

King Cove Land Exchange Fact Sheet

- The Aleut community of [King Cove](#) (Pop. 965) has maintained for the past 35 years that a one-lane, gravel road to the all-weather airport in neighboring Cold Bay is the only safe, reliable and affordable means to transport patients in medical emergencies.
- King Cove's airport, set at the base of two volcanic mountains, is closed an average of 100 days a year by high wind and foul weather. Nearby Cold Bay has a 10,000-foot, all-weather runway with an instrument approach system built by the U.S. Military during World War II.
- At least 19 deaths have been attributed to the lack of a land route to Cold Bay, either because of plane crashes or an inability to get timely medical treatment, including **four people who died** in a 1980 medevac crash. With only a small clinic and no full-time physician, residents of King Cove must travel 600 miles to Anchorage for most medical procedures, including for childbirth, trauma and minor surgery. <http://bit.ly/VEjyFC>
- In 1998, Congress appropriated funds for a \$9-million hovercraft for King Cove. It was operated by the Aleutians East Borough until 2011, when the borough said it could no longer afford the more than \$1 million a year in operating costs. The hovercraft also failed to function in the rough waters of North Pacific Ocean that separate King Cove and Cold Bay 30 percent of the time.
- Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) sponsored a provision in the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 ordering a land exchange with the conditions that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service do an environmental impact statement and that the Secretary of the Interior issue a public interest determination, both of which must consider the health and human safety of the people of King Cove.
- The full length of the road would be about 30 miles (of which 19 miles already exists), but only about 11 miles of new road is needed within the refuge to connect with Cold Bay. The land required for the **road (206 acres) is less than 1 percent of the total refuge**. The federal government in return would receive more than 200 times the number of acres needed for the road, including 2,300 acres of eelgrass beds – 20 times more migratory bird feeding habitat than would potentially be lost through the exchange.
- The land exchange would remove 206 acres from the Izembek refuge for the road and 1,600 acres from the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on Sitkinak Island south of Kodiak. In exchange, the refuge would receive 43,093 acres of state land and 13,300 acres of land owned by the King Cove Native Corp. (**56,393 acres vs. 1,806 acres.**)
- The Izembek Refuge – including federally designated wilderness areas – **already contains nearly 70 miles of road** built by the U.S. Military during World War II, some 50 miles of which continue to be maintained and used today by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System has more than 4,900 miles of roads nationally.