

August 8, 2023

Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
US Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear President Biden and Secretary Haaland,

On behalf of the organizations and businesses signed below, and our millions of members, we are calling on your administration to take bold action in America's Arctic for our climate and conservation. Home to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (Reserve), America's Arctic provides some of our nation's last remaining opportunities to protect ecosystems at a landscape level, a scale that is unparalleled in our nation. In front of you is the tremendous opportunity to protect tens of millions of acres of critical biological and cultural resources relied upon by local Indigenous communities, which will significantly contribute to your America the Beautiful goals and leverage the critical role that the Arctic, along with all our public lands, must play in addressing the climate crisis.

The science is clear, it is imperative to our climate that new fossil fuel projects cannot move forward and existing fossil fuel extraction must be phased out. In a region where temperatures are rising at four times the rate of the rest of the planet, America's Arctic is ground zero for climate change. Drilling for oil on these sensitive landscapes will compound devastating climate impacts, allowing for the exposure of carbon emissions, worsening climate pollution, and harm to communities already bearing the brunt of a changing climate. Below are opportunities your administration can take that would ensure durable protections for the most ecologically and culturally important sites in the Arctic and would showcase a new approach for addressing fossil fuel extraction on federal public lands.

**ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE:**

As part of the 2017 Tax Act, the Arctic Refuge was opened to oil and gas development for the first time since its creation. After a failed Trump-era lease sale in January 2020, President Biden took bold action to suspend all activity on the coastal plain and to address the fundamental legal errors with the Arctic Refuge Leasing program. Over the next year, the Department of the Interior (DOI) should prioritize the important work to complete a robust supplemental environmental analysis (SEIS) for the Arctic Refuge leasing program. This effort should include a decision to cancel the remaining illegal leases on the coastal plain and an assessment of the climate impacts of leasing and its compatibility with U.S. climate goals. Protection of the Arctic Refuge is a human rights issue for the Alaska Native communities that rely on its resources. Widespread and strong public support exists for its protection. Canceling the remaining leases and finalizing a highly protective program is essential for keeping oil rigs off this sacred land long into the future.

## **NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE-ALASKA:**

Over the past decades, management of the Reserve has been subject to shifting political winds. President Biden reinstated the protections that the Trump Administration rolled back, and now has an opportunity to take further necessary action through the impending conservation rulemaking. Addressing future oil and gas leasing in the Reserve by strengthening protections for existing Special Areas is a critical first step. We look forward to working with you on this process and the opportunity to address stronger and expanded protections for the entire Western Arctic. We also urge this administration to quickly and boldly address the millions of acres of lands in the Reserve already leased to oil companies. With Willow as a hub, more than 4 billion barrels of oil are poised to be extracted from this area, including from Special Areas. A robust protection effort for the Reserve must address all lands to prevent the sprawl of industrialization already unlocked by the Willow Project. The massive Peregrine oil project alone, which could move forward at any time, would be nearly twice the size of Willow. Unchecked development will jeopardize our nation's climate commitments for decades to come.

We implore this administration not to advance any new oil and gas permits in the Reserve until there is a clear assessment completed regarding the compatibility of the Reserve's oil and gas program with U.S. climate commitments. A new approach for addressing fossil fuel extraction on federal public lands is needed. America's Arctic provides your administration the opportunity to showcase a new future for oil and gas extraction on public lands. Bold action will honor our global climate commitments and safeguard subsistence resources for Alaska Native communities who have relied on these lands, waters, and wildlife to support their way of life for millennia.

Bold protection action for both the Refuge and Reserve would bolster the exceptional climate achievements that your administration has accomplished. A sobering energy forecast from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) recently warned that our domestic oil and gas production would increase steadily in the coming decades, potentially erasing all the climate benefits from the landmark Inflation Reduction Act. It is no secret that high-cost Arctic oil projects are extremely complex and long in duration. On top of providing no immediate relief to high gas prices for Americans today, this also means that Arctic oil production will ramp up at a time when it will be even more critical to abandon our reliance on fossil fuels.

Indigenous peoples' livelihoods, well-being, subsistence rights, and food sovereignty depend on a healthy and interconnected pan-Arctic. As a nation, we are reminded that the climate crisis is not biased to one region but is interconnected across the globe. This administration must continue to uphold commitments to Tribal Nations by mitigating Arctic oil and gas developments and looking toward long-term solutions that recognize traditional knowledge and stewardship, foster collaboration between stakeholders, and build capacity within Indigenous communities to participate and lead in decision-making processes.

We encourage you to take hold of the tremendous opportunity in America's Arctic to protect tens of millions of acres of unparalleled biological and cultural resources, which will significantly contribute to your America the Beautiful goals and leverage the critical role that the Arctic, along with all our public lands, must play in addressing the climate crisis.

On behalf of the 107 undersigned,

198 Methods  
350Hawaii  
350Juneau  
Action for the Climate Emergency (ACE)  
Advocates for the Environment  
AFGE Local 704  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
Alaska Wilderness League  
Alpacka Raft  
American Humanist Association  
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.  
Arkansas Valley Audubon Society  
Audubon Colorado Council  
Braided River  
California Environmental Voters  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Cass County, MN IWLA Chapter  
Central Minnesota Audubon Society  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
Clean Energy Action  
Clean Water Action  
Climate Hawks Vote  
Climate Law & Policy Project  
Climate Reality, Greater Maryland Chapter  
Coalition to Protect New York  
Concerned Health Professionals of  
Pennsylvania  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship  
CT League of Conservation Voters  
Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)  
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action  
Denver Audubon  
Don't Waste Arizona  
Earth Ethics, Inc.  
Earthjustice  
Education Through Engagement, LLC  
Elders Climate Action Maryland  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environmental Action  
Evergreen Audubon  
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay  
Area  
Extinction Rebellion US  
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition  
Figure 8 Investment Strategies  
Fridays for Future US

Friends of Alaska Wildlife Refuges  
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural  
Areas  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
Friends of the Lost Coast  
Georgia WAND Education Fund Inc.  
Good Neighbor Steering Committee of  
Benicia  
Great Bear Foundation  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
GreenLatinos  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
International Marine Mammal Project of  
Earth Island Institute  
Jitterbug Art Studio  
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society  
League of Conservation Voters  
Mattole Restoration Council  
Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton  
League  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
NC Council of Churches  
NC Interfaith Power & Light  
Nicaragua Center for Community Action  
Northern Alaska Environmental Center  
Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS)  
Oil and Gas Action Network  
Patagonia  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Pennsylvania  
Protect All Children's Environment  
Santa Fe Forest Coalition  
Seeding Sovereignty  
Selkirk Conservation Alliance  
Sierra Club  
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council  
SOMA Action  
South Asian Fund for Education  
Scholarship and Training Inc.  
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council  
Spirit of the Sun  
St. Cloud Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
St. Paul Audubon Society  
Stand.earth  
Student Public Interest Research Groups  
(PIRGs)  
Sunrise Durham

TAO  
The Alaska Center  
The Conservation Alliance  
The People's Justice Council  
The Wilderness Society  
Tidelines Institute  
Tongass Forest Women's Earth & Climate  
Action Network  
Trustees for Alaska  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Unite North Metro Denver  
W.J. McCabe Chapter, Izaak Walton League  
of America  
Wall of Women  
Whole Earth Tools  
Wilderness Watch  
Winter Wildlands Alliance  
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network  
Womxn from the Mountain  
World Wildlife Fund  
Zero Hour  
Zumbro Valley Audubon