

***The Wilderness Society \* Alaska Wilderness League \* Sierra Club \* National Resources Defense Council \* Earthjustice \* Defenders of Wildlife \* National Wildlife Refuge Association \* Conservation Lands Foundation \* Americans for Alaska \* League of Conservation Voters \* Alaska Conservation Foundation \* Izaak Walton League \* American Hunters and Anglers***

**April 29, 2026**

**To Oil and Gas Companies Considering Bidding in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:**

As leaders of national conservation and sportsmen groups representing tens of millions of Americans, we write to remind you of the risks of bidding on oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and to strongly urge you to publicly commit to rejecting the upcoming lease sale and any future efforts to industrialize this remarkable place.

The Arctic Refuge is widely recognized as one of the most sensitive and irreplaceable regions in North America, providing critical habitat for caribou, polar bears, migratory birds, and a wide range of Arctic species. The Refuge's coastal plain is especially critical to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which has sustained the Gwich'in Nation for generations. They – along with Iñupiat land protectors – strongly oppose any efforts to drill in the Refuge, which threatens the caribou herd.

Even at a time when the daily news cycle is frenetic and crowded, activity affecting this region would not occur quietly. The Arctic Refuge stands as a crown jewel in our nation's beloved public lands system. The public overwhelmingly supports protecting it, making any action there especially visible and consequential.

The Department of the Interior is moving forward with lease sales in the Arctic Refuge, with a sale scheduled for June 5. This is not a new proposition. We appreciate that previous lease sales have consistently failed due to a persistent lack of market interest, as numerous leading companies have adopted formal commitments not to finance or insure Arctic Refuge development. The first sale in 2021 was a bust, generating only a fraction of projected revenue, and the second sale in 2025 received no bids at all. Several major companies have exited Arctic Refuge positions, in some cases at significant cost. Litigation over existing leases and leasing programs continues. This track record underscores the financial, operational, and reputational risks that continue to define leasing in this region.

Engagement in Arctic Refuge leasing is not a routine business decision, especially now, as the stakes are even higher than before. The current policy environment, marked by unpredictability and ever-evolving approaches to process and oversight, adds further uncertainty for long-term investment. In the Arctic Refuge, these dynamics are compounded by the region's remoteness, lack of infrastructure, environmental sensitivity, and dramatic warming, all of which increase the complexity, cost, and risk associated with development.

Taken together, these factors indicate that leasing in this region will face ongoing challenges, sustained public outrage, and compounding uncertainty over time. Our organizations represent members and supporters—your customers-- who care deeply about this landscape, and we will continue to engage constructively in public processes, support the Gwich'in Nation, and work to ensure the Arctic Refuge remains permanently protected from any industrial development.

In light of these considerations, we urge your company to take a clear and public position by committing to not bid on or support oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and to refrain from financing, partnering on, or underwriting projects tied to development in the Arctic Refuge.

Sincerely,

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The Wilderness Society

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