



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #MSP-15-033

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

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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

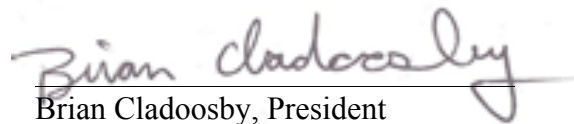
WHEREAS, the Aleut people of King Cove are continuing to seek justice for this basic right to safe and dependable transportation access for emergency and routine medical and health, which is an expectation that most Americans, Indian and non-Indian, take for granted.

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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2015 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul, MN, June 28 to July 1, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary