

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

We write to you to express our deepest appreciation for the courageous decision that you made in December in rejecting the proposed road through designate wilderness in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. All of the signatories to this letter have had the privilege of serving as the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in both Republican and Democratic administrations, spanning more than 40 years, and while there may be some conservation issues on which we differ, rejecting the Izembek road is not one of them.

The Izembek National Wildlife Refuge is the smallest unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System in Alaska and is almost entirely designated wilderness. Despite its size, Izembek is enormously important for shorebirds and waterfowl, serving as the nesting area for 98% of the world's Pacific black brant. It also contains irreplaceable wetlands of both national and international importance, as recognized in 1986 when it became the first wetland area in the United States to be designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the RAMSAR Convention. Izembek is also subjected to frequent violent winter storms, making travel along the proposed land route extremely dangerous and deadly. In short, it is one of the last places in the country that you would ever want to build a road.

In 1998, the American public had good reason to believe that the question of a road through Izembek had been resolved once and for all, when the Clinton administration reached agreement on an alternative solution with the road's biggest proponent, Senator Ted Stevens. In lieu of the proposed road, Congress expended more than \$37 million to upgrade local medical services and equipment and dock facilities for King Cove, including the purchase of a \$9 million all-weather hovercraft. Unfortunately, some Alaskan politicians now act as if the 1998 compromise had never happened and have once again mounted an unrelenting campaign to force the building of the road through Izembek. Put bluntly, the Izembek road was a terrible idea in 1998, it was a terrible idea when you heroically rejected it last December, and it still remains a terrible idea

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today. Your courage and public lands conservation leadership on this issue has been critical, not only for maintaining the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System but also for the future management of designated wilderness lands throughout the country. Your decision on Izembek was the correct one and we wanted to take this opportunity to tell you that. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,



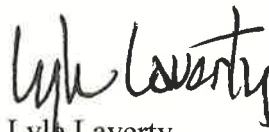
Nathaniel P. Reed
Former Assistant Secretary
For Fish and Wildlife and Parks
(1971 – 1977)



George T. Frampton, Jr.
Former Assistant Secretary
For Fish and Wildlife and Parks
(1993 – 1997)



Donald J. Barry
Former Assistant Secretary
For Fish and Wildlife and Parks
(1997 – 2000)



Lyle Laverty
Former Assistant Secretary
For Fish and Wildlife and Parks
(2007 – 2008)

cc: Mr. John Podesta, Counselor to the President
Mr. Dan Ashe, Director, US Fish & Wildlife Services