

In the Matter Of:

IZEMBEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LAND EXCHANGE/ROAD CORRIDOR

Public Meeting-ANILCA Section 10 Subsistence Hearing - King Cove, Alaska

December 04, 2024

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**CERTIFIED
TRANSCRIPT**

IZEMBEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
LAND EXCHANGE/ROAD CORRIDOR
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC MEETING
AND
ANILCA SECTION 810 SUBSISTENCE HEARING
KING COVE, ALASKA
DECEMBER 4, 2024

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
Pages 1 - 82, inclusive

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2 AGDAAGUX TRIBAL CENTER
3 KING COVE, ALASKA
4 6:39 P.M.

5 -oOo-

6 MAYOR WARREN WILSON: I want to welcome
7 everybody here tonight for this meeting for our road
8 to Cold Bay through the SEIS process. And with us we
9 have the Fish and Wildlife Service here, we've got
10 Department of Interior folks here.

11 And we have SEIS number one man, Bill over
12 here, and he is the guy who put this SEIS together.
13 And there's a stack of books that's over in the
14 corner over there. He's the guy who does that. Then
15 we have Bobbie Jo here. She's from the Department of
16 Interior and she's running this show to make sure
17 that we get it all done. And we have Jon over here
18 from the Department of Interior. We have Maria over
19 here from Cold Bay. And Karlin, he's the Assistant
20 Regional Director for the refuges. And then we have
21 a gal over here that's recording for us tonight.

22 So I encouraged everybody here tonight to
23 either fill out the sheet back there that is going to
24 put your name on the register for the SEIS process
25 we're doing and get your name on the record so we can

1 have more people involved from our area that wants to
2 put our Alternative 6 into play. And hopefully it
3 will happen, and the cards are lining up so it will.

4 And I want to -- we're going to do a little
5 presentation here today that they are going to do for
6 us on what's happened so far with the SEIS. And I
7 encourage everybody, if you want to come up and do a
8 public testimony, you have three minutes to talk to
9 support Alternative 6 and subsistence and the health
10 and safety and well-being of our traveling folks out
11 of King Cove for safety reasons.

12 So that is the key issues tonight that we
13 want to really stress that we need for safe travel
14 out of King Cove. And I know that's why we're all
15 here. And we want to make this work. It's been a
16 long process. It started last year. And we had a
17 lot of two-week meetings. We all got together with
18 the King Cove group that spelled all this out for
19 what we want for a land exchange from the King Cove
20 Corporation to make this possible so we could
21 actually maybe get a road to Cold Bay for our needs
22 for safe travel out of King Cove and all our medical
23 and medevac so we don't have to fly out on a
24 Coast Guard helicopter or out in rough weather out of
25 King Cove.

1 So anyway, I'm going to hand it over, I
2 think, to Bill here and he's going to give us an
3 overview of what's going to happen here with this
4 meeting tonight. So thank you.

5 BILL CRAIG: Thank you, Mayor. Welcome,
6 everybody, to the Draft Supplemental Environmental
7 Impact Statement Public Meeting and the ANILCA
8 Section 810 Subsistence Hearing.

9 As the mayor said, my name is Bill Craig,
10 and I'm the project manager for AECOM. We're the
11 contractor helping Fish and Wildlife Service with
12 preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact
13 Statement.

14 Also here tonight from my company,
15 Jon Isaac, Senior Planner. Arika Mercer is in the
16 back. She's a planner. And Deirdre is recording the
17 testimony tonight.

18 I also want to thank Agdaagux for letting
19 us use this facility. It's a really nice facility.
20 And also thank everybody for the warm welcome that we
21 received in the community since we've been here.

22 This is a really nice facility and I'm sure
23 you all are more familiar with it than I, but the
24 exits are in the back here on each side of the room
25 and then the restrooms are right there in the back

1 where you came in the door.

2 I really want to emphasize there's going to
3 be two separate meetings tonight. We're going to
4 start with the public meeting on the Draft
5 Supplemental EIS, and that meeting will consist of a
6 short presentation by the Fish and Wildlife Service
7 followed by your opportunity to provide public
8 comments.

9 And when we are done with the public
10 comment portion of that meeting, we will end that
11 public meeting on the EIS and we will begin the
12 ANILCA Section 810 Subsistence Hearing. Again, Fish
13 and Wildlife Service will give a short presentation
14 followed by public comments on the draft subsistence
15 findings.

16 And ideally, you would kind of separate
17 your comments and you would provide your comments in
18 the first meeting on the Draft Supplemental EIS and
19 then you would provide your subsistence-related
20 comments in the second meeting. If that isn't
21 perfect, if we get subsistence comments earlier, we
22 can sort those out. But that would be an ideal
23 situation, is if you can kind of hold your
24 subsistence comments to the second meeting.

25 And then just kind of ground rules. I

1 don't really think we need to mention this much, but
2 real quickly here. We ask that you be respectful of
3 those who are speaking, even if you do not agree with
4 what is said. Please refrain from clapping or
5 cheering after public comments.

6 When we get to the public comment period,
7 Jon will go over more specific requests related to
8 that. But we're anticipating a three-minute limit on
9 your comments so that we can give everybody a chance.
10 Everybody that wants to speak, we want to make sure
11 we leave enough time for that.

12 And if you don't get a chance to make as
13 detailed a comment as you would like on the public
14 record when you're standing up and talking, you can
15 always go online and make your specific comments
16 there on the docket.

17 And I think that's it. I think the only
18 other thing I would like to mention is we're really
19 here to listen to your input and your comments on the
20 Draft EIS, Supplemental EIS and/or the ANILCA 810,
21 but it is not a kind of question-and-answer period.
22 The folks that are here tonight, we really want to
23 make sure we keep the time open so that we get
24 everybody's comments on the record. We don't want to
25 kind of get into a question-and-answer kind of

1 period. So I think that's it.

2 I'm going to turn the mic over to
3 Bobbie Jo.

4 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Great. Thank you, Bill.
5 And thank you so much. Your team has been awesome to
6 work with. Really, really appreciate you.

7 So I am going to probably be a little
8 clumsy because we have to talk, look, flip papers.
9 So bear with us. This is our first public meeting,
10 so we haven't run through this other than at home in
11 our offices. So thank you for bearing with us.

12 My name is Bobbie Jo Skibo as others have
13 said. I'm a senior planner with the U.S. Fish and
14 Wildlife Service. I have dedicated my career here in
15 Alaska, 30 years, working on natural resource
16 management, conservation planning type issues all
17 over the state. Most recently I've been working up
18 in the Arctic on an oil and gas program up there.

19 So I've been all over the place and I've
20 never been here. This is an absolutely beautiful
21 place. So thanks for having us.

22 I want to always channel my children. I'm
23 a mom of three wild Alaska boys, and so I live in
24 Palmer as well.

25 And again, thank you for having us. And I

1 have two other colleagues here. I will bring the mic
2 over to them, or if you want to stand up and come
3 over here, either way. You want to come over? I
4 will let them do introductions. Then Maria, she's
5 going to come up with a few slides out of this. So
6 if you want to just come up, that would be great.

7 All right. With that, here is Karlin.

8 KARLIN ITCHOAK: Thank you, Bobbie Jo. Can
9 you hear me okay? I usually like to mumble. But my
10 name is Karlin Itchoak. I'm the Assistant Regional
11 Director for refuges in the Anchorage office. And
12 I'm originally from Nome, born and raised in Nome.
13 My family on my dad's side is from Utqiagvik and from
14 on my mother's side, they're from upstate New York.
15 But I've spent most of my life in Nome and in Alaska.

16 As you may know, we have about 570 refuges
17 in the United States, which totals about 95 million
18 acres of land. And in Alaska we have 16 national
19 wildlife refuges, which total 76.8 million acres of
20 land. So over 90 percent of the refuges in the
21 United States are in Alaska.

22 And my role as chief of refuges is to work
23 with our 16 managers to manage these lands, and it's
24 not lost on us and not lost on me as an indigenous
25 person that we're on the ancestral homelands of your

1 people, the Unangan. So I just want to acknowledge
2 that we're here on your ancestral homelands, and I
3 thank you, quyanagpak, for allowing us to be here and
4 for allowing us to come and listen to you tonight.
5 So thank you. And I'll will pass the mic to our
6 refuge manager for Izembek.

7 MARIA FOSADO: Good evening, everyone. I'm
8 Maria Fosado. I'm the Izembek refuge manager. I've
9 been with the Fish and Wildlife Service for a little
10 over 15 years. Prior to moving to Cold Bay in 2020,
11 I worked for Fish and Wildlife out of Minnesota. So
12 most of my time I've kind of bounced around
13 Minnesota. That's where I'm most familiar, what I
14 call home. But like I said, I moved to Cold Bay and
15 have been living there since 2020. I've really
16 enjoyed my time here and all the experiences that
17 I've had.

18 So thank you for welcoming us into your
19 community and I think we will get started.

20 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: We're going to skip this
21 next slide. We were going to go over the agenda, but
22 I think you guys get it. We're in two parts. We're
23 going to do a presentation and then we're going to do
24 public testimony and then do ANILCA 810.

25 The next few slides I wanted to just ground

1 us in the background of the Izembek Refuge, and Maria
2 will cover that.

3 MARIA FOSADO: So I'm here to provide a
4 little background information on Izembek Refuge.
5 Izembek National Wildlife Range was established in
6 1960 by public land order as a refuge, breeding
7 ground, and management area for all forms of
8 wildlife.

9 In 1972, Izembek Lagoon and the surrounding
10 watershed was protected by the Alaska Legislature
11 through the establishment of the Izembek State Game
12 Refuge. And then with the passage of the Alaska
13 National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, the
14 Izembek National Wildlife Range was redesignated as
15 the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. It encompasses
16 comes 310,000 acres, of which approximately 300,000
17 acres was designated as wilderness by Congress.

18 The Congressionally designated Izembek
19 wilderness areas, which comprise most of the refuge,
20 became part of the National Wilderness Preservation
21 System. These areas are administered for the use and
22 enjoyment of the American public in such a manner as
23 will leave them unimpaired for future use and
24 enjoyment as wilderness, to provide for the
25 protection of these areas, and for the preservation

1 of their wilderness character. Wilderness areas
2 provide scenic, wildlife, and scientific values, as
3 well as the opportunity for solitude and primitive
4 and unconfined types of recreation.

5 So each refuge unit in the National
6 Wildlife Refuge System is established to serve a
7 statutory purpose that targets the conservation of
8 native species dependant on its land and waters. To
9 administer those lands in accordance with their
10 statutory purposes, all activities are reviewed for
11 appropriateness and compatibility.

12 So with the passage of ANILCA and the
13 establishment of Izembek Refuge, there were also
14 ANILCA refuge purposes that were identified, and
15 those are as follows: To conserve fish and wildlife
16 populations and habitats in their natural diversity,
17 but not limited to waterfowl, shorebirds, and other
18 migratory birds, brown bear, and salmonids; to
19 fulfill international treaty obligations of the
20 United States with respect to fish and wildlife and
21 their habitats; to provide opportunity for continued
22 subsistence uses for local residents; and to ensure
23 water quality and necessary water quantity within the
24 refuge.

25 Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was the

1 first site in the United States to be designated as a
2 wetland of international importance by the Ramsar
3 Convention in 1986, and subsequently was recognized
4 as an important bird area of global significance by
5 Birdlife International and the National Audubon
6 Society. Izembek Refuge has received these special
7 global recognitions due its diverse habitats, the
8 dynamic landscapes, and the unique geographic
9 location situated between the highly productive
10 waters of the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska.

11 So from brown bears to specific salmon,
12 more than 200 species call the refuge home. The
13 heart of the refuge is Izembek Lagoon, a coastal
14 ecosystem that is home to one of the world's largest
15 eelgrass beds. Kinzarof Lagoon is located on the
16 Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula and is separated
17 from Izembek Lagoon by the narrow isthmus. It's
18 considered one of the most significant eelgrass beds
19 of the Pacific Coast of the Alaska Peninsula.

20 The location of the Izembek Refuge along
21 avian migration routes, combined with abundant food
22 resource provided by eelgrass, makes Izembek Lagoon
23 one of the most important migratory bird staging and
24 wintering habitats in the world. This site is
25 especially critical for many species of waterfowl,

1 particularly geese, and shorebirds that undertake
2 transoceanic flights.

3 Virtually the entire population of Pacific
4 black brant, more than half the world population of
5 emperor geese, and significant percentages of the
6 world population of Steller's Eiders, the Taverner's
7 Cackling -- Taverner's Canada geese depend on
8 Izembek Lagoon.

9 The highest density of brown bears in the
10 Izembek Refuge occurs within the Joshua Green
11 watershed on the northeast side of Cold Bay.
12 However, bears can be observed all throughout the
13 refuge and use a wide variety of habitats, including
14 shoreline, low-lying meadows and tundra, streams, and
15 alpine areas.

16 Caribou have a high profile as a refuge-
17 purpose species and are high value for subsistence
18 users. The Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd
19 ranges from Port Moller to the southern end of Alaska
20 Peninsula, with its primary calving grounds located
21 just north of Izembek Refuge. Wintering areas have
22 historically extended southward and encompass the
23 area around Izembek Lagoon and Cold Bay in the narrow
24 isthmus between Izembek and Kinzarof Lagoons and have
25 been important migration corridor and moving corridor

1 between wintering and calving grounds. The refuge
2 also supports satellite populations of caribou year
3 round.

4 Lastly, Pacific salmon also have a high
5 profile as a refuge purpose species and are high
6 value for subsistence uses. Izembek supports five
7 species of salmon which return to streams each year
8 to spawn in the coastal ecosystem during summer and
9 fall.

10 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Thank you very much.
11 Okay. Thank you so much for giving us such a
12 detailed background.

13 I wanted to ask. Can people still hear us?
14 And can you see this at all? We turned down the
15 lights a little bit. Now we're going to get into the
16 presentation of the actual project, so I want to make
17 sure that you can see this.

18 And then just to point out, over on the
19 wall, when we do conclude, feel free to take a closer
20 look at those posters. We will be leaving a set of
21 those here in the community with the mayor or Gary or
22 somebody else. You can let folks know where you're
23 going to put those. But feel free to take a closer
24 look.

25 So let's go back in time. This project has

1 been going on for a long time. But we're going to
2 start just in 2009. And Omnibus Public Land
3 Management Act -- we refer to that as the 2009 Act --
4 that was in place and directed the Secretary of the
5 Interior at that time to analyze the land exchange
6 through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and directed
7 the Service to prepare an environmental impact
8 statement under the National Environmental Policy
9 Act.

10 I'm going to shorten this. The EIS --
11 that's the Environmental Impact Statement -- was
12 completed in 2013. I'm sure some of you probably
13 remember that. And the no-action alternative was
14 selected at that time.

15 Then in 2019, Secretary of the Interior
16 Bernhardt entered into a land exchange agreement, but
17 then in March 2023, the sitting secretary, the new
18 one that came in, Secretary Haaland, withdrew that
19 from consideration, citing several procedural flaws.

20 So this process that we're participating in
21 now is called a Draft Supplemental Environmental
22 Impact Statement. So what we're doing is taking new
23 information and putting that into the 2013 EIS and
24 adding to it. So that's the supplement part.

25 So this new one was at the request of

1 Secretary Haaland to consider a newly proposed
2 potential land exchange that was based on an offer
3 from the King Cove Corporation. This draft evaluates
4 a no-action alternative, four action alternatives
5 that were from the 2013 EIS, and then we've added a
6 new one based on that offer from King Cove
7 Corporation which we're calling Alternative 6, and
8 we'll get into some details on what that includes.

9 Now, if a land exchange is approved, the
10 King Cover Corporation would have a corridor of land
11 through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. And
12 that is Congressionally designated wilderness. This
13 assumes that all the permitting and regulatory
14 requirements are subsequently met. So there will be
15 more process to go through. But that would allow for
16 the construction, operation, and maintenance of a
17 single-lane gravel road between King Cove and
18 Cold Bay.

19 So the proposed action is to enter into the
20 land exchange to add land with conservation,
21 subsistence, and habitat values to the National
22 Wildlife Refuge System in exchange for a transfer to
23 King Cove Corporation of real property interests that
24 are the surface and the subsurface resources of the
25 United States for the corridor of land through the

1 refuge.

2 Now, the purposes of this are to provide a
3 safe, reliability, year-round transportation system
4 for health and safety purposes. That's with a
5 particular emphasis on emergency medical evacuations
6 between the two communities.

7 Another purpose is to increase the overall
8 conservation value of the lands preserved in the
9 wildlife refuge system and to maintain or increase
10 the opportunity for subsistence by rural Alaskans.

11 Now, the details of the need for this
12 project, it's a pretty lengthy paragraph and we
13 couldn't fit it on the slide, but it is in the EIS in
14 Section 1.4. And you can take a look at that online,
15 or we even have a copy here.

16 So to orient you to this -- I'm sure you
17 probably know this better than I do. Again, I live
18 in Palmer currently, not here. Hopefully you can see
19 this on the map. So we have King Cove, Cold Bay.
20 This is a blow-up of this larger map. If you can
21 see, this was the Lenard Harbor alternative coming in
22 for the ferry. This is the hovercraft alternative.
23 And then this right here now is Alternative 6 and the
24 proposed road corridor. So we'll take a look at this
25 a lot closer in detail here in the next few slides.

1 So as previously noted, the draft SEIS
2 supplements that 2013. So we have a reasonable range
3 of alternatives within it. Again, the no-action. We
4 have two that were included for comparative purposes.
5 Back in 2013, the 2009 Act that was in place, the
6 Omnibus one, it expired. And there was some land
7 exchange stuff going on with the State. So
8 Alternative 2 and 3 have been taken off of the pile
9 but are still in the document for comparisons.

10 Then we included still the two marine
11 alternatives that I just showed you. Those have been
12 retained through this process as what we call viable
13 alternatives, things that would go forward. And then
14 Alternative 6 is actually a similar corridor to
15 Alternative 2, but there has been updated design
16 based on topography and some things with the
17 Department of Public Transportation, so that's why
18 it's a little different. So we'll talk again in more
19 detail.

20 So we're not going to talk about the
21 no-action because, right, nothing to talk about. The
22 second one is off the table. The third one is off
23 the table. But now we're left with Alternative 4, 5,
24 and 6 in greater detail.

25 So this alternative, again, would go from

1 Cold Bay straight across -- which was great for me to
2 see the lay of the land today. I was so glad that
3 the weather opened up for us to see this more in
4 reality, not on these maps. But, again, it was from
5 the 2013 EIS and it was considering operations for
6 six days of service per week. And so we have
7 considered it as a reasonable alternative. And it's
8 there for you to comment on, take a look at, and
9 provide input.

10 Alternative 5 is the Lenard Harbor ferry
11 with the Cold Bay dock improvements. This one would
12 be the ferry that would travel 14 miles and that
13 would require substantially to modify Cold Bay dock.
14 And I have been notified that there is a replacement
15 dock in the planning stages with the Alaska
16 Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
17 So this alternative would not include a land exchange
18 but it has been considered as a viable alternative
19 that, again, you can comment on and provide input.

20 Let's get to the good one, right, the one
21 you want to hear about, Alternative 6.

22 So the Alternative 6 we've analyzed an
23 updated land exchange and road alignment and it has
24 been identified as what's called a preferred
25 alternative by the Department of Interior. That

1 means that it does not constitute a commitment or a
2 decision at this point by the Department.

3 Ultimately, a decision will have to come in what's
4 called a record of decision later in the process.

5 Alternative 6 road alignment would start at
6 the terminus -- okay, I've got my little laser
7 pointer. You'll laugh. This is from Petco for cats.

8 So we've got number 1. This is the
9 terminus of King Cove Access Road near the Northeast
10 Terminal. You'll then cruise north here and then go
11 up through the wilderness and through the refuge, and
12 then you come back down to -- it terminates at the
13 intersection of Outer Marker Road and Blinn Lake
14 Loop. So that would be the road. And then it
15 connects in to some of the other existing roads.

16 This is now the acres. So this is a lot on
17 the screen, but we wanted you to understand all the
18 different numbers trade-offs for this land exchange
19 and alternative.

20 So this alternative would exchange 31,198
21 acres from King Cove Corporation to the federal
22 government. Within that, 29,459 are surface acres,
23 1,739 are surface and subsurface, and those would be
24 from King Cove. Now, the 1,739 acres, that would go
25 back into the congressionally designated wilderness.

1 This 29,459 would actually go to the Alaska Peninsula
2 Refuge, not to the Izembek Refuge.

3 Now, what the government would be giving up
4 is a total of 490 acres, 484 of which are surface and
5 subsurface and six of which are just the subsurface,
6 and that would be giving that back over to King Cove.
7 336 acres of that 490 are currently within the
8 congressionally designated wilderness.

9 There's another slide here that's a little
10 bit more complicated but I think it's helpful for you
11 to understand some of these numbers. So we'll get to
12 that in a second.

13 So on this slide, though, the other
14 components of this are an 18.9-mile single-lane
15 gravel road and then there would be 15 material sites
16 throughout -- if you saw that one slide, there was
17 little dots, it looked like, on that road. Those
18 would be material sites. 13 of which are on kind of
19 the existing road corridor, two of which would be
20 separated with a little, like, shoot-off road and
21 have it a little bit further away from that corridor.

22 So to minimize the impacts to the
23 environment, the road traffic type of use, frequency,
24 and timing, would be restricted to noncommercial uses
25 and further restricted to those necessary for health

1 and safety purposes and access to resources by the
2 federally qualified subsistence users actively
3 engaged in subsistence. So that is kind of an
4 important piece for you to think about how that would
5 be -- you know, how you would utilize that road.

6 This is a nuance, but I think it's
7 important for you to understand since you would be
8 the ones primarily using it. The use of taxis,
9 commercial vans for public transportation or
10 ride-sharing services when used for health and safety
11 or subsistence purposes would not be considered
12 commercial use. So that's something for you to also
13 consider and think about and comment.

14 This is the one -- and you probably can't
15 see it, but it is over there right behind the mayor.
16 So I wanted to go through this as quickly as I can.
17 So what you see here is, right up on the top, this is
18 that Alternative 2 and 3. And this one is 6. We put
19 this in for comparison, because those were actual
20 land exchange road corridor alternatives from the
21 past.

22 Back in the 2013 EIS, the Alternative 2 had
23 a 19.4-mile road, Alternative 3 had 21.6, and this
24 current Alternative 6 is 18.9. The road width was
25 assumed for these others 100 foot. Whereas,

1 Alternative 6 is 100 to 240, and that's just
2 depending on topography, water features, etcetera.
3 Then in addition to that, there would be the material
4 sites that could go further outside that corridor.

5 The third line here is again the acres
6 proposed for exchange from Izembek. So it was
7 187,201 and now we're up to 490, and this does
8 include the 336 acres of wilderness. This is surface
9 and subsurface. And there's two little asterisks
10 there, and it says, This includes six acres of
11 subsurface estate owned by the government in a
12 location of proposed material site on King Cove
13 Corporation service lands -- or corporation surface
14 lands.

15 So when you see some of the numbers in the
16 document, you'll see 484 used and then there's
17 another six. So just not to confuse you.

18 Now, these acres for exchange added to the
19 refuge system, in 2013 it was 52,000 and some change,
20 and this one is 31,198. Now, let's break this down.
21 I will just focus on this one right now.

22 The 1,739 -- we've already talked about
23 this -- that would be surface, subsurface added to
24 wilderness. 29,459, that would come from King Cove
25 Corporation, only the surface, and it would be added

1 over to the Alaska Peninsula Refuge. So just some
2 nuances here.

3 And the reason why this is zero and there
4 are numbers over here, these are the different lands
5 that were associated to those land exchange
6 proposals, but they no longer exist because those
7 were the State lands and they're not party to this
8 exchange at this time.

9 Okay. Lots of detail, but we want you to
10 be the most informed so you can provide your input.
11 And like I said, that is over on that slide.

12 Next one. How to read the document. And
13 we're really getting close. So you will see on the
14 back or over here on my stack, it's a pretty big
15 document. The way we tried to help you understand
16 what is new or substantially revised, you will see
17 yellow text or things with asterisks. So it will
18 look like this. This will be the new text. Anything
19 down here that's not yellow has not been edited. So
20 sometimes it kind of contradicts things, but the
21 yellow is the most important part for you to take a
22 look at.

23 So once you know how to read it, you have
24 your ideas on what to say, we have a variety of ways
25 for you to provide input today. This will go on the

1 public record. We have our court reporter, Deirdre,
2 here. You can go to regulations.gov. We are having
3 a 45-day comment period at this time. We have had
4 two requests for extensions, and the Department is in
5 consideration of that at this time. So we should
6 know soon enough if there will be an extension of
7 that. But at this time, December 30, 2024, at
8 11:59 Eastern Standard Time is the deadline.

9 And then we anticipate that the final
10 Supplemental EIS, which, after we get all the public
11 comment, we'll take it back to the office, we'll be
12 working through it, incorporating it, and then we
13 will publish a final. At that time, 30 days later,
14 there's a waiting period and the record of decision
15 can be signed, and that will be sometime in 2025. We
16 really don't have a good answer on when, recognizing
17 we do have a new administration coming in to place
18 and they need to get into their offices and get ready
19 to tell us our new direction going forward.

20 So I think that this time that is really
21 the presentation. I know it seemed a little tedious
22 with some of those details, but I hope you understand
23 what Alternative 6 is at this time.

24 And then I will hand it over to Jon Isaac
25 and he will give some ground rules on what the rules

1 are for the public testimony.

2 JON ISAACS: Thanks, Bobbie Jo. I'm
3 Jon Isaacs with AECOM based in Anchorage. This is
4 actually my third time in King Cove. I seem to make
5 it every ten years for either costal management or an
6 EIS. But I have to say it's nice being back, but as
7 an Alaskan, most of us sympathize with the challenges
8 that this community is facing with commercial
9 fishing, like other commercial fishing communities.
10 So again, I want to express that sympathy.

11 But the task at hand. So what we're going
12 to be doing, we're going to be taking public comments
13 on the Supplemental EIS. So we're going to call
14 people up in the order they're signed in. So what I
15 will do is I'll call your name, and when I call your
16 name, I'll also indicate who is the next person up,
17 just so you're forewarned. What I will do is I'll
18 hand you the microphone and you can either sit at the
19 table up there, or if you want to stand to talk,
20 whatever you're most comfortable doing.

21 We also have a court reporter who is going
22 to be recording your comments. That's going to go
23 into a transcript and there will be a summary of your
24 comments that we've heard in the Final EIS.

25 So as Bobbie Jo said, we're giving each

1 person three minutes just to make sure that everyone
2 has time to testify. We want to do three minutes on
3 the Draft Supplemental EIS, and then we also have to
4 have a separate ANILCA 810 hearing, so we want to
5 give you three minutes there.

6 But at the end of the testimony on both of
7 those documents, I'll ask if there's someone in the
8 room who has not signed up to testify that would like
9 to comment. So if you haven't signed up and you're
10 listening to this and you decided you want to
11 comment, there's going to be an opportunity to do so.

12 The other thing that Bobbie Jo said is that
13 there are other opportunities to comment. So you're
14 just not limited to commenting tonight. Three
15 minutes is not a lot of time to say perhaps
16 everything you want to say, and so we have a comment
17 form back in the corner that Arika has, and it tells
18 you how to comment, if you want to use the website,
19 if you want to send your comments in. And you may
20 want to think about it, think about what you hear
21 tonight, look at the posters, and it gives you the
22 opportunity to provide more detailed comments. So we
23 want to encourage you to do that.

24 So again, as we said earlier, we ask people
25 to be respectful of what people say. Not everyone is

1 going to agree. You may not agree with what you
2 hear. But we do ask you to be respectful.

3 And the other thing we ask is that we don't
4 encourage cheering or clapping, because it kind of
5 takes away from the time that people have for
6 testimony. But you may be excited with some of the
7 things you hear.

8 So I think with that, again, at the end if
9 there are people that want to testify, I'll go back
10 to you. But we'll go ahead and start with the list.

11 So the first person who is signed up is
12 Dakota Walker, and that would be followed by
13 Brenda Wilson. I'll keep an eye on the three
14 minutes, and as we get close, about two and a half
15 minutes, I'll let you know that you're running out of
16 time.

17 DAKOTA WALKER: My name is Dakota Ariel
18 Walker. I'm a King Cove resident and have been for
19 my entire 29 years. My family, my brothers, my
20 mother, my grandparents, their parents, their
21 parents, and even their parents, up to six
22 generations, have lived in King Cove and their
23 surrounding communities even before King Cove was a
24 community.

25 I'll start at the beginning. I was born in

1 1995 to my mother here in King Cove. As we all know,
2 King Cove is not equipped with a sufficient birthing
3 center, trained midwives, nurses, or doctors. We
4 have a wonderful staff at the clinic, but we know
5 that we don't have those resources even to this day.
6 I was born exactly two months early, with my original
7 due date to be on August 19th. I was told of a story
8 where I was put in a cardboard box with tinfoil
9 blankets and put in the oven with the door open as a
10 type of incubator. I weighed just over three pounds.
11 For how rural this area is, this is not good. I'm
12 lucky to be alive and here to tell this story.

13 For almost a decade I cared for my
14 grandmother, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's
15 dementia. The first three years were easier and
16 there wasn't such a need for resources during this
17 time. In the middle and late stages, things were not
18 as easy. Every time she would become sick, it was
19 terrifying. A cold for her in King Cove could be a
20 death sentence, depending on the weather.

21 And this shouldn't be a concern for elders
22 that are hoping to live their life in their home
23 community as their parents and their grandparents and
24 their grandparents before in this home community.

25 This is a barrier for our aging population, as well

1 as individuals living with disabilities in the area.

2 There are community members that can't come
3 back home because of the lack of access to emergency
4 care necessary. This is a population that is many
5 times overlooked and often because they cannot speak
6 for themselves.

7 The last story I want to share is that of
8 my mother, Donna Walker. In January this year she
9 became ill with pneumonia. She was rushed to the
10 clinic. As my brother said, she wasn't acting
11 herself and needed care. She stayed in the King Cove
12 clinic for over 24 hours, almost two days before a
13 medevac could take make it into King Cover to take
14 her to Cold Bay and then off to Anchorage from there.

15 Once she made it out of King Cove, she
16 suffered from cardiac arrest. And after receiving
17 CPR and having been resuscitated, she stayed at ANMC
18 ICU until she passed on the 14th. I talked to the
19 doctor, and he said he was sorry and that if she had
20 only made it out sooner, they probably could have
21 been able to help her, as her diagnosis was
22 potentially reversible if treated within the time
23 frame.

24 Unlike my first story, my grandmother and
25 my mother aren't here to tell their stories, but I

1 am, and after our lifelong fight for one single road,
2 which is to be intended for emergency vehicles, the
3 result is death and sorrow.

4 My mom has been one of the most recent
5 deaths due to the lack of transport out of King Cove,
6 but she's not the first, and I can guarantee she
7 won't be the last. And at this time I'd like to
8 circulate my mother's death certificate to the
9 officials, and I'd like to point out the highlighted
10 part that says the underlying cause is transport
11 delayed treatment.

12 Me and my siblings have been left with no
13 mother and my children will grow up with no
14 grandmother, and a hole is there that is...

15 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Dakota.

