end of all the talking the
24 answer still might be no. You're going to hear no from
25 some of the people sitting here tonight. They want to

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1 speak to you, too. They want to tell you about the
2 swans and caribou, how they must come first. They live
3 in a world -- and maybe you do, too -- I don't know --
4 where roads and wildlife are automatically bad news. I
5 am looking you in the eye today and telling you that in
6 this world we live in, and have always lived in,
7 wildlife have nothing to fear from us. Stop and look at
8 the record where wildlife are concerned and you have to
9 admit it's pretty good and pretty simple: We take what
10 we need to our families and then we leave them alone.
11 "I have only lived in this part of the world,
12 but I've traveled extensively to where your experts
13 live. It's not hard to notice the difference between
14 the two. And if you're a swan or any other animal who
15 wants a life in this world, you're pretty happy with the
16 Aleut way. Help us keep that way of life alive and
17 well.
18 "Thank you for hearing me out."
19 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty-two. I think we have
20 two twenty-twos.
21 **ARNOLD NEWMAN:** Hello. Good evening. My name
22 is Arnold Newman, and I'm from King Cove. People that
23 oppose this road, I want you guys to be in our shoes.
24 We lost people in our home trying to get a boat from
25 King Cove to Cold Bay. We've had weather -- winds 60 to

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1 100 mile an hour. If you guys were in our shoes and
2 seen the problem trying to dock a boat by the Cold Bay
3 dock, it's -- sometimes it's impossible. We lose lives;
4 we lose family members.
5 And people that oppose this road, I would like
6 you to be in our shoes. If you lost a family member or
7 a person from your town, you'd be for this road and
8 that's why we're for this. So many people have lost
9 their lives trying to get to Cold Bay to get a flight to
10 Anchorage. And when you guys think this road is crazy,
11 I think you guys are crazy because our families --
12 our -- people from our village, when you lose somebody,
13 it's -- the whole town hurts. And I would like you guys
14 to be in our shoes. And if you were, you would be for
15 this road. Thank you.
16 **POLLY WHEELER:** The other 22.
17 **MARVIN MOSER:** My name is Marvin Moser. I've
18 been in Anchorage for 32 years. I've been to King Cove,
19 and I was there in a situation that I was there for
20 three days. And I'm in support of this road.
21 I want to say, when this road is built, if it
22 saves one life, it's worth any birds that are lost, any
23 birds. If it's a couple hundred, if it's a couple
24 thousand, it's worth one life -- it's worth those birds
25 if it saves a life.

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1 And I'm curious about the folks that are here
2 against that road, if they live out in King Cove. I bet
3 you don't. It's the people that are against that road
4 that don't even live there. And I feel like the people
5 that live there ought to have the road to protect their
6 lives, to give them the kind of quality of life that we,
7 that live in Anchorage, have and we expect. We have
8 trails that the city builds so that people can walk and
9 hike. These people need a road so they can have the
10 same quality of life that we have in Anchorage.
11 And, also, I wanted to just say, the lady that
12 mentioned about the health and the birds, the wings, and
13 stuff like that, we have a situation where we have put
14 priority on the creature instead of the creative and
15 people that deserve life, you know, some of the same
16 people that don't care about other people's lives.
17 And I think about this situation where it was
18 in Cordova about four to six years ago, something like
19 that, there was four pilots -- four people on a plane
20 that lost their lives. And I wondered, if they would
21 have had a road, they could have drove out. Thank you.
22 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty-three.
23 **AMBERLY WEISS:** My name is Amberly Weiss. I'm
24 from King Cove. I am a member of the Agdaagux Tribe and
25 a King Cove Corporation shareholder. I was also a

