

February 26, 2013

1725 E. 24th Ave.

Anchorage, Alaska

Mr. Ken Salazar

99508

Secretary, United States Department of Interior

Dear Mr. Salazar,

My name is Dr. Peter Mjos. For many years, while serving in the United States Indian Health Service in Alaska, I was the Medical Director for the Eastern Aleutian Tribes, and the physician directly responsible for the medical care for the Alaska Peninsula communities of both King Cove and Cold Bay. I provided direct care to these communities twice a year for many years.

I absolutely agree with the Department of Interior decision to deny road access through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness. On three previous occasions I have given both oral and written testimony in opposition to the proposed road. The Department of Interior decision is the right decision and the correct decision based on fact.

I have been involved in several successful marine medical evacuations from King Cove to Cold Bay, each without incident. These were accomplished aboard one of several Bering Sea crabbers home ported in King Cove, each capable of withstanding the worst seas imaginable. The essential missing element, however, is a break water at the Cold Bay dock, one which would assure calm water for safe medivac transfers.

Conversely, the proposed road would always be a calamity-in- waiting. In addition, the final limiting factor is whether any aircraft, fixed wing or helicopter, could safely land and depart from Cold Bay in an Aleutian maelstrom.

The proposed road construction estimates are astronomical, and the annual maintenance costs for this 27 mile road are well over \$1 million per year. Furthermore, the Alaska Department of Transportation has stated that it simply cannot provide that service.

In a typical, and not infrequent, Aleutian storm- aptly named the "cradle of the storms", as counterrotating warm Pacific currents collide with frigid Bering Sea currents-the meteorologic results are astonishing. Hurricane force gales often well above 100 miles per hour inflict blinding, zero visibility; massive and impenetrable drifts; salt spray glazing everything with the worst black ice; deadly wind chill; and great avalanche likelihood. In such storms Cold Bay cannot clear and maintain for even one hour the flat asphalt 10,000 foot Cold Bay runaways, much less the community gravel streets. It is inconceivable then that the proposed 27 mile road could be passable. Any vehicle or ambulance

attempting transit in such conditions could be suicidal, rescue impossible, and rescuers gravely imperiled.

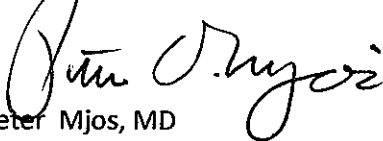
With all due respect to my many friends and former patients in King Cove I submit that the proposed road is the Great Irony- this proposed road to ostensibly save lives, and for health and public safety, in reality poses grave dangers, and is a very real threat to life itself.

Moreover, community officials have, over the years, stated that the real purpose of the road is not public safety, but in fact is to promote commercial purposes, to create "positive socioeconomic impacts" (1994 King Cove resolution).

Given those truths, one must question Sen. Murkowski's real intent, or personal ulterior motives, by insisting that the road is the only life-saving option.

Therefore, based on my experience and the observations of myself and others, marine transportation utilizing deep draft, stable, Aleutian storm-capable craft, traveling from either King Cove or Lenart's Harbor to a fully protected breakwater at the Cold Bay dock is the safest, most reliable, most viable, and most cost-effective medical evacuation solution for the residents of King Cove, Alaska.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Peter Mjos, MD