16 Next is Brenda Wilson, and that will be
17 followed by Matt Thompson. Excuse me. Mark. Is
18 Brenda Wilson here?

19 BRENDA WILSON: Hello. I'm Brenda Wilson.
20 I'm from the region, born and raised in the region,
21 in Sand Point. My husband was born and raised here.
22 Our families are interconnected long, long time ago.
23 I'm actually a product of the marriage of two people
24 who tracked that Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.
25 My grandfather walked up the coast from False Pass.

1 He had to go across on a dory over to where Morzhovoi
2 village used to be and then he hiked all the way up
3 to Herendeen Bay. That's up by Nelson Lagoon.

4 And he married his wife, Molly Meyers.
5 Molly Meyers, oh God, could you imagine meeting
6 someone and getting married and she had to walk all
7 the way back down with him? But this man was a
8 remarkable man, John Gardner, Senior. He's actually
9 in the National Geographic magazines. He took the
10 scientists all over. They had their squares all over
11 back in the '30s and '40s. So our family has trekked
12 those land for many years. I think he would be
13 appalled to know his cabin had been burnt down and a
14 place that none of his grandchildren can go across.

15 I've been medevacked lots. My kids were
16 medevacked. I used to go out on medevacs with my
17 mother-in-law alternate with my husband, and we'd go
18 on a helicopter or an airplane. And so it was -- I
19 look back at the things we had to go to.

20 And I am behavioral health for Eastern
21 Aleutian Tribes, the health care organization in the
22 region, and you would not believe how many people
23 suffer from flight anxiety. I myself do because my
24 brother has been in three airplane crashes. So I
25 wonder where my time is next. He survived them all,

1 but I just don't think that we should have to -- like
2 the words of Don Young said, a bunch of birds
3 crossing the road are more important than all of your
4 people and your children and your children to come.
5 They aren't.

6 We are the most important people in this
7 community. We will thrive. No matter what happens
8 to our calvary, we will thrive and survive in this
9 community. And it's a beautiful place to be, and I
10 think we are really restricted as Native people and
11 our Native culture and our values as just being
12 trampled on. And I don't appreciate -- I would
13 appreciate if they look at the corridor number 6.
14 That is the best alternative with the least
15 restrictions as possible.

16 I am worried that having restrictions on
17 there with the commercial and the different things
18 that are talking about on there what is going to
19 happen when we cross mail to come over in a battle
20 and they say no. How many times many of us have gone
21 without medications in this room because the mail
22 doesn't make it in? And we've had people be
23 medevacked out because they haven't gotten their
24 medications in. I myself have. And I do not like
25 going without blood pressure pills. So the clinic

1 will hear me knocking on the door, even though I work
2 there. But I just really think we have to have the
3 least restrictions as possible. Thank you.

4 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Brenda.

5 Next is Mark Thompson, followed by Marylee
6 Yatchmeneff. So we'll skip Mary. And then next
7 would be Susan Bailey.

8 MARK THOMPSON: Good evening. My name is
9 Mark Thompson. Along with my wife Kay, we have
10 called King Cove home for the past eight years. Kay
11 and I own the Alaska Commercial Store here in
12 King Cove, and as the only store in town, it is our
13 responsibility to ensure that we provide the adequate
14 supply of goods and food products to meet the needs
15 of our community.

16 Our goods arrive bi-weekly vehicles to
17 boats and our biggest challenge is to get produce and
18 dairy items that have a longer shelf life to last
19 until the next boat arrives so the community can have
20 healthy options on a daily basis for their families.

21 Unfortunately, from the time we order until
22 arrival in King Cove, the perishable items have been
23 sitting in refrigerated containers for over two weeks
24 on average, and once they're available for sale, most
25 fruits and vegetables only have a one- to two-day

1 shelf life to be used before they have to be
2 discarded.

3 During this past Thanksgiving holiday, our
4 store ordered produce to be flown in so that fresh
5 and healthy goods could be available for families to
6 have with their holiday meals. The goods arrived in
7 Cold Bay on November 23rd, five days before
8 Thanksgiving. However, due to the poor weather that
9 is a staple in our area, the produce was not able to
10 get forwarded over to King Cove until November 30th,
11 leaving our community without fresh goods for the
12 holidays and forcing our store to have to destroy
13 most of what was ordered.

14 By having a road between King Cove and
15 Cold Bay, our company would be able to fly goods into
16 Cold Bay on a noncoastal [indiscernible], allowing us
17 to drive across to get goods for the community, which
18 would allow for overall better healthy meal choices
19 for all of our citizens.

20 To be clear, this is not additional profits
21 for the Alaska Commercial Company, because after
22 paying freight changes to have perishable goods flown
23 in, we have zero margin of profitability for these
24 orders. It is about ensuring healthy options are
25 more readily available for our community.

1 The Alaska Commercial Company stands firmly
2 with the citizens of King Cove, and a request to have
3 a road built between King Cove and Cold Bay would be
4 Alternative 6 for not only the reasons stated, but
5 for the well-being of all individuals that face a
6 medical emergency for the ability to get them
7 advanced medical care that's often a matter of life
8 or death.

9 From a personal viewpoint, our son Robert
10 is a junior at the King Cove School, and like so many
11 of his classmates, he participates in sports, which
12 requires a lot of travel during the winter months
13 when the weather can be at its worst here. Every
14 time he and his teammates get ready for a road trip,
15 the stress level for us, as well as all parents of
16 students traveling, skyrockets as we worry for their
17 safety when flying in poor weather conditions,
18 something that could be alleviated by having access
19 to Cold Bay where they can fly in larger planes that
20 are more suited for inclement weather.

21 I want to thank you for your time and
22 consideration on my comments, as well as all of those
23 here who have been concerned about this tonight.

24 And I want to thank Dakota for comments
25 about your mom. Your mom was a very special person

1 and we all loved her very, very much. And it's very
2 difficult to get up and say what you said, so thank
3 you for that.

4 JON ISAACS: Susan Bailey, followed by
5 Richard Bailey.

6 SUSAN BAILEY: Richard is going to pass his
7 time.

8 My name is Susan Bailey. I am an RN case
9 manager for Eastern Aleutian Tribes. So the sole
10 purpose of my job is to get people the right care at
11 the right time in the right place. So medevacs in
12 particular are incredibly important to us. So my
13 role is trying to coordinate that as quickly and as
14 efficiently as possible. A road would make a world
15 of difference for that.

16 As soon as we make a call and we have a
17 doctor that accepts, we could put a patient in an
18 ambulance and start them on their journey to getting
19 the right care. As it is now, we have to sit, we
20 have to wait for a plane to check the weather to see
21 if they will be willing to come into King Cove, which
22 is always a challenge. Then if they say, oh, if you
23 can get them to Cold Bay, then I have to look for
24 alternatives to that. I need to try and see if I've
25 got another small aircraft in the area that might be

1 willing to take the chance to come over and look for
2 that tiny window where they can land, get my patient
3 and get them over to Cold Bay.

4 In the worst of conditions we've even had
5 to put people on boats to get them across. And you
6 can always say, oh, well, you just call the
7 Coast Guard. But it's never that easy. The
8 Coast Guard has covered a huge area and it's -- it's
9 a long process to get a Coast Guard plane in here.
10 You have to call and make an initial report to
11 whoever is on duty. They have to report to a flight
12 surgeon, a flight surgeon needs to get back to you,
13 they need to then look at what the resources are and
14 if resources are being utilized in other areas. So
15 you may be triaged. So that can even delay you more.

16 It's not as simple as just saying, just
17 bring the Coast Guard in. And even though people
18 think, we have a Coast Guard station over in
19 Cold Bay, that doesn't mean that's where they'll come
20 from. They may come out of Dutch. They may come out
21 of Kodiak. They can come from any number of other
22 areas. But the time to get somebody from here to
23 Cold Bay on that road would make the world of
24 difference to our patients of getting them timely
25 care in a timely manner.

1 And just as Dakota had the unfortunate
2 experience of sharing with you, it does make a
3 difference, and there is nothing that is more
4 heart-wrenching than to sit and watch families
5 watching their life fade from their loved ones, or to
6 have to make the call that says, I am so sorry, but
7 your loved one did not make it because we didn't get
8 them the care they needed.

9 So I truly hope you'll appreciate how very,
10 very significant this road is to this community. And
11 I do appreciate you taking the time to listen to us
12 this evening. Thank you.

13 JON ISAACS: Thank you.

14 Next is Warren Wilson, followed by
15 Ginger Bear. So Warren first.

16 MAYOR WARREN WILSON: Hello again. Warren
17 Wilson. I want to thank everybody for testifying
18 here tonight, especially Dakota to come over. My
19 daughter-in-law Cookie [as heard]. So that hits home
20 real hard here with what happened there last winter.
21 But she wasn't the only one. There was 18 people
22 total that got killed on the way to Cold Bay, flights
23 from airplane crashes and other things happened
24 there.

25 So I -- to see this Alternative 6 put

1 before us today with a lot of the details worked out,
2 I think this is going to work for us here at
3 King Cove, providing all the ins and outs come
4 together to make this happen. And where we are on
5 this process of the SEIS, it takes a long time, but
6 we are doing the checklist.

7 We got the folks there all educated. We
8 told them all the ins and outs of what goes on in
9 King Cove here with trying to transport people,
10 trying to bring -- like what Mark was saying,
11 bringing fresh produce for the health and well-being
12 of our citizens and residents of King Cove.

13 And with our lifestyle here in King Cove, I
14 want to stress the subsistence part of the
15 Alternative 6, where almost everybody in this
16 community, the local Natives, we all subsist off the
17 land just as we did, our ancestors did thousands of
18 years ago.

19 So we're still living the life here, we
20 love it here, and this is our home. And any law
21 could say that you cannot subsist on your own lands,
22 whether they be refuge or wilderness, but I know that
23 it's public land. We are -- it is made available for
24 us to subsist on. And with this Alternative 6 with
25 the road going through the refuge to be able to

1 access the lands on the other side of Cold Bay, which
2 are traditional fishing grounds and hunting grounds
3 for the people of King Cove, it will help a lot.

4 We'll be able to access them without having
5 to use a boat to get over there, without having to
6 worry about the weather coming up and you lose your
7 boat, your skiff, your life. Sometimes, maybe,
8 something like that happens. We don't want to see
9 that.

10 And then with the Alternative 6 with where
11 the road is going up inland as far as disturbing the
12 birds, brants or waterfowl that hang out in lagoons
13 mostly, they're not up on the land. The only birds
14 we see up on the land are the land geese that go in
15 there to feed on the berries. So that's probably the
16 only birds we see along that corridor that we want
17 for the road.

18 And as far as the water ducks, the ducks
19 and the Steller eiders, they're saltwater birds, so
20 they won't be affected by the road up inland. And we
21 notice in the cities, when we drive by geese in the
22 cities, that if you go ahead and drive by them, they
23 will not fly. But if you stop your vehicle, they
24 will fly. So there's a lot of misconceptions of what
25 happens along a road with some geese on the side of

1 the road, like a land goose or a Canada goose.

2 But anyway, Alternative 6, if we can get
3 that through to help us out for safe travel from
4 King Cove to Cold Bay, our lives will turn around
5 360 degrees. We'll have access to an all-weather
6 airport in Cold Bay that we can -- actually will
7 bring King Cove into the 21st Century to be able to
8 get a reservation on an airline where we know we'll
9 be able to make it to Cold Bay and be able to travel
10 on a date where we will not have to pay fees for
11 having to change your travel reservations. They're
12 way up there now. So anyway, we won't have to do
13 that. We'll save a lot of money all the way around.

14 And just thinking of traveling to King Cove
15 as a young boy or a mother bringing her baby home to
16 King Cove, in the past and right now, as soon as you
17 bring your little baby home and you're holding it and
18 you're going through this valley -- just an
19 example -- as soon as that mother grabs that baby to
20 hold it down from flying in the air because it's so
21 damn rough that you're getting tossed around, banging
22 your head on the window, you grab that baby, you set
23 fear into that child. And it's a proven fact, once
24 that fear is set -- everybody in this room that lives
25 in King Cove has a fear of flying one way or another.

1 And that seat is already set for when that baby is
2 brand new and he or she is brought home.

3 I think about that a lot, of what we have
4 to go through to go through that valley flying to
5 Cold Bay. There's a lot of fear there. So to
6 overcome the fear is why we're here. And we need
7 Alternative 6.

8 And I think I should just stop there
9 because I will have a chance again to talk some more
10 the next time here.

11 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Warren.

12 Next up is Ginger, followed by McKenna
13 Gould. Ginger, please state your name for the court
14 reporter.

15 GINGER BEAR: Ginger Bear. I'm a former
16 health aide here at the clinic.

17 My mom got sick one day. It was, like, fog
18 down to the ground outside. Nobody was coming for
19 her. They had to take her on a boat over to
20 Cold Bay. It took all day. She didn't get to
21 Anchorage until, like, 1:00 in the morning. I was
22 finally, like, relaxing and letting myself fall
23 asleep, and my upstairs neighbor called and said that
24 there was a bad accident on the road and that they
25 didn't see my brother's truck at home.

1 So she let me use her car and I went to
2 check on him. One of my brothers was there sleeping,
3 but the other one, he wasn't there. So I ran out and
4 checked some other places he might be, and finally I
5 just decided to drive out there. It was like every
6 emergency vehicle in town. Top of our car was just
7 all smashed in. And I just went up and knocked on
8 one of the windows, and I was like, can you please
9 just tell me if my brother is -- he wasn't.

10 So I drove back home, and when I got there,
11 my brother that I was looking for called and said it
12 was our friend Jim -- he's a month younger than me --
13 he was dead. Even if they had gotten him out of the
14 car on time, they wouldn't have been able to get him
15 to Cold Bay in the dark.

16 I have watched people die here when looking
17 into my eyes when life went out. I can't do that
18 anymore.

19 And, like 30,000 -- how much land are we
20 going to have left? All these tribes are getting
21 their land back and we're, like, begging for this.
22 Here, we'll give you a billion dollars. It's, like,
23 20 bucks. If you want to do what's best for the
24 land, get off of our land.

25 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Ginger.

1 Next up is McKenna Gould.

2 MCKENNA GOULD: That's me and I would just
3 like to leave a paper comment.

4 JON ISAACS: Okay. Great. So you're the
5 last person who has signed up for public comment.

6 Before we move on to the ANILCA 810
7 hearing, would anybody else --

8 REBECCA STURDEVANT: I signed up.

9 JON ISAACS: What's your name?

10 REBECCA STURDEVANT: Rebecca Sturdevant.

11 JON ISAACS: Thank you. I missed you.

12 You're right. My apologies for missing you.

13 REBECCA STURDEVANT: Hi. I'm Rebecca
14 Studevant. I work at the clinic as a provider, and
15 I've been coming here about four years now.

16 Part of the reason we don't have full-time
17 providers at the clinic is because it's so difficult
18 to have to deal with people dying while you're
19 watching them, just like Ginger said. You don't have
20 the ability to do what you need to do to save lives.
21 And we've all been there, and it's really tough.

22 I have a small child, less than two years
23 old, who can't breathe -- we lost one provider
24 because she had to bag a child all the way to
25 Cold Bay. I was scared we were going to lose her.

1 That particular child we didn't lose, but that child
2 has been medevacked out repeatedly. Her mother is so
3 afraid of flying, and she has to get on that
4 helicopter and get in that plane and go to Anchorage.
5 Terrified. Terrifying for her and her child. It's
6 terrifying for the providers who are trying to save
7 those lives.

8 I can't tell you how many times I've wished
9 for a road. And I can tell you that the water
10 choices are not viable. If the weather is that bad,
11 you can't get somebody on a boat. The waves are
12 20 feet high. It's just not going to work. Okay?
13 We need that road. We really need that road. Thank
14 you.

15 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Rebecca.

16 I saw some hands at the table over here.
17 First start with this gentleman and work your way up.

18 So you can come up, please state your name
19 for the court reporter.

20 CHRISTOPHER BABCOCK: Good evening. My
21 name is Christopher Babcock, and I am the fire chief
22 and EMS director for the city. I've been for
23 20 years. I'm not Native. I come from the state of
24 Washington, but I've lived in King Cove for over
25 30 years. I'm married to a community health aide, my

1 wife is Bonita Babcock.

2 And I want to speak on the medevacs,
3 because I do a lot of medevacs. I can't even count
4 how many medevacs that I've done. And, you know, as
5 Susan Bailey was talking about, we hear, the
6 Coast Guard is going to come in, the Coast Guard will
7 be there. I did a medevac several years ago of a
8 gentleman that broke his neck, and it was blowing
9 probably 80 to 90 miles an hour at the airport, and
10 the Coast Guard said that they would come in.

11 When the Coast Guard comes in and we
12 transfer a patient onto their helicopter, they do not
13 stop their props. So we're talking loud noise, we're
14 talking wind, we're talking almost total blindness
15 because they have night vision, they can't have us
16 having lights and things, and also the confined space
17 in a Jayhawk is terrible.

18 We just did a medevac here earlier this
19 week at -- I believe it was 2:30 in the morning, and
20 this patient was not ambulatory, okay, they couldn't
21 walk, so -- they couldn't sit, so we had to put this
22 orange basket, maneuver it into the helicopter, and
23 it was terrible. And this person that was in the
24 gurney or the orange stretcher was in a lot of pain.

25 And we are jeopardizing those patients.

1 We're putting them in more pain, we're putting them
2 in more fear. I mean, it's chaos out there when the
3 Coast Guard comes in if you haven't experienced it.
4 My son came and helped us on this last one, lifting,
5 and he was very taken back on how we have to treat
6 our patients sometimes. And that's just totally
7 uncalled for.

8 But what I wanted to say, when that guy
9 broke his neck, I had a chance to talk with the
10 Coast Guard guys about a week or two weeks later. We
11 were over having a conference. That was when the
12 bird flu was really popular and going around and they
13 were going around to all the refuges, and they called
14 several people from different communities to meet in
15 Cold Bay and we had a big meeting there.

16 Well, I had a chance to talk to the
17 Coast Guard guys that night, and they told me that
18 the weather was so bad with this patient that they
19 actually had to go and sit on the back side of
20 Deer Island for 45 minutes before they could actually
21 get into King Cove. So don't think that the
22 Coast Guard is always the answer.

23 This medevac we had a couple days ago, the
24 Coast Guard said they weren't coming in. We're not
25 going to come in. And thankfully they changed their

1 mind. But that's not an alternative. It's not an
2 alternative. The road is the only alternative.

3 And I'm glad that you're looking at
4 route 6, because that is the alternative. Boats are
5 the alternative. We've done the boats, we've done
6 the hovercraft. They don't work. They do not work.

7 I don't know if you guys have been to the
8 dock in Cold Bay yet. Try to walk up that dock or
9 try to find that ladder when we've got seas 20 feet,
10 30 feet. Try to climb up that ladder. We've had
11 people slip down that ladder and break their legs.

12 So the Alternative 6 is what we want. We
13 want that road. So thank you.

14 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Chris.

15 Some others?

16 BONITA BABCOCK: Hi. I'm Bonita Babcock.
17 My husband Chris there. I am an EMT. I have -- and
18 also a community health aide practitioner. I've been
19 an EMT for nearly 20 years, and so I've also been on
20 a lot of medevacs, and I've worked at the clinic for
21 about 15 years now.

22 So being born here, raised here, having my
23 parents born and raised here, my grandparents and
24 their parents, when this was first forming. We've
25 all lived here, we've all experienced trauma from

1 having to fly. I am scared to death to fly when it
2 comes to a medevac and they ask, who is going to go
3 with the patient? I am so thankful for other
4 providers who will get on a helicopter. Thank you,
5 Sarah. She's been on more helicopters than I care to
6 even think about.

7 This road that is being proposed would be
8 such a godsend. You can't imagine what it's like to
9 be related to most people here, because I am. My
10 dad's family had 18 kids. My mom's family had eight
11 kids. Hard to try to find a husband when you're
12 growing up. Because you're related to most of the
13 town. But anyway, you know what it's like, cousin.

14 Anyway. No. But in all seriousness, when
15 you're sitting there and you know it's your cousin's
16 child that can't breathe on their own and you're
17 bagging that child or it's your uncle or it's your
18 cousin who is bleeding to death. I've been there.
19 I've had those experiences.

20 My heart hurts for Ginger because I was
21 there watching her when she saw the life leave a
22 person for the first time. Unfortunately, I've seen
23 that more than I care to think about. In the
24 beginning, I was like, okay, I've seen nine deaths.
25 Okay, I've seen 12 deaths. Okay. I don't count

1 anymore. It's too painful, because a lot of those
2 are family. But I don't want to dwell on that
3 because you've already heard that before, if you've
4 heard any of our testimonies at all.

5 What I want to say is we have a brand new
6 ambulance. It's beautiful. It's well stocked. We
7 have really experienced EMS. Like I said, I've got
8 20 years myself. My husband also. My daughter-in-
9 law, she works at the clinic with me. She's been an
10 EMT as long as I have. She's also got 15 years as a
11 CHAP.