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1 hovercraft captain for Aleutians East Borough.
2 I hear everyone talking about the 32 medevacs
3 that were completed. More than half of those were
4 completed in near perfect weather conditions. In other
5 words, those patients were lucky. The other half of
6 those medevacs -- sorry -- were completed in pretty
7 rough weather, weather bad enough to keep my crew and I
8 from returning home from medevacs for over a week, but
9 we were glad to do it to save a life.
10 One time it took us over four hours to get to
11 Cold Bay, which is usually a 20-minute ride. The
12 patient had severe trauma and is very lucky to be alive.
13 It was a very dark and very cold, very windy night.
14 But I don't hear anything about the medevacs
15 that we were not able to complete. Sorry. I can
16 testify to at least one during my appointment with the
17 Aleutians East Borough. We could not complete this
18 medevac due to extreme cold temperatures and winds in
19 excess of 70 miles per hour. It's the worst feeling in
20 the world to tell someone that, "Sorry, we can't help
21 you."
22 But the Fish and Wildlife Service and the
23 government has a choice. I pray to God they do not have
24 to say that, "Sorry, we can't help you." Put the lives
25 of the people in King Cove before the inconvenience of

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1 waterfowl. Make the choice to save a life. Thank you.
2 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty-four.
3 **AARON CHRISTIANSEN:** Hi. My name is Aaron
4 Christiansen, and I'm also from King Cove.
5 And for the people who are against the road,
6 Della Trumble here has been fighting for the road all
7 her life. But you guys don't know, her daughter had
8 crashed on a plane trying to get home. That was kind of
9 ironic.
10 And one of the other things I wanted to say
11 was that we've got these guys, you know, talking about
12 budgets and stuff and they're trying to build a road to
13 Knik that costs -- what? -- almost three quarters of a
14 billion dollars, a bridge, and all we want is a -- you
15 know -- what? -- \$30 million more, if possible. And
16 they just want to cut the time in half. We want to save
17 people. That's all I want to say.
18 **THE REPORTER:** Can you state your name again?
19 **AARON CHRISTIANSEN:** Aaron Christiansen,
20 Christian with S-E-N.
21 **LINDSEY HAJDUK:** My name is Lindsey Hajduk.
22 My last name is H-a-j-d-u-k. And I work for the Sierra
23 Club here in Anchorage.
24 The Sierra Club is a grassroot environmental
25 organization with about 1500 members within Alaska. A

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1 core value of our membership is to protect America's
2 public lands and waters. In this case, the objective is
3 to protect the public land of the Izembek National
4 Wildlife Refuge, which is also designated as wilderness.
5 The land exchange, in order to build a road through the
6 refuge, sets a terrible precedent for lands in our
7 wilderness preservation systems throughout the country
8 and it violates the purpose and mission of the refuge.
9 Over numerous administrations, this unique
10 wilderness and invaluable wildlife habitat has been
11 deemed a benefit to the general public and to the
12 international community. The Sierra Club and our
13 members urge U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to adopt the
14 no-action alternative in the Izembek land exchange. An
15 essential anchor of biodiversity and wilderness is in
16 the refuge system. The Izembek Refuge's conservation
17 benefits extend beyond its boundaries.
18 Road development and use will wreak
19 devastation on the federal wetlands, ecosystem, and
20 wilderness area, and likely set a practice that would
21 lead to the unraveling of conservation policies
22 affecting other refuges and land agencies.
23 America's great outdoors and the service's new
24 vision for the refuge system conserving the future were
25 built around the concept of greater public engagement

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1 related to the conversation of public lands. Conserving
2 our public lands is but one reason to object to the road
3 proposal through the Izembek Refuge.
4 The Sierra Club will submit more detailed
5 comments that will further explain why the no-action
6 alternative should be supported in this process. Thank
7 you.
8 **POLLY WHEELER:** Next. Twenty-six.
9 **KIERSTEN LIPPMANN:** Hi. My name is Kiersten
10 Lippman. I'm a wildlife biologist with the Center for
11 Biological Diversity here in Anchorage.
12 We urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to
13 support the no-action alternative. This is the only
14 alternative that does not cause long-term damage and
15 destruction to the internationally important wildlife
16 habitat of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.
17 The proposed land exchange in alternatives two
18 and three is totally insufficient and provides no
19 measure of mitigation for wildlife of Izembek. This is
20 because the qualities that make Izembek such an
21 important habitat for migrating birds, marine mammals,
22 and caribou are irreplaceable and are unique to Izembek.
23 Nearly all of the world's Pacific black brant, Emperor
24 geese, and Steller's eider rely on Izembek's eelgrass
25 beds for food during migration and for over-wintering

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1 habitat. Without this critical food source, these
2 already-stressed species are at risk of further
3 population losses and future extinction.
4 Cutting a road through Izembek is especially
5 damaging, as this area is currently facing rapid changes
6 due to global warming. Alaska is warming twice as fast
7 as the rest of the world, which has a range of effects,
8 including sea level rise, warmer waters, ocean
9 acidification, melting sea ice, marine current and
10 productivity changes, and increases in extreme
11 temperature and weather events. All of these will have
12 a negative impact on Izembek's environment and wildlife.
13 The impacts of a road, on top of these major
14 changes, would be disastrous. Migrating seabirds can be
15 highly stressed by human activity. And I speak from
16 experience. I am a wildlife biologist. I have seen it,
17 I've observed this, and I have studied this.
18 If these animals are unable to consume
19 sufficient calories for their long migration because of
20 avoidance or stress responses to road-related human
21 activities, they may not survive the journey south.
22 Human disturbance and changes in hydrology and the
23 impact of the road as a barrier will also negatively
24 impact caribou, bear, and birds.
25 Weather conditions in the Alaska Peninsula are

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1 extreme and will be even more extreme with climate
2 change. The Fish and Wildlife Service underestimated
3 the cost of building and maintaining a road under these
4 current and future challenging conditions. Maintaining
5 the proposed road will be both costly and difficult.
6 Traveling on this road during such conditions would be
7 dangerous for both people and wildlife.
8 I've worked as an EMT and I'm -- a first
9 responder -- a wilderness responder, and I can say that
10 you ask -- you say, exchange a human life for wildlife
11 life. Well, there's no way to estimate how many human
12 lives were lost. There's no way to know if those people
13 would have survived. If you're being medevaced, you're
14 in an extremely bad shape as it is.
15 And so a road is not needed to meet the health
16 and safety requirements of the people of King Cove.
17 This is not a question of trading human life for the
18 life of a goose because alternative A provides for safe
19 and reliable medical evacuations. To date, more than 30
20 successful evacuations have occurred.
21 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty-seven.
22 **REBECCA NOBLIN:** Hi. Rebecca Noblin. That's
23 N-o-b-l-i-n. I'm also with the Center for Biological
24 Diversity in Anchorage. And I think -- because my
25 testimony is largely repetitive of what my colleague

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1 just said -- I'm just going to go ahead and hand it in.
2 I just wrote that we support the no-action alternative.
3 Thanks.
4 **POLLY WHEELER:** Twenty-eight.
5 **LAMAR COTTEN:** I'm Lamar Cotten, spelled
6 C-o-t-t-e-n. I represent myself. I am in favor of
7 alternative two or three. It's a practical approach to
8 the complicated problem.
9 **POLLY WHEELER:** You win the prize.
10 Twenty-nine. 29? How about 30? We've got 30
11 back here.
12 **DAVID D'AMATO:** My name is David D'Amato. I'm
13 the director of government affairs for the Alaska
14 Primary Care Association. We represent 143 small
15 community health centers scattered all over Alaska. Two
16 of our health centers are represented by the
17 Aleutians -- Eastern Aleutian Tribe -- sorry -- in Cold
18 Bay and King Cove. And we stand with them in supporting
19 option two or -- rather, alternative two or alternative
20 three.
21 This road has been long-studied. The
22 environmental impacts have been carefully considered.
23 We believe that the exchange is well beyond fair. And
24 it's time to get this road built.
25 I wish I could say something -- I'm going to

1 get a little bit of my comments here and just say
2 something about the precedent that's been set. We keep
3 hearing from folks that this will set a dangerous
4 precedent to environmental policy to cut a road through
5 King Cove in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. I'd
6 like to take vigorous exception to that. The reason
7 being is that that law, ANILCA, the law that set out
8 that wildlife refuge, is 32 years old. That area of the
9 world has been populated for 5,000 years.
10 The precedent that has been set by the Aleut
11 people and the people of King Cove and Bristol Bay is
12 respect for the land and respect for the people. And
13 the Alaska Primary Care Association stands with those
14 people in looking out for their health and the access of
15 all people within Alaska and America to get safe, easy,
16 full access to medical care. Thank you.
17 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thirty-one.
18 **LISA WILSON:** My name is Lisa Wilson,
19 W-i-l-s-o-n. And I have lived in King Cove since 1974.
20 My husband was born and raised there, as well as our
21 three children. And we support this necessary road to
22 Cold Bay. We also live in Cold Bay part of the year,
23 for the past nine years, so we've lived in both -- we
24 live there. We don't just go there to hunt and to play,
25 we live there and fish there. And that's where our

1 family is, and we support it fully.
2 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thirty-two.
3 **SEAN MACK:** Hi. My name is Sean Mack. I was
4 born in King Cove. I went to school at the University
5 of Washington, studied history and anthropology; got my
6 master's degree from Idaho State University, studied
7 anthropology and GIS.
8 One thing that I have learned in academia is
9 that you find a lot of these studies have kind of come
10 full circle, resorting back to just asking -- they call
11 it traditional ecological knowledge. They find that the
12 most reliable information comes from the people who have
13 lived there. And I find that that's true as well, which
14 is why at the beginning I was asking about whether the
15 study was done using the history of the previous roads
16 and how those impacted the birds.
17 And one of the reasons why I asked that is
18 because if you want to know how they impacted the birds,
19 all you've got to do is ask, you know. You can ask the
20 people of King Cove. You can ask the people who have
21 lived in Cold Bay and know the impact of the roads, that
22 know these animals.
23 I heard a lot of people talk about studying
24 these birds, what they know. And I'll tell you, I'd
25 gladly put your five years of experience up against

1 Henry's 50 when you want to ask about caribou, you want
2 to ask about brant, you want to ask about what these
3 animals are doing. That's all you have to do is ask.
4 And that's pretty much all I have to say for that.
5 But I do want to mention one other thing.
6 When I was reading through the executive summary -- and
7 I also went through portions of the full version -- one
8 of the secondary impacts that they talked about was
9 socioeconomics. And in the full version, you guys spoke
10 of education as kind of a -- I guess a side effect of
11 reliable transportation, that you thought that people
12 could stay in school longer, there would be more people
13 graduating. But in the executive summary, I noticed
14 that under the effects of the socioeconomics you said
15 they were negligible. And I would like some of that
16 corrected, because I think education is very important
17 and the education especially in rural Alaska is
18 extremely important, as you pointed out in the full
19 version. But I didn't think that was reflected in the
20 summary because, as I said, you said it's negligible.
21 Also, in the PowerPoint presentation, you guys
22 might want to change -- you mentioned it was 3,000
23 years, I heard somebody else mention 5,000, and in your
24 full version you do say that -- you know, according to
25 the Anangula Site and some of the other archeological

1 findings around the peninsula, it's closer to 8,000 to
2 10,000 years of experience that the Aleuts have out in
3 the region. So you might want to correct that slide.
4 That's all. Thank you.
5 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thirty-three.
6 **JULES TILESTON:** For the record, I'm Jules
7 Tileston. I'm an independent consultant, and I'm
8 working for King Cove Corporation -- the City of King
9 Cove. But I think you also need to know that for the
10 last 12 years I've lived with this particular project,
11 first, as the project EIS third-party contractor for the
12 Corps of Engineers that studied and authorized the
13 hovercraft operation; secondly, for the State when
14 funding was requested to complete the road for the
15 hovercraft in 2007 and 2008; and now with this project.
16 So I've got quite a history of working in EIS's,
17 particularly in this area.
18 Rather than talk about what I would prefer or
19 what I see, I'm going to address the process. There was
20 a major screw-up at the end of the process where
21 everyone had commented, all the cooperating agencies had
22 commented on the graph that we were given to review, and
23 then we were told by phone that the service had
24 unilaterally decided to increase impact judgments on
25 their own without distribution. And it was sometime

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1 later that we actually got a copy of why they were doing
2 this. As a result of that, they said, tundra swans are
3 going from this to a major impact. We asked what was
4 the basis for that, and they couldn't tell us. We asked
5 for their swan nesting data, which they provided, and
6 unfortunately the King Cove city had to hire a
7 contractor to take the Fish and Wildlife data, take the
8 Fish and Wildlife ordinance for the road, and
9 superimpose those to determine how many tundra swans
10 were actually involved. We're not completed with the
11 analysis. We will provide that to the service as part
12 of our formal comments.

13 You've heard about the definitions not being
14 applied uniformly. We'll comment on that. The biggest
15 thing, though, is the Act also requires Kinzarof Lagoon
16 to be added to the Izembek State Game Refuge, who by the
17 way owns and manages Izembek Lagoon. That is not
18 mentioned. I've heard eelgrass beds. There's 2,300
19 acres of eelgrass beds in that one piece that could be
20 added to the refuge, surrounded completely by
21 wilderness. Thank you.

22 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thirty-four. Are you looking
23 for me?

24 **ORIN SEYBERT:** Yeah. Thank you.

25 I am Orin Seybert, O-r-i-n S-e-y-b-e-r-t. I'm

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1 the founder of PenAir, Peninsula Airways. I started it
2 just me and one airplane in 1955. I moved out to
3 Bristol Bay when I was 13 years old, grew up there
4 hunting, fishing, trapping, to feed my family and then
5 started flying down -- I think I made my first trip to
6 Cold Bay in 1956. King Cove had no runway at all, and I
7 didn't get my Grumman until 1963 when I started flying
8 to King Cove and Akutan.

9 I'm asked once in a while, "Why would you
10 support this road? It's going to take business away
11 from you, your airline." And there's a much larger
12 picture. We built our company by helping the people and
13 working with them. And anything that's good for our
14 customers, we support. And believe me, this road is
15 absolutely necessary. And in the long run, we
16 benefit -- we'd be glad to get rid of that link
17 between -- that we have to fly between Cold Bay to King
18 Cove.

19 Anyway, I support strongly alternative two.
20 The impact on the wildlife, that's ridiculous. I've
21 been looking at various situations up and down the
22 peninsula and the Aleutians hundreds of times and,
23 believe me, this little road would not have any impact.

24 You talk about fish. The road doesn't go near
25 a salmon stream. You talk about -- I heard talk and

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1 publicity about eelgrass. Well, the eelgrass is in the
2 lagoons, Izembek, of course, and Kinzarof, by the way.
3 And the road is not going to impact that. So there's a
4 few tundra swan that will move around, like somebody
5 said, and just -- they don't need to go anywhere. The
6 road is not even going to be in their habitat. And
7 they've got 500 miles from King Salmon to Cape Sarichef
8 to land and breed in.

9 I lost my train of thought. Oh, the point was
10 made that -- a good point about, if you're going to do
11 it in King Cove, why don't you do it in all the
12 communities, Nelson Lagoon, False Pass. Well, that
13 would be admirable and I would love to see every
14 community in the state have good access to a large
15 airport, all-weather, but it comes down to economics.
16 It's not economically feasible to support many of these
17 communities. This is such a simple deal to support King
18 Cove and help 900 people down there. Thank you.

19 **SHARON BOYETTE:** My name is Sharon Boyette,
20 B-o-y-e-t-t-e. Until this past Tuesday, I was the
21 administrator of the Aleutians East Borough and I
22 retired on that day.

23 I just had a couple of little comments. It
24 seems like we're at the point in the agenda where just
25 about everything has been said. But I did want to say

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1 that I am very much going to miss visiting with the
2 wonderful people in King Cove. I will not miss having
3 to fly in there or back out. It truly is a terrifying
4 flight. And even when it's not a terrifying flight,
5 you're ready for a terrifying flight. And so this road
6 is really needed.

7 I'll also not miss not being able to fly back
8 to Cold Bay and having to jump from a bucking fishing
9 vessel onto an icy ladder to get up on the Cold Bay
10 dock. People shouldn't have to do that. It's not
11 right. A road is the right thing to do. We need to do
12 it soon.

13 The other comment I think I have to make,
14 although I no longer speak for the borough, is to just
15 mention the hovercraft briefly. The Aleutians East
16 Borough tried very hard to make the hovercraft work for
17 three years at an expense that other local governments
18 would never have considered. \$3 million is a huge
19 amount for a small rural Alaskan government. We tried
20 very hard to make it work. It doesn't work.

21 So in King Cove and Cold Bay, it's not the
22 answer. We're hoping that it will find a use in Akutan,
23 as to not waste any more of the taxpayer's dollars that
24 we've heard so much about. But we'll take it to Akutan
25 and we'll see if we can't use it there. And hopefully

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1 it will be a success there. Thank you.
2 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thirty-six.
3 **LIZA MACK:** Hi. My name is Liza Mack. I was
4 born and raised in King Cove. I have my master's degree
5 in anthropology, and I'm currently pursuing my Ph.D. in
6 indigenous studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks
7 where I am in the marine ecosystems sustainability in
8 the arctic and subarctic program.
9 One of the things that we talk about a lot in
10 these classes is the way that -- the human dimension is
11 a lot of times taken out of an ecosystem. Well, the
12 Aleut people have been in this ecosystem for 20,000
13 years. We've been there longer than the Defenders of
14 Wildlife, longer than the Audubon, longer than the
15 Sierra Club, longer than a lot of the hunters that have
16 been flying in. We have been the stewards of this land
17 and we have taken care of it.
18 This road is necessary for our people. It's
19 necessary for our health and safety. And I strongly
20 support alternative two. I think that it is safe, I
21 think that it is reliable, and I think that a lot of the
22 negative terminology that has been used to define these
23 alternatives as far as wreaking devastation, unraveling
24 policies of wilderness areas, are false and I don't
25 think that they properly reflect what this road would

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1 do. And I do not think that is what would happen to the
2 wilderness, to the birds.
3 As you can see, we have been there. We are
4 resilient. So is our land. So is our animals. And we
5 will respect that. Thank you.
6 **POLLY WHEELER:** Number 37.
7 **NICOLE WHITTINGTON-EVANS:** Thanks. My name is
8 Nicole Whittington-Evans, and I'm here representing the
9 Wilderness Society tonight. And we have members both in
10 Alaska and elsewhere in the nation that care about the
11 future of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Our office
12 has been engaged in the Izembek road debate since the
13 1990s. I appreciate the opportunity to comment tonight.
14 I have been fortunate to spend time at Izembek
15 National Wildlife Refuge. I have visited both
16 communities of King Cove and Cold Bay and have talked
17 with many people over the years about the proposed road
18 and sat through many meetings on the topic. Thanks to
19 Aleutians East Borough representatives and Della
20 Trumble, I have toured King Cove, flown through its
21 airport, spent time on the refuge, and also flown over
22 the proposed exchange lands during my visits.
23 This road would be incompatible with the
24 primary purposes of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
25 and it would fragment the ecological heart of the

