



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **In Honor of Alaska Day, AIDEA Defends Alaskan Rights and Holds the Department of Interior Accountable for Illegally Cancelling ANWR Leases**

October 18, 2023 (Anchorage, Alaska) – The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) has filed a lawsuit against the Department of Interior (DOI) for illegally canceling leases in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) 1002 area and the detrimental impact this action has had on the Alaskan communities involved.

The cancellation of leases by the Department of the Interior shows arbitrary and capricious disregard for Federal law. President Biden believes his 2019 political campaign statement allows him to ignore Federal law. AIDEA is holding DOI accountable for this illegal act. Section 20001(b)(2)(A) of Public Law No. 115-97, known as the “Tax Act,” clearly states, “The Secretary shall establish and administer a competitive oil and gas program for the leasing, development, production, and transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain.”

“The federal government is determined to strip away Alaska’s ability to support itself, and we have got to stop it. Alaska does responsible oil and gas development in the Arctic under stricter environmental standards than anywhere else in the world. Yet the federal government is focused on trying to stop our ability to produce oil and gas. Each action they take demonstrates a failure to comprehend the worldwide demand for oil and gas. If Alaska continues to be denied its constitutional right to safely develop resources, countries with much lower environmental standards will gladly fill that void with significant environmental impacts. The State of Alaska will continue being bold in defending our rights. We will not allow illegal actions to occur against Alaska and I fully support this lawsuit,” **said Governor Mike Dunleavy.**

“This lawsuit wouldn’t be necessary had the Biden administration followed the law that I drafted, consulted with the Alaska Natives who actually live on the North Slope, or simply acted in America’s best interest. Instead, we’re watching an administration soften sections with an authoritarian regime in Venezuela, while effectively sanctioning Alaska’s economy. At this precarious time in the world, all this does is increase our reliance on foreign oil, harm our energy and national security, and drive up fuel costs at the pump,” **said U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski**

"Last month, the Biden administration canceled lawfully-issued leases for oil and gas development in ANWR, disregarding the plain meaning of Federal law and the clear intent of Congress. This week, the Biden administration announced it will lift sanctions on Venezuela so that we can import oil from this dictatorship and terrorist regime. I can't think of a more perfect encapsulation of President Biden's insane energy policies. By outsourcing energy development, President Biden is empowering and funding America's adversaries, harming the global environment with lower standards and higher emissions, taking good-paying jobs away from hard-working Americans, and disregarding the voices of the indigenous people of the Arctic region who strongly support responsible resource development. I strongly support AIDEA's lawsuit against this lawless administration, a critically important effort to defend the rule of law and protect the interests of Alaskans and all Americans," **said U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan.**

"Alaskans must advocate for our rights and I cannot think of a better day than Alaska Day to stand united for our ability to explore and develop our natural resources, from the critical minerals we need for our clean energy transition to the domestic oil and gas we need to get us there," **said Representative Mary Peltola.**

DOI's cancellation of lease agreements is unlawful for several reasons:

1. DOI failed to adhere to its own rules governing lease termination, rendering its cancellation of the 1002 area leases invalid.
2. The 1002 area leases were and are lawful. DOI's reversal from its original position that the leases were legal to its current position that they are illegal directly contravenes and frustrates Congress's directive in the Tax Act to hold an initial sale and issue leases for oil and gas production and development by 2021.
3. DOI's unilateral decision to cancel the leases violates constitutional and statutory due process rights.
4. DOI's decision was inadequately reasoned and unsupported by facts, making the lease cancellation decision arbitrary and capricious.

The lawsuit filed today in the Washington DC District Court [[click here](#)] is in honor of Alaska Day and demonstrates AIDEA's commitment to defending the rights of Alaskans. "Unfortunately, Alaskans can expect more illegal acts by the federal government based on campaign rhetoric. A willingness to circumvent laws passed by Congress has consequences reaching far beyond ANWR's boundaries and will impact future development across this country. AIDEA will aggressively defend our lease rights and oppose this unlawful action," said Randy Ruaro, Executive Director of AIDEA.

For information about AIDEA or any of AIDEA's projects, please visit [www.aidea.org](http://www.aidea.org) or contact AIDEA at [communications@aidea.org](mailto:communications@aidea.org).

#### **About AIDEA:**

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

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