



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Responds to Biden Administration Lease Suspension Announcement

(Anchorage) – Tuesday, June 1, 2021, the U.S. Department of Interior announced a suspension on oil and gas leases in the Section 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

Section 1002 Area is the 1.56 million acres within the 19.3 million acres of ANWR that were specifically set aside for oil and natural resource development by Congress and President Carter in 1980 under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). It is commonly referred to as the “1002 Area” because it is the section of ANILCA that excludes the area from wilderness designation.

For more than 40 years, Alaskans —led by our native communities on the North Slope— have urged Congress to open the Section 1002 Area for exploration. With the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2017, Congress authorized the U.S. Department of Interior to establish and administer a competitive oil and gas program in Section 1002 Area, which was held in December 2020. AIDEA participated in the Section 1002 Area Oil and Gas Leasing Program hosted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and is the current leaseholder on seven tracts.

“For decades, Alaska has proven that energy development and environmental conservation can proactively co-exist,” said **AIDEA Executive Director, Alan Weitzner**. “The Department of Interior has yet to provide AIDEA with documentation of any deficiencies that would warrant a suspension of leases. We’re extremely disappointed in the Biden Administration’s effort to prevent Alaska from lawfully and responsibly developing its natural resources as agreed and provided for under ANILCA.”

Support for developing the Section 1002 Area comes from a wide cross-section of Alaskans, including the Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat (a non-profit coalition comprised of 24 entities including tribal councils, regional organizations, municipal governments, and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations located in and around the 1002 Area), Governor Mike Dunleavy, Alaska’s Legislature, and all members of Alaska’s congressional delegation since 1980. In April of this year, the Alaska State Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 12 (HJR 12), which urged the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, to honor the recent lease sales and proceed with permitting in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

“It’s our hope that President Biden will choose to spotlight Alaska as the leader it is for responsible resource development and not suspend these leases out of respect for our local communities’ right for economic development,” said **AIDEA Board Chair Dana Pruhs**.

As we continue to navigate this new economic landscape created by the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s more important than ever for Alaska to have as many tools as possible to promote Alaska’s economic interests and energy independence. The Section 1002 Area contains an estimated 7.6 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The exploration, development, and production of which is predicted to generate 1,430 direct jobs and 6,350 indirect jobs annually and 2,480 direct jobs and 10,100 indirect jobs at peak employment.

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the state. AIDEA’s purpose is to promote, develop and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska.

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