



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

Resolutions Committee Recommendation

Resolution #: MSP-15-033

Title: Support for Road Access for the Aleut People of King Cove, Alaska to Cold Bay All-Weather Airport

Comments:

The Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, Alaska has been seeking road access from their village to the Cold Bay Airport, through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Federal legislations have been introduced by Congress to address this issue, and it has been reviewed by the Administration for administrative approval, however in 2014 the Secretary of Interior denied the road through the national wildlife refuge. This resolution is requesting NCAI to support the road access and to call upon Congress to pass legislation on this issue.

At the 2007 NCAI Annual Conference, NCAI considered and passed #DEN-07-036, “The Izembek and Alaska Peninsula Refuge and Wilderness Enhancement and King Cove Safe Access Act”. The #DEN-07-36 resolution is very similar to this resolution in support of the road access and to pass legislation by Congress on this issue however it was nullified after the 110th Congress.

In the 13th paragraph the language in BE IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED was struck and amended to the following, “*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution*” This amended language will keep this resolution in place until either legislation or administrative action is enacted to give road access to the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove.

Recommendations:

It is recommended this resolution be forward to Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee for consideration and inclusion of the amended language.

Sponsor a member in good standing (yes/no)?: _____

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #33

TITLE: Support for Road Access for the Aleut People of King Cove, Alaska to Cold Bay
All-Weather Airport

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, Alaska have lived on the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, contemporarily known as the Izembek area, for over 4,000 years and have fished, hunted and subsisted throughout this area the entire time; and,

WHEREAS, the Izembek area is one of the most isolated areas in the State of Alaska and because of this isolation, the indigenous people of this area lived relatively undisturbed until the invasion of the Aleutian Islands in World War II and has continued unabated with the construction of one of the largest, all-weather airports in the State at Cold Bay by the US Army in the 1940's; and

WHEREAS, the all-weather Cold Bay Airport is the lifeline for the Aleut residents of King Cove to the outside world, particularly for medical and health reasons, however, residents can only safely and dependably access the Cold Bay Airport about 60-70% of the time (see resolution attachment); and,

WHEREAS, the Agdaagux Tribe has been struggling for the past 25 years for permission from the federal government for the construction of a road between the village of King Cove and Cold Bay Airport, but until 2009 the federal government had not agreed to consider approving this road connection; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has supported the Aleut people's need for a safe and dependable road connection between King Cove and the Cold Bay Airport for the primary purpose of timely access for emergency and routine medical and health care at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, Alaska: and,

WHEREAS, the NCAI passed Resolution #Den-07-036 which supported the *Izembek and Peninsula Refuge and Wilderness Enhancement and King Cove Safe Access Act*, in which Congress authorized a land exchange to construct a 9-mile, single-lane, gravel road connecting King Cove to the Cold Bay Airport; and,

WHEREAS, the Aleuts of King Cove were further encouraged that the land exchange and road approval would be forthcoming with President Obama's 2013 Executive Order, which stated "it is the policy of the United States to promote the development of prosperous and resilient tribal communities in providing greater access to, and control over, nutrition and healthcare, including special efforts to confront historic health disparities"; and,

WHEREAS, on December 23, 2013, Secretary of Interior, Sally Jewell, rejected the land exchange and road authorized by Congress, and after many requests for reconsideration, the Aleut people, along with the State of Alaska, were left with no choice but to sue the Department of Interior over this arbitrary and capricious decision; and,

WHEREAS, the Aleut people of King Cove are continuing to seek justice for this basic right to safe and dependable transportation access for emergency and routine medical and health, which is an expectation that most Americans, Indian and non-Indian, take for granted; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, because of public health, safety, and quality of life factors, the NCAI does hereby support the rights of the Aleut people of King Cove for this basic expectation of dependable transportation access, and calls upon Congress to immediately pass new legislation approving a land corridor for the construction of a permanent lifesaving road linking the community of King Cove to the Cold Bay Airport.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until the final adjournment of the 114th Congress.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2015 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the St. Paul River Centre in St. Paul Minnesota, on July, ____ 2015, with a quorum present.

Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:

Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary

The National Congress of American Indians

Resolution # _____

Edits

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WHEREAS, the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, Alaska have lived on the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, contemporarily known as the Izembek area, for over 4,000 years and have fished, hunted and subsisted throughout this area the entire time; and,

WHEREAS, the Izembek area is one of the most isolated areas in the State of Alaska and because of this isolation, the indigenous people of this area lived relatively undisturbed until the invasion of the Aleutian Islands in World War II and has continued unabated with the construction of one of the largest, all-weather airports in the State at Cold Bay by the US Army in the 1940's; and

WHEREAS, the all-weather Cold Bay Airport is the lifeline for the Aleut residents of King Cove to the outside world, particularly for medical and health reasons, however, residents can only safely and dependably access the Cold Bay Airport about 60-70% of the time (see resolution attachment); and,

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Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:

Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary