

# The New York Times

**November 26, 2008**

To the Editor:

You correctly conclude that there is great support among Americans for protecting open space, and urge Congress to pass a package of bills that would, in part, establish millions of acres of designated wilderness. Regrettably, however, the public lands bill includes a provision that would pave the way for a taxpayer-financed \$56 million “road to nowhere” through the heart of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

The refuge is an internationally recognized wilderness that brown bears, caribou and more than half a million migratory birds call home.

The public lands package should be passed, but not at the expense of a premier wildlife refuge and wilderness area. To allow this to happen cheapens any wilderness gains, and opens the door to removing wilderness protections elsewhere.

Congress should strip the Izembek road and pass a bill that Americans can be proud of.

Evan Hirsche  
President  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Washington, Nov. 20, 2008