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The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW – MS 7729  
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Dear Secretary Jewell:

During your recent appearance before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I was surprised and disappointed that you were not aware of the number of medevacs carried out from King Cove, Alaska, over the past 14 months. Compounding my frustration was your inability to name any concrete action that you have taken – or intend to take – to protect the health and safety of the nearly 1,000 Alaskans who live in this isolated community.

A total of 23 medevacs have been carried out since December 23, 2013 – the day you rejected a short, one-lane, gravel, non-commercial road to connect King Cove with the all-weather airport in nearby Cold Bay. Seven of those medevacs have been carried out by the U.S. Coast Guard, even though such service is not part of their core mission, comes at very high cost to taxpayers, and forces flight crews to risk their own lives in terrible weather conditions.

For your information, I am enclosing a list of the 23 medevacs since your decision, as documented by the Aleutians East Borough and passed on to my office. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter I originally sent to you on April 2, 2014. It includes estimates from the Coast Guard that underscore why a new helicopter base in the region – an approach that you are apparently considering – is not an adequate solution.

Whether operated by the Coast Guard or another agency, a helicopter base would be costly, dangerous, and ineffective at providing all-weather emergency medical transport. It would continue to needlessly endanger additional lives and would be considerably less effective than a simple connector road, particularly for medevacs that must be carried out at night or in extreme weather conditions that prevent the use of fixed-wing aircraft and marine vessels.

As Secretary of the Interior, you have authority and responsibility to ensure that King Cove's residents have reliable medical transport during emergencies caused by illness or injury. The 23 medevacs that have taken place over the past 14 months reinforce the need for a real solution – as opposed to the status quo or half-measures that will force local residents to endure needless pain and suffering until help can arrive.

I again urge you to make this one of your top priorities – and to work expeditiously toward what is now a long-overdue resolution.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

**Medevacs from King Cove  
As Documented by the Aleutians East Borough  
December 23, 2013 to March 8, 2015**

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**23 TOTAL**

- 1. January 3, 2014 (11 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 50s with gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding. Forced to wait until the next day for a medevac.
- 2. February 7, 2014 (46 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 60s with gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding.
- 3. February 14, 2014 (53 Days After Road Rejection):** Female in her 60s with heart problems.
- 4. March 11, 2014 (78 Days After Road Rejection):** Infant boy struggling to breathe; later diagnosed with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).
- 5. March 11, 2014 (78 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 30s who dislocated both hips after a 600-pound cod pot fell on him.
- 6. March 16, 2014 (83 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 40s with head trauma.
- 7. March 21, 2014 (88 Days After Road Rejection):** Male, age 19, with an infection in his leg.
- 8. March 31, 2014 (98 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 50s who severely injured his eye. Medevaced to save as much of his sight as possible.
- 9. April 11, 2014 (109 Days After Road Rejection):** Man suffering from an apparent heart attack. Had to be medevaced aboard a coastal freighter due to high winds and seas.
- 10. April 15, 2014 (113 Days After Road Rejection):** Elderly resident suffering from apparent internal bleeding. Weather allowed medevac aboard a local charter airline service.
- 11. April 18, 2014 (116 Days After Road Rejection):** Woman in her 50s with severe breathing difficulty due to a severe allergic reaction. Forced to wait overnight for medevac to arrive.
- 12. June 19, 2014 (178 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 20s in acute respiratory distress. Local medical treatment options were exhausted before medevac.
- 13. July 7, 2014 (196 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 40s suffering from internal bleeding.
- 14. August 23, 2014 (243 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 40s with severe abdominal infection. Forced to wait 14 hours for medevac to arrive due to bad weather.
- 15. September 9, 2014 (260 Days After Road Rejection):** Woman in her 80s with chest pains and concern of possible heart attack. Forced to wait nine hours for medevac to arrive.

- 16. October 16, 2014 (297 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 80s with sepsis. Forced to wait three hours before medevac could arrive.
- 17. January 15, 2015 (388 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 20s with head trauma. Severe weather prevented medevac from arriving for several hours.
- 18. February 3, 2015 (407 Days After Road Rejection):** Female in her 40s with abdominal pain.
- 19. February 4, 2015 (408 Days After Road Rejection):** Female in her 50s with altered mental status.
- 20. February 14, 2015 (418 Days After Road Rejection):** Female in her 50s with a displaced wrist fracture. Patient was transported to Cold Bay by fishing boat.
- 21. February 22, 2015 (426 Days After Road Rejection):** Female in her 80s with an infection.
- 22. February 25, 2015 (429 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 50s with a cardiac emergency. Forced to wait overnight for medevac to arrive.
- 23. February 25, 2015 (429 Days After Road Rejection):** Male in his 50s with gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding.