

4/29/2010 ✓

My name is Harlen Newman, I am a life-long resident of King Cove. Today I would like to share with you the importance of the road to both myself and my family. As you are aware, our community has fought long and hard to have our concerns for safety addressed.

As you begin the scoping process, I would like you to consider the mental and emotional trauma we are faced with every time we board an airplane out of our community. There is a very serious issue regarding the safety of air travel. In developing the environmental study, please include the history of cancelled flights, weather conditions, number of crashes – you can add an additional statistic to that number from this week's incident. By reviewing the aviation history in this area, there should be ample information on why this road is necessary. We are talking about life and death.

Regarding activities that are foreseeable for our future, the safety analysis should be able to help determine even if our community will be sustainable. Our population is aging, our economy is on a downturn and our children are leaving their community. Without the road, there is a chance we will end up like many of the rural Alaskan communities...closing our schools and moving out for opportunities. In this scoping process, I ask you to also consider our quality of life.

In developing the alternatives for the road, I would request that you dismiss the option of barricading the road. This would be unreasonable. I also think it would be valuable for the public to understand the costs associated with each alternative, understand the level of natural and physical environmental impacts and to be involved in the screening criteria development for these alternatives. It would be prudent for the agency to also provide resources to our local government to participate in this process. As a community we need to understand all aspects of your decision making process and we need to have the opportunity to provide meaningful input. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony, but scoping is not the only place where we as a community should be involved. We need to be present throughout the process and have access to all the reports and plans generated and also be able to provide comments.

This road is important to us and your attention to our needs and concerns is greatly appreciated.