

The Road of Hope

King Cove's Need for a Road to Cold Bay

By ~ Kelsie Larae Lanham

King Cove, Alaska is a little town on the Alaskan Peninsula that has around 800 people that live here all year long and also 200 – 500 cannery workers that come and go through out the year. That adds up to around 1,300 people at one time in a remote area. And I am one of those 1,300 people. If there were to be a life or death emergency at the same time when there were high winds, how are we supposed to make it out of here? Where are we supposed to get help? There is no way. We need the road of hope.

For many years, the native people of King Cove have only had two ways out of this secluded area. Those ways are by a small 5-seater plane or a fishing boat. Both of these ways will get you to Cold Bay where there is a bigger airstrip with larger planes going to Anchorage. The plane will take only 15 –20 minutes, depending on weather conditions. A fishing boat, on the other hand, can take up to 3 hours. Weather is also a factor to consider for this type of transportation.

Also, because of non-sufficient traveling conditions, there have been many losses of loved ones, family members, and friends.

Some people have said that we are the second windiest city in the world, and I have come to believe that we really are. This is one of the biggest interferences with the transportation that we have now (boat, plane). Can you fly in 60 mph winds? No. Is it safe or, at all sane, to go out on a boat in 60 mph winds and 30ft waves? NO! The only other option is to drive. But you can only do that if you have a road to drive on. And right now, we don't have one.

And yes, it is true that we have a hovercraft. The government was nice enough to give us that for medical emergencies. But through the use of it, we have come to find out that it is impossible to run the hovercraft when the ocean is frozen without wrecking the entire thing. It just won't work, especially when it is pretty much winter here for 9 months out of 12. A hovercraft is restricted to under 30 mph winds and will not run properly if these conditions aren't met. Also, there have already been many problems with it and now we are in debt for the repairs that need to be made. Therefore, it is no longer in use except for emergencies and school use. So, as you can see our situation, our sources are going down pretty fast.

It is just a road! You build them every other day in every other city without thinking twice about it. And while you are at it, you're probably killing more wildlife there then we ever would on this little 7-mile stretch that we need. There are, for one, more cars, and for two, much more surrounding pollution coming from other surrounding cities. So what is it really going to hurt to have some animals move a little to the side so we can have a 7-mile long and 10 feet wide road?

Just put yourself in our shoes. What if it was your son, daughter, mom, dad, aunt, uncle, grandma, grandpa, friend, you name it! Would you rather build a road and slightly relocate a few wild animals, or jeopardize the life of that person you love?

So, that is really all we are asking for. We want just a little sliver of land to save probably hundreds of lives. Is that really too much to ask?