



Governor Michael J. Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wallace
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary Wallace:

Tourism is a major economic driver for Alaska. People from all over the world visit Alaska to experience the natural wonders and enjoy our unparalleled scenic beauty. Access to federally-owned public lands is one of the most important things that keeps tourism strong.

The crown jewel of Alaska tourism is the Denali National Park and Preserve. Denali is the anchor for a \$3.2 billion outdoor recreation industry, providing jobs and generating income for thousands of businesses, both large and small. More than 580,000 visitors come to Denali annually, generating over \$600 million in visitor spending. Whether they arrive as independent travelers or on large cruise ships, most visitors to the road system in Alaska have a tour on the Denali Park Road on their itinerary. The only road into Denali, the highest peak in North America, is a 92-mile ribbon that transports people into the heart of the park where stunning vistas compete with the opportunities to see bears, wolves, and other iconic Alaskan wildlife. Absent the road, there is no accessibility to the average visitor.

In recent years, the Denali Park Road has suffered a series of landslide events that have damaged the road and highlighted just how fragile the Park's infrastructure is to natural forces. Winter temperatures can plummet to -50 degrees, with high winds and snowfall. These factors make it impossible to provide year-round maintenance on the road.

Known as "Pretty Rocks", one specific landslide has the potential to significantly disrupt transportation, greatly diminish visitor travel, and curtail commercial services throughout the entire visitor industry. A long-term road closure during the summer tourism season on the Denali road would have a disastrous cascade effect on businesses throughout the State, and would not allow the average American to see the beauty of their national park.

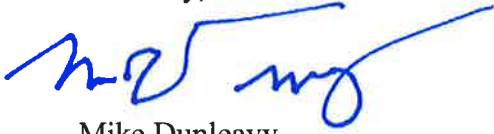
Assistant Secretary Robert Wallace

February 11, 2020

Page 2 of 2

I am requesting that you support the effort to expedite a short- and long-term fix to the road. Please consider including an initiative in your upcoming budget to permanently fix the Denali Park Road to ensure that the public continues to have reasonable access to the Park they own.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

cc: Mr. Dough Hoelscher, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
The Honorable David L. Bernhardt, Secretary, United States Department of the Interior
Mr. David Vela, Acting Director of the National Park Service
Mr. Don Striker, Acting Regional Director NPS (Alaska)
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate
The Honorable Don Young, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Senators and Representatives of the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature
Alaska Tourism Industry Association (ATIA)