

**Angutekaraq Estelle Thomson Traditional Council President of the Native
Village of Paimiut**

Full Statement on the Izembek Road Permit Lawsuit

July 23, 2026

When leaders from our Tribal communities traveled from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to Anchorage in March, we made it explicitly clear to the Army Corps that bulldozing a road through Izembek would threaten our subsistence way of life. We also explained that it would violate Tribal subsistence rights and practices that have continued since time immemorial. The 634 people who identify as Indigenous in the community of King Cove also have these rights, but a road would infringe on the Tribal food sovereignty and food security of tens of thousands of Yup'ik people in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, as the birds we rely on stage in Izembek. It is requisite for the courts to keep that in mind.

By ignoring our Tribal resolutions and issuing this permit, the administration forced our hand. We are taking legal action to enforce federal law because our protection of species we rely on for food security, our millennia-old relationships with migratory birds and our sovereignty cannot be swept aside for short-sighted development deals. Izembek provides a globally unrivaled ecosystem that serves as a vital staging ground. Disturbing the land to build a road puts that delicate ecosystem at risk in a time of unprecedented change in climate and policy. No infrastructure deal should be placed above Izembek's value.