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CAPITOL ROOM 204

JUNEAU: 465-3438  
ANCHORAGE: 269-0100

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## **INTERIOR SECRETARY TELLS ALASKANS TO "GET OVER IT" ON KING COVE ROAD DECISION**

***Majority Leader Pruitt shocked at blunt reaction from question posed today at White House***

**Friday, July 25, 2014, Washington, D.C.** – Alaska House Majority Leader Lance Pruitt released the following statement today in reaction to U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell's unprofessional comment when asked by Pruitt about her intentions to reconsider her Record of Decision on blocking a land trade that would lead to the development of the long-sought King Cove-Cold Bay Road.

In a meeting at the White House this morning sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures with three Obama Administration cabinet secretaries, Pruitt asked Secretary Jewell if she knew when she would respond to numerous requests from local residents, the legislature, and Alaska's congressional members to reconsider her decision to block the proposed land trade between the state and federal governments.

"I was shocked and taken aback at her quick and callous comment indicating that there were bigger issues and that Alaskans need to just 'get over this.' It angers me that the person who holds the power to simply shutdown this vital public safety project would be so quick to dismiss my question, and showcase in front of legislative leaders from across the country her arrogance and lack of respect to our entire state.

"King Cove residents deserve a response to their letter requesting reconsideration. I asked the question after meeting with both Senator Begich and Senator Murkowski yesterday. Sen. Murkowski sent a letter to Secretary Jewell just two days ago on the issue, and asked me to follow up. I didn't expect such a hand-waving dismissal. It's, sadly, not surprising, except for the setting. Bald face, contemptuous federal overreach on full display, in front of my peers from across the nation."

Secretary Jewell nixed the land swap in February, whereby land in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge would be given to the state in order to construct a one-lane gravel road connecting the community of King Cove with Cold Bay. The road would primarily serve a public safety purpose, since Cold Bay has a longer air strip for medical emergencies.

The Legislature unanimously passed House Joint Resolution 30 in March; Representative Bob Herron's six-page resolution urging Secretary Jewell to reconsider her decision.

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