12 Our EMS is strong and our providers that
13 come out here on rotation are amazing. They're super
14 strong also. So we have capabilities to safely move
15 patients from King Cove to Cold Bay. We are
16 prepared. We're ready. We have oxygen supplies that
17 can take us from King Cove to Cold Bay. You know, if
18 it is two hours, that's not a problem. We have extra
19 oxygen supplies. We have trained people to take care
20 of patients on their way over there. We're ready.

21 We just need the access to that small
22 gravel road that will get our patients to that
23 all-weather airport. So that's what I mainly came to
24 say.

25 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Bonita.

1 Are there others who haven't signed up for
2 public testimony that have thought about it and would
3 like to say something? Gary.

4 GARY HENNIGH: Gary Hennigh. I've had the
5 honor of being the city administrator for King Cove
6 for 34 years, and certainly one of the things during
7 my whole time that I've been focused on is this road.
8 Alternative 6 is close to the best answer that we
9 could expect.

10 And I just want to put this a little bit
11 into perspective, that it goes back to the early '80s
12 when I was working for the Alaska Department of
13 Transportation that, under Governor Jay Hammond, his
14 special assistant, Clem Tillion, started talking
15 about this road between King Cove and Cold Bay. That
16 didn't really become much of a focus or a mission for
17 me until I started with the city in '89, but I
18 learned a lot of things along the way.

19 First, ANILCA is a great piece of
20 legislation. Jimmy Carter, bless his sole, deserves
21 all the credit that the environmental community and
22 the rest of us will give him, but the record will
23 clearly show that back in the late '70s, early '80s,
24 the outreach from the federal government to the folks
25 in King Cove did not exist. There's nothing that we

1 have uncovered that ever said, folks, King Cove,
2 there's going to be some wilderness created and that
3 wilderness is going to have certain restrictions.
4 That means you will never really be able to have
5 access through it.

6 I think, had we all had a chance to know
7 what that meant back in the day, there could have
8 been some provisions in ANILCA at the time. And the
9 significance about bringing that up is we know that
10 the environmental community is never going to be
11 happy. They're going to be actually quite angry, as
12 we know, with preferred Alternative 6.

13 But the thing that resonates mostly with me
14 was the recent discussion we had with your boss,
15 Secretary Haaland. We admire her courage and her
16 commitment to hear what the folks in King Cove had to
17 say about, look at our life, it's a great place, but
18 we've got this access issue, help us. She has helped
19 us. We couldn't say anything -- I mean, we honor
20 Secretary Haaland for doing that.

21 And the thing that stuck with me, she said,
22 I want you to know that we talked to President
23 Carter's grandson, I think it's John, who is taking
24 care of his grandpa, who, as you all know, he's in
25 hospice and probably soon to move on to the next

1 stage, but the grandson did not argue with the
2 secretary and sort of said, well, if that's what
3 needs to happen, then so be it. And I will tell that
4 story I think probably quite a bit over the next few
5 weeks to the environmental community, who I know is
6 really angry.

7 I would also say that probably the lowest
8 thing I ever heard anybody say was the secretary
9 before Secretary Haaland, Secretary Jewell, when she
10 stood in front of us on August 14th, 2013, I think it
11 was, up at the community center and said, yeah, I'm
12 here to listen to what the people of King Cove have
13 to say about the road, but I also want to listen to
14 what the animals have to say. And I think we all,
15 when we heard that statement, just like, wow, she
16 really said what she just said. And obviously, she
17 did not have the same attitude to help us solve this
18 issue like Secretary Haaland does. And we're very
19 happy that Secretary Haaland is supporting us.

20 So just leave it at that. Thank you.

21 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Gary. Is there
22 anybody else who would like to testify? Okay. We
23 have two.

24 FANNY JO NEWTON: Thank you. My name is
25 Fanny Jo Newton, and I'm a resident of King Cove,

1 born and raised. My family is from here and part of
2 the Mack family, so we've been around for quite some
3 time.

4 While other comments have noted on certain
5 things, I appreciate talking about Alternative 4 and
6 5 as options that our community and our borough has
7 tried before, and yet, we're still fighting for this
8 road because those weren't and aren't sustainable and
9 long-term solutions.

10 Regarding Alternative 6, some of the things
11 that I wanted to comment on were the opposing
12 arguments, as reviewing some of the comments that
13 have been made, written within the website and seeing
14 what those arguments are.

15 The first one being, you choose to live out
16 in a rural community, that's your choice. If you
17 need medical help, you can simply move to another
18 location where you can receive that service. And to
19 that opposing argument, I would like to note that we
20 just want to live where our families are. We want to
21 continue our culture, continue our life here, raise
22 our children here, and not let our community pass
23 away as our elders do. So that was one argument.

24 The second argument was that the road, this
25 Alternative 6 road, would be impassible during winter

1 months. If we're talking about weather in
2 Alternative 4, 5, and 6, we already know that 4 and 5
3 are not successful in the weather that we have here
4 with the high winds, 80 miles an hour, 90 miles an
5 hour. Even just make it 40 and 50. The seas can get
6 pretty rough for the boats to travel over and
7 successfully and safely dock at the City of Cold Bay
8 dock. Again, for those that haven't visited the
9 area, you might not know, but the residents here
10 definitely know the horrors and the tragedies of
11 trying to get to that dock.

12 Same with the hovercraft, Alternative 4,
13 there were issues with weather with that as well.

14 And regarding the road being impassible
15 during the wintertime, we currently have the
16 King Cove Access Road that is open and available to
17 transport on or go on throughout the winter with rare
18 occurrences of it being impassible. And the same
19 goes for the roads over in Cold Bay. The flat
20 topography doesn't really allow for giant snow drifts
21 to occur or for those to be impassible. So that also
22 would be an argument to rebut for those that are
23 maybe not from the area.

24 And the final and the biggest is that it
25 will impact wildlife. And again to that, we have

1 been living here for generations and centuries, and
2 even with Cold Bay's road system and their very
3 strong hunting season over there during September 1st
4 through December where there are multiple guides
5 bringing in multiple hunters and coming out that
6 access those roads and hunt off those roads and those
7 trails and those areas more frequently than our own
8 community is able to do, I guess I -- with the
9 environmental study and things there, the impact --
10 the impact is already there with the activities of
11 the hunting seasons over in Cold Bay were a small
12 percentage compared to the number of hunters that
13 come through that community.

14 And so with those, I just wanted to provide
15 some arguments to rebut the ones being made by the
16 opposition.

17 And that concludes. And thank you so much
18 for coming over to hear our testimony. We really
19 appreciate hosting you. Thank you.

20 JON ISAACS: Thank you. Next. Name for
21 the court reporter.

22 SARAH KELLY: Sarah Kelly. Hello. So my
23 name is Sarah Kelly. I am a nurse practitioner. I
24 work with the clinic. I've been coming to Alaska for
25 two years, a little bit over two years. I have been

1 in health care for 25 years, probably more than that.
2 I've done EMS. I've been a flight medic. I worked
3 in a high-level urban ER. And I fell in love with
4 Alaska, and King Cove is -- I tell everybody this is
5 my second home. I love the clinic. I love everyone
6 that works in the clinic. I love everybody in the
7 community. It's just a really nice place.

8 The problem with it is just logistics of
9 it, which I like everywhere else, but it's really
10 hard when you're having a patient that's really sick
11 and you can't help them with extended times to get
12 someone to the hospital. You think someone is
13 coming. We call the medevac, they're going to get
14 here. Well, they don't come or they change their
15 plans or you're waiting for the Coast Guard and they
16 can't even get out of their hangar because it's so
17 windy. It's just a really scary experience to know
18 that no one is coming for you. You're the hero, but
19 no one is going to save you.

20 What also comes with that is running out of
21 resources, like medications. We only have
22 medications to take care of somebody for a few hours
23 or a few days, or depending on what's wrong with
24 them, and then now you're here and you're looking at
25 the patient like, I can't get you out of this place

1 and now I don't have medicine for you. You just
2 really feel helpless. This is the first time that
3 I've had a job where I have felt hopeless at times
4 just because of the logistics of it.

5 A new road would make a big difference.
6 And I'll tell you, in 25 years this is one of the
7 first times that I've thought about patients
8 afterwards that I could have made more of a
9 difference if we didn't have to wait so long to get
10 somebody to come get us.

11 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Sarah.

12 Is there anybody else who hasn't signed up
13 who would like to have something to say?

14 Again, thank you for your very frank
15 testimony tonight. I'm going to give the mic back to
16 Bobbie Jo and she'll talk about the ANILCA 810
17 process.

18 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Okay. First and
19 foremost, my heart goes out to all of you who have
20 lost loved ones here. It's really hard to hear. But
21 I am glad we're here listening to your stories. So
22 thank you.

23 So ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest
24 Lands Conservation Act, has a section called 810.
25 And I'm going to tell you a little bit about it. I'm

1 going to tell you about how the federal government
2 evaluates the topic to help you understand the best
3 thing -- what we need to hear from you.

4 We will talk about the summary of the
5 findings that have been determined in the
6 Supplemental EIS and then just talk a little bit
7 about where we're going with our hearings in other
8 locations and why.

9 So ANILCA requires us to hold these
10 hearings and evaluate the effects on subsistence uses
11 and needs, and that is in determining if we are to --
12 so I've got to use these words exact because they're
13 legal, right? So I'm going to say it.

14 ANILCA, we evaluate the effects on
15 subsistence uses and needs in determining whether to
16 withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the
17 use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands on
18 National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.

19 ANILCA requires us, as the U.S. Fish and
20 Wildlife Service, to hold public hearings on
21 subsistence resources and activities in conjunction
22 with the public meetings for the communities for
23 which a positive may significantly restrict that
24 determination where those have been made.

25 So when looking at this, we go through a

1 process of determining three factors. So when we
2 determine if a significant restriction of subsistence
3 uses and needs may result from the proposed action
4 alternatives or the cumulative case of it, we are
5 looking at three things. It's the three A's.

6 We've got reduction in the abundance of
7 harvestable resources used for subsistence purposes.
8 So again, number one is abundance of the resources.
9 We look at the reduction in the availability of
10 resources used for subsistence caused by the
11 alteration of their distribution, migration patterns,
12 or the location. So we have abundance now. We have
13 the availability of those resources. And then third
14 is the legal or physical limitation on access of
15 subsistence users to harvestable resources.

16 So access, abundance, and availability.
17 Each alternative and the cumulative effects of each
18 of those alternatives have been analyzed based on
19 those three criteria.

