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ALASKA LEGISLATURE OVERWHELMINGLY PASSES RESOLUTION OPPOSING BLM'S PROPOSED NPR-A RULE

JUNEAU, ALASKA—U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan (both R-Alaska), and Representative Mary Sattler Peltola (D-Alaska), along with Governor Mike Dunleavy and a host of Alaska leaders and stakeholders, today thanked members of the Alaska Legislature for overwhelmingly passing a bipartisan, bicameral resolution demanding the Biden administration withdraw a proposed Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rule that would enact unprecedented restrictions on responsible resource development within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). In their resolution, the legislators argue that BLM's rule violates long-standing federal law that mandates oil and gas production in the NPR-A, and that the agency failed to meaningfully consult with Alaska stakeholders—particularly those in the North Slope region—who will be most impacted by the proposed regulation.

“For the second year in a row, the Alaska Legislature has registered its overwhelming support for responsible energy production in our petroleum reserve. While this draft rule from BLM has flown under the radar, it is unlawful, will harm our state and national interests, and must be withdrawn,” **Sen. Murkowski said**. “This resolution will help as we make the case to Interior and the broader Biden administration that their proposal does not make any sense from a legal, economic, environmental, geostrategic, or any other perspective. I thank Representative Baker for leading the way and all the legislators who supported this measure.”

“I appreciate members of the Alaska Legislature—Republicans, Democrats and Independents—for coming together to pass this and other powerful resolutions demonstrating the broad support of Alaskans for vital resource development opportunities in our great state,” **Sen. Sullivan said**. “These resolutions can have a big impact, as was clearly the case with the Biden administration's reapproval of the Willow project, and the federal courts' subsequent rejection of Lower 48 eco-colonialists' specious legal challenges. Now, as the Biden administration pushes forward another outrageous and unlawful rule to lock up the NPR-A, I am very

concerned that Secretary Haaland will continue to ignore the voices of Alaskans, including our elected officials in Juneau, in favor of the eco-colonialists from the Lower 48 who want to lock up our state and whom Secretary Haaland almost always listens to above the voices of Alaskans, including and especially Alaska Native people. She's already declined to meet with the elected Alaska Native tribal, borough and ANC leaders of the North Slope eight separate times when they've flown 4,000 miles to D.C. No group of Alaskans will be more negatively impacted by Interior's proposed NPR-A rule than these Alaska Native leaders, but she cancels their voices by not meeting with them. In spite of these challenges, we still need to maintain the pressure on this administration and amplify the voices of Alaskans, which is why this overwhelming, bipartisan resolution, led by Representative Baker, calling on the administration to withdraw the NPR-A rule is so important."

"Outside groups have pushed the Department of Interior to restrict development in almost all of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, which, as its name reflects, was set aside explicitly for oil development," **said Rep. Peltola**. "They ignored precedent. They ignored the Inupiat of the North Slope - and made this decision without any actual tribal consultation. They rushed through this process to satiate Lower 48 political pressure. This resolution shows that we all agree: Alaskans, not Lower 48 special interests, should make this choice."

"I want to thank the members of the Legislature who sent an overwhelming message on behalf of Alaskans to the environmental extremists in the Biden Administration," **said Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy**. "Not only is the proposed rule to prohibit development in the NPR-A legally flawed, it is also fundamentally flawed as a policy that stifles economic development, weakens our national security, and guarantees environmental degradation by sending production overseas to nations without the high standards we have here in Alaska. While this administration drains our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to record lows and waives sanctions on our adversaries like Iran and Venezuela, it continues sanctioning Alaska to appease radical environmentalists. This fight is not over, and today's vote is more evidence that Alaskans are united in defense of our rights against outside forces who would turn our state into nothing more than a giant national park."

"I am honored to witness the passage of House Joint Resolution 20 (HJR 20) in both the House and the Senate," **stated Representative Thomas Baker (R-Kotzebue)**. "This bipartisan effort underscores our commitment to safeguarding Alaska's economic interests, national energy security, and subsistence communities. Today, Alaskans unite in our shared endeavor to enhance energy independence and bolster national security, ensuring our voices are heard in shaping new energy and environmental regulations."

“I am thankful to the Legislature for passing this resolution and further amplifying the voices of the North Slope and all Alaskans,” **said North Slope Borough Mayor Josiah Aullaqsruaq Patkotak.** “Time and time again the North Slope has been promised a seat at the table when deciding the future of the NPR-A, our ancestral lands, and that commitment has once again been broken. The passage of HJR20 helps emphasize that there is no partisan divide in Alaska when it comes to the need to consult local tribes, governments, subsistence users, and communities on matters of our land and livelihoods.”

“The Biden administration’s September 6, 2023 mandate to ‘protect’ 13 million acres of our ancestral homelands was made without fulfilling legal consultative obligations to our regional tribal governments, without engaging our communities about the decision’s impact, and with an incomplete economic analysis that undercuts North Slope communities,” **said Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Iñupiat.** “Despite President Biden himself highlighting the importance of listening to Indigenous and tribal leaders in formulating federal policy — our elected North Slope Iñupiat leadership were excluded from policy discussions. In fact, when announced, we learned of these new rules only through the press. The NPR-A rule not only fails to consider our perspective as North Slope Iñupiat, the Indigenous stewards of these lands, but also goes against the wishes of our communities and elected leaders. Our communities and elected leaders remain steadfast in our support for responsible development projects in our region that are undertaken with the inclusion and engagement of the North Slope Iñupiat.”

“The Biden administration’s September actions betray the government-to-government relationship that underpins how the federal government should respect and work with Indigenous communities,” **said Doreen Leavitt, Director of Natural Resources and Council Secretary for the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope.** “With its vote today, the Alaska State Legislature has taken a strong step to hopefully reverse or revise the actions taken against our wishes in ANWR and the NPR-A to restore the self-determination of the North Slope Iñupiat.”

“The legislature’s bipartisan support of HJR 20 echoes the unified voices of elected leaders who represent and serve the North Slope Iñupiat,” **said Rex. A Rock, Sr. President and CEO Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.** “ASRC is grateful to Representative Baker for introducing the resolution and to the Alaska Legislature for reinforcing the responsibility of federal agencies to meaningfully engage and consult with Tribes and Alaska Native corporations on issues impacting their lands and their people.”

"We commend the Alaska Legislature for demanding fairness and consistency in federal rulemaking. Alaska's economy depends on responsible resource development," **said Kati Capozzi, president and CEO of the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.** "Yet, the recent rule proposed for the NPR-A blatantly defies legal standards and ignores many Alaska Native voices. We must not stymie U.S. oil production; doing so makes us more dependent on foreign resources and susceptible to geopolitical turmoil. We urge the Bureau of Land Management to retract this ill-conceived rule."

"Union members applaud the Alaska State Legislature's bipartisan support for responsible resource development in the NPR-A," **said A.J. "Joey" Merrick II, president of the Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council.** "Oil production is imperative for both our economy and our national energy security. Responsible development in the NPR-A will produce family-supporting jobs, extend the economic lifetime of the Trans Alaska Pipeline, and generate revenue to fund critical local and state services for Alaskans," continued Merrick.

"House Joint Resolution 20 (HJR 20) appropriately requests the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw its proposed NPRA rule as it is a complete shift in BLM management of the area, conflicts with Congressional intent for the NPRA, and creates new substantive standards and procedural requirements, raising into the question the legal durability of this rule. HJR 20 reaffirms Alaska's commitment to a fair and balanced regulatory approach for the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of the NPRA," **said Kara Moriarty, President and CEO of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association.**

"The Alaska State Legislature's decision to pass HJR 20 demonstrates a true understanding of the balance between economic development and environmental stewardship in Alaska," **said Leila Kimbrell, executive director for the Resource Development Council for Alaska.** "It is a testament to the state's proven record of creating a climate where energy and resource sectors can thrive, bringing jobs, prosperity, and stability to Alaskans across the state. We now call upon the Biden Administration to follow the bipartisan direction provided by our state legislature and our congressional delegation to withdraw this proposed rule-making that is based on a flawed and legally questionable process and places unnecessary barriers on future investment and responsible resource development on Alaska's North Slope."

"Alaska's oil, gas and mining support companies applaud the Alaska Legislature for passing a resolution urging the withdrawal of the proposed Bureau of Land Management regulations that would cause such great harm to all Alaskans," **said Rebecca Logan, CEO of The Alliance.** "The economic impact of responsible development in the NPR-A benefits every Alaskan."

In September 2023, the Department of the Interior (DOI) proposed a draft rule entitled, “Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.” The rule would radically rewrite the fundamental purposes of the 23-million acre reserve, which Congress has explicitly designated for expedited energy leasing and development. DOI has clearly disregarded the law and strategic national interests in promulgating this rule, going so far as to “establish a presumption against leasing and infrastructure” across millions of acres of land—a move that openly threatens all future leasing, development, and infrastructure in the reserve.

- In October 2023, the delegation sought an 80-day extension for the rule’s public comment period after DOI failed to consult with Alaska Native people on the North Slope who stand to be directly (and negatively) impacted by it. DOI refused and granted just a 30-day extension—in part because, as two DOI officials publicly admitted, the Department is attempting to avoid the final rule being subject to the *Congressional Review Act*.
- In November 2023, the delegation introduced the *Alaska’s Right to Produce Act* (S. 3289/H.R. 6285) to nullify the draft NPR-A rule and prevent it from taking effect. The legislation would also restore a functional Coastal Plain oil and gas program in the non-wilderness 1002 Area, in line with federal law and clear congressional direction that DOI has repeatedly undermined.
- In November 2023, Alaska Native leaders held a **press conference** with Senators Sullivan and Murkowski criticizing DOI Secretary Deb Haaland and the Biden administration for failing to consult with their communities in decisions to lock up millions of acres of land from economic development. The North Slope leaders called for Secretary Haaland to “hear our voices” after she rejected seven meetings with them over the course of more than two years.
- In February 2024, the delegation wrote to the federal Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), requesting Administrator Richard Revesz’s immediate engagement to address the significant deficiencies in the draft rule. The delegation’s letter again outlines DOI’s numerous failures in the rulemaking process and calls on OIRA to, at minimum, conduct a second review of the rule and to correct those substantive and procedural breakdowns.
- In February 2024, the delegation wrote an **opinion piece** about the NPR-A rule, linking it to the Biden administration’s short-sighted “pause” on the approval of LNG export facilities, as yet another election-year move that places bad politics over good policy and the rule of law.
- In February 2024, Sen. Murkowski added **report language** to her Fiscal Year 2024 Interior-Environment Appropriations bill urging DOI to conduct additional meaningful, in-person consultation on the NPR-A rule with federally recognized

Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations that will be impacted by it. The Interior-Environment bill recently became law as part of H.R. 4366, a six-bill appropriations package that the delegation supported.

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