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1 refuge. The proposed road would de-designate federally
2 protected wilderness in order to build a road that
3 Congress has already determined would be incompatible
4 with the wildlife and habitat protection purposes for
5 which Izembek was established.
6 The internationally significant wetlands
7 complex through which the road would be built is a
8 critically important habitat for hundreds of thousands
9 of migrating birds that rely on the refuge's eelgrass
10 beds to nest, rest, and feed and is vital to a number of
11 marine mammals, including threatened species. Nearly
12 all of the world's Pacific black brant and Emperor geese
13 rely on Izembek's eelgrass for their survival.
14 The isthmus is a critical migration corridor
15 for caribou and grizzly bears and is important tundra
16 swan nesting habitat. The road would fragment the
17 isthmus, an important winter habitat for caribou, which
18 is already facing habitat challenges and declining
19 numbers.
20 The majority of the exchanged lands being
21 proposed do not provide habitat comparable to the
22 lagoon's complex. They provide quantity, but not
23 similar quality of the 43,000 acres proposed to be
24 included as wilderness. Half of them are uplands with
25 no waterfowl value and the other half contain no

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1 eelgrass beds and only limited value for the waterfowl
2 species found in the lagoon's complex. There is no
3 comparable habitat anywhere else in the Izembek Refuge
4 or in the proposed exchange lands that would make up for
5 the loss of the wilderness lands found in the isthmus
6 between Izembek and Kinzarof Lagoons.
7 There will be impacts to subsistence. I know
8 I'm running out of time.
9 We do not believe that the road will offer
10 safe or reliable transportation. You know, hazardous
11 conditions and winter, snow blowing, will be very
12 difficult to maintain the road if opened. I appreciate
13 the comments here tonight regarding life-threatening
14 situations. I think the road will not -- the road will
15 not actually be a panacea for King Cove and will
16 potentially cost lives. We also are doing a
17 cost-benefit analysis and will submit detailed comments.
18 **POLLY WHEELER:** Thank you.
19 That's all we have signed up to give public
20 testimony tonight, but I would encourage -- I would like
21 to thank everybody for being here and for offering their
22 testimony. I'd like to thank everybody for being
23 respectful of everybody offering the testimony.
24 I encourage people -- again, here's the public
25 comment meetings that are going on next week. You have

1 until May 18th to submit any written comments. I really
2 encourage you to do that. There's the e-mail address up
3 there and fax. And there's also a -- you can do it the
4 old-fashioned way by mailing hard copies in. So I
5 really encourage people to do that.

6 And, again, thank you very, very much for your
7 time and thank you for being here -- I appreciate it --
8 on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

9 (Proceedings adjourned at 9:17 p.m.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, VALERIE MARTINEZ, RPR, and Notary Public in
3 and for the State of Alaska do hereby certify:

4 That the proceedings were taken before me at the
5 time and place herein set forth; that the proceedings
6 were reported stenographically by me and later
7 transcribed under my direction by computer
8 transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of
9 the proceedings taken at that time; and that I am not a
10 party to nor have I any interest in the outcome of the
11 action herein contained.

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed
13 my hand and affixed my seal this 17th day of May, 2012.

14
15
16
17

18 _____
19 VALERIE MARTINEZ,
20 Registered Professional Reporter
21 Notary Public for Alaska

22 My Commission Expires: June 22, 2014

23
24
25

	131 (2) 14:23;49:8	2.4 (1) 16:8	15:8;16:8	60 (1) 72:25
\$	14 (1) 57:9	20 (6) 30:6;47:21,24;59:9, 17:64:22	30 (8) 5:22;23:13;32:15; 38:1;43:17;80:19;81:10, 10	60,000 (2) 53:8;55:7
\$1 (4) 14:10;18:22;19:7; 55:21	143 (1) 81:14	20,000 (1) 90:12	300,000 (1) 35:15	7
\$149,000 (2) 15:13;21:1	15 (2) 52:7;60:3	200 (1) 55:10	32 (4) 30:5;73:18;75:2;82:8	70 (2) 38:22;75:19
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