20 Because Alternative 6 and the cumulative
21 effect of that has been determined may significantly
22 restrict subsistence uses, so we are holding a public
23 hearing here today and in the communities where a
24 positive may significantly restrict determination has
25 been made. So those are King Cove, Cold Bay,

1 False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, and Sand Point.

2 So tonight, as we have you come speak,
3 speaking about the abundance, availability, or access
4 issues to the subsistence resources between King Cove
5 and Cold Bay will be really useful to us in helping
6 us analyze the final findings that will be in the
7 Final Supplemental EIS.

8 In addition to those communities, the
9 Service will also hold a public meeting and ANILCA
10 810 hearing on subsistence resources and activities
11 in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta hub community of Bethel.
12 We will be there next Thursday and Friday. And this
13 is because we do acknowledge a number of community in
14 the Y-K Delta could meet the may significantly
15 restrict threshold based on a reduction in abundance
16 of certain migratory birds harvested by those in the
17 communities in the Y-K Delta.

18 As I said, a final determination will be
19 made according to ANILCA Section 810(a)(3), and that
20 will be incorporated into the final. So all of the
21 information that you provide here today, either
22 during the public part of this, the first part or
23 this part, will be captured and our team will be
24 using that to work through the final findings.

25 Really appreciate everybody's time. I know

1 it's been late, but really, it's been a meaningful
2 experience for us.

3 So I think at this point, Bill, do we have
4 folks that have -- or Jon -- have identified to speak
5 on ANILCA 810?

6 JON ISAACS: We do.

7 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Okay. So this is
8 basically the same format. The same rules apply. I
9 don't even know if we need to go over that. You've
10 done amazing.

11 So with that, we'd love to just call up the
12 first person and you can speak on behalf of
13 subsistence access, abundance, and availability.

14 JON ISAACS: Thank you. It's pretty much
15 the same ground rules as before. The first person
16 who is signed up to speak on ANILCA is Dakota.

17 DAKOTA WALKER: I'm the first person to
18 sign up, but I was wondering if maybe someone else
19 wanted to take the first spot there.

20 JON ISAACS: We will come back to you.

21 DAKOTA WALKER: Thank you.

22 JON ISAACS: The next person signed up is
23 Brenda.

24 BRENDA WILSON: Looking at access, I think
25 this will open up access for our people to be able to

1 go hunting, to go fishing for our community to what
2 we normally used to have access to since there's a
3 chain link fence that goes along our road up there.
4 I am resistant to crossing that fence. So somebody
5 has laid a line and said my race as a Unangan person,
6 it's not good enough really to cross that line.
7 Someone put holes and chains along that road that my
8 grandfathers, great grandfathers, and grandfathers
9 before them had gone and gotten food and subsistence
10 to come and feed their families, because I'm a
11 product of that. That's totally racist.

12 And it's just very bothersome to me as a
13 Native person whose mother had to piddle in the side
14 of the road in Juneau because the white bathroom was
15 right there that her red-haired and green-eyed
16 sisters got to be able to go to the bathroom in but
17 she was brown-haired and brown-eyed but she had to go
18 to the Native bathroom, which was way down there.
19 That is the same barrier. And it brings back the
20 stories which is historical trauma. So now let's
21 traumatize me.

22 Now you're talking about access. What are
23 the three? Access and what? Availability. Access,
24 availability. Availability. Yes, it's going to open
25 up a little more for us to be able to have access to

1 be able to go hunting and fishing. Good Lord, I
2 can't get by that dock over there and get a
3 four-wheeler off on that dock, which we have to pay
4 to go use and then pay to be able to be up there
5 running around where all those hundreds of hunters
6 come in every year and be able to hunt off of that
7 land with all those guided services that are out
8 there in Cold Bay.

9 And you're telling me that we're making a
10 dent. We have 128 households in this community, and
11 if every one of them went and got a moose every day,
12 which I don't think people could choke down that much
13 moose, I really -- we aren't going to do that. We
14 don't eat the eggs that everybody says, oh, they lay
15 eggs down here. Most of them lay the eggs up north.
16 Who eats the eggs up north? We don't. They do. And
17 so I think if they're looking at issues, they should
18 look at the harvest that they have up in their own
19 backyard.

20 But I also would like to contest -- look at
21 old Army records. There's 98 miles of documented
22 road in Cold Bay that was put in by the United States
23 military during the -- during the putting up the
24 facility -- the military facility in Cold Bay. They
25 used to have shotgun rallies across the road with

1 people on one side, people on the other. As the
2 ptarmigan would come down -- or as the caribou would
3 come down the road -- and there's pictures of this
4 that can document that in military records -- that
5 show stacks of caribou that these people have shot
6 and then shipped out on their large airplanes with
7 none of that subsistence going to the Native people.

8 And I'm just -- I think I'm -- I have
9 grandchildren. Some day I will have great
10 grandchildren. Am I going to take the option to go
11 ptarmigan hunting, goose hunting, to get fish, to
12 sugar fish. My grandchildren all grew up sugaring
13 fish. And you're going to tell me that I'm going to
14 have limited access. That is very scary. But it is
15 the way to weed the Native population out of the
16 world. And I think basically our access is a way to
17 weed us Native population out of rural Alaska.

18 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Brenda.

19 DAKOTA WALKER: Can I submit mine in
20 writing?

21 JON ISAACS: Yes, you definitely can do so.
22 So I think the next signed up for testimony
23 on ANILCA is Warren Wilson.

24 MAYOR WARREN WILSON: Okay. Back on the
25 record here. Warren Wilson. Born and raised in

1 King Cove.

2 Talking about subsistence and ANILCA here
3 with our availability and abundance. King Cove area
4 and where we live here in this little valley is very
5 vibrant with wildlife. With the road that's built
6 now down to the northeast corner, we were able to
7 access a few more acres of land to hunt, fish on.
8 Although, that isn't the only areas where we harvest
9 salmon or geese or caribou.

10 King Cove folks here go hunting all the way
11 down to Pavlof Bay to get their caribou. Some of
12 them go over to Cold Bay to hunt for caribou. Some
13 people go to hunt over in Morzhovoi Bay for caribou
14 and over in the False Pass area for caribou. So we
15 have to go a long way to get our subsistence in
16 King Cove, which costs a lot of money.

17 So just thinking of the access with the
18 proposed Alternative 6, to be able to access the
19 lands that are going to be traded to the refuge,
20 which is the Thinpoint and Old Man's Lagoon area
21 there. It comes up to 31,000 acres. Ten percent of
22 the 300,000 is 300 acres, a ten percent expansion of
23 the refuge lands which are going to be public lands
24 that we can actually hunt and fish on.

25 So with the road, it will make

1 accessibility way better for the people of King Cove
2 where we are stuck in this valley here without
3 access. With access now and with access in the
4 future, I mean, our lives would -- to keep our
5 culture, to keep our heritage, to keep the people
6 living here to show them how to hunt and fish and
7 provide for themselves and their families is key to
8 survival out in Alaska Peninsula.

9 I just hate the thought of things happening
10 in a world where we will not be able to have a
11 freight boat come in every two weeks now or another
12 plane coming out of Anchorage. That would be
13 devastating to think that we have to live off the
14 land. But if it was passed down to us, that's key to
15 survival right there. The only way we could do that
16 is to keep hunting and fishing and living off of our
17 land.

18 So ANILCA was -- the provisions are in
19 there, in ANILCA, for access through wilderness
20 and/or refuge to make safe passage for the residents
21 of a community, which is King Cove, which we've been
22 fighting for for about 30 years now. We want this to
23 move forward. We want it to move on with our new
24 administration coming in in Washington, D.C. We
25 might have a chance to get this done for the first

1 time in a long time, where we've been turned down a
2 lot more than we've been given the go-ahead to go
3 along with this.

4 So the land trade here is key to getting
5 this done. The people will be able to have safe
6 passage on that road to Cold Bay just to hunt and
7 fish, if that's what they want to do, or to gather
8 berries off the land. It's key to survival. That's
9 what I'm trying to say here. And we need it. We
10 need it really bad right now because we don't have a
11 fish plant that's operating.

12 So with the road even with not as much
13 money coming in from our fisheries because the
14 fishermen have to go so long -- far away to unload
15 their catch now, it costs a lot of money. There's
16 not enough money left to be able to, you know, to
17 think about flying to Cold Bay or flying to Anchorage
18 for that matter.

19 So anyway, I just want to get on the record
20 that I support this Alternative 6 using the ANILCA
21 law. So that's all I have to say.

22 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Warren.

23 I think the only other person signed up,
24 but I know she's left, is Ginger.

25 Is there anybody else who would like to

1 testify on ANILCA? State your name for the court
2 reporter.

3 BONITA BABCOCK: Bonita Babcock again.

4 I just -- I have my boys here with me, two
5 of them. I have two more older sons. And they like
6 to hunt. It was kind of nice this Thanksgiving. We
7 had turkey but we also had geese. And my son Gunner,
8 who works for the city -- he runs the electrical.
9 He's the department head for the electrical
10 department. He got us geese and cooked them up, and
11 I thought, you know, that just -- that makes me
12 proud. That makes me happy.

13 But when Glen, my 21-year-old there -- he's
14 my baby. When he was in elementary school, he came
15 home one day -- and it hit me so hard -- he had the
16 word "refuge" as a vocabulary word. And as I went
17 over every night with him his vocabulary words, his
18 spelling words, we learned about what "refuge" means,
19 a place of safety, a place of -- you know, what is a
20 refuge?

21 And he goes, mom, that's not what happens
22 in Cold Bay. They kill things over there. Hunters
23 are invited to go kill stuff. The animals aren't
24 safe. It's not us killing what's over in Cold Bay.
25 We don't have as much access.

1 There's such a -- there's such an
2 invitation, it seems like, that's out there to rich
3 people with nothing better to do than have big game
4 licenses, that, if you go to some of those trade
5 shows where they pay \$10,000 to go here, \$10,000 to
6 go here, another \$30,000 to kill a bear out our way,
7 those -- when you talk about restricting our -- you
8 know, in determining -- you know, determining if a
9 significant restriction of subsistence uses and needs
10 may result from the proposed action, it's sick,
11 because we already are restricted.

12 The people who aren't restricted are the
13 ones that are being invited there to kill the birds.
14 It took my breath away one time when we were over in
15 Cold Bay two years ago and we were out at Grant's
16 Point, and the birds, there was just so many of them,
17 and it was so beautiful. And I couldn't believe all
18 the birds that were there, and it made me so happy.
19 And then I saw guides bringing people there to check
20 out where the birds were to kill them. And I
21 thought, what? What on earth is going on?

