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Alaska Wilderness League applauds Biden Executive Order halting Arctic Refuge oil program

Washington — Today, as part of a flurry of Executive Actions that include rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement and stopping the Keystone XL Pipeline, President-elect Joe Biden will take immediate action to protect the sacred lands of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by placing a temporary moratorium on oil and gas leasing activities on its coastal plain. Fifteen years ago, [Joe Biden called the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge](#) one of our nation's last pristine natural areas. He ran for president and was elected on the most ambitious climate agenda in history, which included [making the protection of the Arctic Refuge a day one priority](#).

Today's actions also call for a complete review the removal of Roadless Rule protections in the Tongass National Forest; the push for more oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska in Alaska's western Arctic; and, the allowance of unsportsmanlike hunting methods in Alaska national preserves.

Statement by Adam Kolton, executive director, Alaska Wilderness League:

"Our long national nightmare of environmental carnage ends today. We can now return to the bipartisan tradition of valuing our most cherished and iconic landscapes as the national treasures that they are instead of targets for exploitation and short-term profit.

"It's time now to turn the page and look forward to an agenda that prioritizes protection of places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Tongass National Forest not only for their wilderness and wildlife values, but the Indigenous peoples and cultures they support. And with a new administration that once again respects and values science, we can again acknowledge the realities of the climate crisis and advance solutions that will help create clean energy jobs, lift up frontline communities, and lead to better management and stewardship of our public lands.

"Alaska's wild lands and waters were too often in the bullseye for an anti-conservation agenda these past four years. We are thrilled that the incoming Biden administration has placed Alaska's public lands among its top conservation priorities. We look forward to working together to realize Alaska's significant potential to protect America's resources at the landscape level, a key strategy for safeguarding vital biodiversity and addressing the climate crisis.



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“Thank you, President Biden, for making good on your promise to take immediate, strong and decisive action to halt all oil and gas activities in the Arctic Refuge. Today’s executive order to stop the plundering of this national treasure is a critical first step toward what we hope will one day be the permanent protection of one of the last great expanses of untouched wilderness areas in America.”

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Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters, and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.



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