22 Yeah, we don't have that access. It's not
23 us that needs to be restricted from killing what's
24 over there, because we don't have the access. It's
25 the people that are flying in and killing that they

1 need to restrict. It's not us. They leave birds
2 over there that get sent over to the elders over
3 here, which is really nice.

4 My parents are elders. They got caribou
5 from people who were being guided who shot caribou,
6 and they sent it over to my parents, which, you know,
7 in turn, my parents gave some to us. But it's not
8 like we have, you know, a couple thousand dollars for
9 a weekend to take a trip over to Cold Bay to kill
10 stuff to live off of.

11 I'm sorry I'm rambling. But it's
12 disgusting as a Native person to be told that our
13 subsistence rights could be taken away because of the
14 access that we might finally get to be able to hunt
15 birds that are already being killed by the thousands
16 over there, or whatever is allowed. Because I don't
17 know. We don't have the money to go and pay guides
18 to kill stuff.

19 Anyway, that was -- I'm sorry. But that's
20 where I'm coming from. You know, restricting us is
21 not going to help the problem. Restricting the
22 hunting that's already taking place over there and
23 that's already killing the birds, that's what needs
24 to get told to people that are upset about what's
25 happening to the birds in this area. It ain't us

1 that's doing it. It's what they're allowing over
2 there already.

3 JON ISAACS: Thank you. Is there somebody
4 else that would like to submit public comment on
5 ANILCA?

6 CHRIS BABCOCK: I'll be really quick. I
7 just kind of wanted to reiterate --

8 JON ISAACS: Can you state your name?

9 CHRIS BABCOCK: Chris Babcock.

10 I just kind of want to reiterate a little
11 bit on what Brenda said about the fence. I don't
12 know if you guys have had a chance to go out on the
13 new road yet, but there's a fence once you get so far
14 out there, and we call it the million dollar fence,
15 is what we call it. And I've been all over Cold Bay.
16 I've hunted, I've fished over there, I've spent time
17 over there. I love Cold Bay. It's beautiful over
18 there. It's quiet. You can get away from people and
19 just enjoy the scenery and everything out there.

20 I've been all through the Izembek over
21 there. I don't see any fences over there. Why do we
22 have a fence here in King Cove? It's like you're
23 saying, don't cross that fence. You guys can't cross
24 that fence. Nope. That's a no-no. It was a slap in
25 the face when that fence was put up.

1 It basically told us that those lands that
2 these people's ancestors have hunted and fished on
3 for years, they're not for you. They're not for us.
4 And I don't think that's right. And as my wife said,
5 I know guides over there that their people come to
6 hunt just so they can kill something. The caribou
7 meat sometimes comes over here to our elders because
8 all the hunters want over there is they want the
9 antlers. They want the trophy. They're trophy
10 hunters. They're not over there hunting for food or
11 for subsistence like we need and should be allowed to
12 do.

13 I was over there not too long ago and you
14 couldn't even hardly get down the road, there was so
15 many trucks with hunters. And you think that this
16 small amount of people here in this community is
17 going to wipe out a population of birds? You better
18 think again. Think of all the -- years ago when we
19 used to only have Ravn and Aleutian Airlines --
20 actually was only Ravn -- we'd get bumped because
21 fishermen -- because hunters had priority. We
22 couldn't get luggage because the hunters had to have
23 their dogs, they had to have their guns come with
24 them.

25 You really need to think about the

1 situation over there and how it's impacting. It's
2 not us. It's the hunters that come in from outside.
3 Thank you.

4 JON ISAACS: Thank you, Chris.

5 Is there anybody else who would like to --

6 FANNY JO NEWTON: Sorry, Bobbie Jo. One
7 more.

8 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Oh, no.. Bobbie Jo.
9 Fanny Jo.

10 MR. ISAACS: Your name for the court
11 reporter.

12 FANNY JO NEWTON: My name is Fanny Jo
13 Newton. And again, I'm a resident of King Cove;
14 however, I do have a bit of a connection to Cold Bay
15 Bearfoot. My mom owns and operates the local grocery
16 store, hotel, and bar that is located in Cold Bay,
17 and it happens to have its busiest time of year
18 starting in August through November. That is when
19 the influx of hunters and fishermen come out to enjoy
20 a beautiful place with an immense amount of wildlife.
21 As said from previous commenters, they do come out to
22 experience the Alaskan lifestyle to be able to hunt
23 birds that you can't find in other places that they
24 may want to add to their trophy collection. Whatever
25 the reasons are, they're coming there.

1 And If you look on any Ducks Unlimited
2 catalog or Waterfowl Hunting, the top ten lists of
3 places to go waterfowl hunting, Izembek Wildlife
4 Refuge, Cold Bay, Alaska is usually in the top five.
5 And there's a reason for that. Like with all of the
6 resources, one of the largest areas of eelgrass on
7 the Pacific Coast, and a great place for those birds
8 to breed and continue their migratory patterns.

9 However, us being locals just 20 miles
10 away, it is really frustrating for me to go -- to
11 live here in King Cove and know how difficult it is
12 to go out hunting where we do have to go out miles
13 and miles, you know, on the beaches or on the
14 established roads and try to get resources for our
15 families.

16 And then you go over to Cold Bay and it's
17 like, oh, you just hop in your minivan and drive down
18 to Grant's Point or to Outer Marker, or wherever, and
19 the birds are flying right over that road, and all
20 you've got to do -- I mean, of course you can go
21 anyplace and see everything, but you are -- you have
22 an easier access to those resources, and it's really
23 tough to see outside folks from all over the world
24 come and hunt those resources and then not use them
25 for subsistence.

1 I actually have transported birds, donated
2 and given, by some of the guides in Cold Bay back
3 here to King Cove. I've done it more than once. And
4 it's been, you know, lots of birds donated out to the
5 elders. There have been comments, when distributing
6 those birds out, where someone will say, well, which
7 guide group did this come from, because the last
8 guide group that sent over whatever it was, the birds
9 were sour and we couldn't eat them, which just hurts
10 my heart to know that these birds are getting hunted,
11 killed, and they're not being used as subsistence
12 resources. They're basically getting wasted.

13 There is -- I know that there's regulations
14 where you have to, like, list out the birds you have
15 and box them up or if you ship them or doing things
16 like that. But as far as the end of the line for
17 those birds that get hunted, where is the regulations
18 on that? Because if birds are getting wasted or
19 going sour, then that is the problem.

20 And it's hard to see other tribes and
21 indigenous people again wanting to focus on us
22 decimating these populations when it's not us. It's
23 the disproportionate amount of outside hunters coming
24 in and hunting those birds and then not using them as
25 resources. And it's just heart-breaking, because all

1 we want to do is provide for our families and also
2 live in this beautiful place that we call home and
3 continue to do that for generations to come.

4 So I just wanted to point out some of those
5 disproportionate numbers and that everybody else --
6 other populations that have access to a place that we
7 just want access to as well for our own subsistence
8 uses.

9 Thank you again for being here. We're so
10 happy to be able to provide testimony in person.
11 Thank you.

12 JON ISAACS: Thank you.

13 Is there anybody else who hasn't testified
14 who would like to talk about ANILCA 810 subsistence?
15 Dakota.

16 DAKOTA WALKER: Hi, everyone. Dakota
17 Walker again. I'm a former grant coordinator for the
18 Agdaagux tribe. The grant that I ran was funded by
19 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. And I've
20 traveled over to Cold Bay after being personally
21 invited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. And I
22 firsthand have seen exactly what everyone else just
23 previously mentioned.

24 There's hundreds of hunters during that
25 time of year, and it's crazy to see how many birds

1 they're killing. And my grandfather is Agdaagux
2 tribal hunter there in King Cove. He's almost
3 90 years old. And he's an avid hunter. He's up
4 every morning at 4:00 in the morning. And he can't
5 catch a bird, because there's no birds. We don't
6 have access to these birds.

7 But as Fanny Jo was saying, sometimes we
8 get lucky and our elders get birds from these
9 hunters, but it's sad when birds are going sour and
10 we have elders here that want to hunt these birds but
11 they don't have access to these birds.

12 Anything else I will include in my written
13 testimony.

14 JON ISAACS: Thank you.

15 Is there anybody else? Seeing none, again,
16 I personally want to thank you for your frank
17 comments tonight, and I urge you to take advantage of
18 the other opportunities to comment and to provide
19 more detail. So there is information on how to do so
20 on the comment forms in the back.

21 So I will pass it back to Bobbie Jo.

22 BOBBIE JO SKIBO: Thanks, Jon. Thank you
23 so much for everybody's input.

24 I guess the last thing we would say is,
25 again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for

1 welcoming us here. I know you've had to speak on
2 this topic quite a few times. But we are listening.
3 We will, as we have Deirdre here capturing this, this
4 will be all for the public record. But again, we do
5 have a project website. There are QR codes on each
6 of the posters as well that you can open up your
7 camera, press on that, if you have service. I don't
8 have it on GCI. Bad service for me. But you can
9 access that website. Or just note that if you do
10 have any questions about the process, how to access
11 the information, my personal information is there,
12 and I more than welcome the e-mails, calls from this
13 community. So feel free to reach out to me if you do
14 have any follow-up.

15 I think with that, Mayor, or Gary, thank
16 you for working with us. We've been meeting with a
17 handful of folks in what we call government-to-
18 government consultation around this, and it's been
19 great to get to know you guys now in person. So
20 thank you. But if you have any parting words or
21 final things to share, I could give you the floor.

22 MAYOR WARREN WILSON: Again, I would really
23 like to thank everyone who came out tonight. This is
24 a good sight to see. A lot of folks showed up, a lot
25 of people testified.

1 To make our community work, we need input
2 from the local people, whether it's subsistence or
3 medical or fishing or just general travel and the use
4 of our lands. I mean, just think about what we have
5 to give up for this road. But then, again, it's
6 public land. It's going to be available to us to
7 hunt and subsist on. And we'll be able to access hot
8 spots over in the Cold Bay area.

9 But again, thanks, everyone, for coming
10 out. I appreciate it. Made my life a lot easier
11 tonight to have everyone here. And this is going to
12 work this time, I think. We can get it done finally
13 and we'll be able to drive that road and hopefully it
14 won't have a chain link fence along it so we don't
15 feel like we're being discriminated against.

16 So anyway, with that, I will say good
17 night, I guess.

18 (Proceedings concluded at 8:35 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, DEIRDRE J.F. RADCLIFFE, Verbatim Shorthand Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein set forth; that the testimony and proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later transcribed by computer transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of the testimony and proceedings taken at that time; and that I am not a party to nor have I any interest in the outcome of the action herein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 18th day of December 2024.



DEIRDRE J.F. RADCLIFFE
My Commission Expires 5/31/26

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