



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **AIDEA and Partners Appeal Against Oil and Gas Lease Suspension in ANWR**

April 15, 2024 (Anchorage, Alaska) – The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), in partnership with the Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation (Kaktovik), Arctic Slope Regional Corp. (ASRC), and the North Slope Borough (NSB), announced today that they have filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. This appeal challenges an August 2023 ruling regarding the suspension and moratorium of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) Coastal Plain 1002 Area oil and gas program mandated by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

**Governor Mike Dunleavy** has expressed his support, stating, "The State of Alaska has long been at the forefront of fighting for our state rights and pushing back against federal overreach. The federal government's actions regarding the ANWR leases not only undermine our state's autonomy but also hinder our ability to harness our rich natural resources for the betterment of all Alaskans which was guaranteed in the 2017 Tax Act. This appeal is crucial in our ongoing efforts to assert Alaska's rights and potential."

**Charles Lampe, President of Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation** emphasized, "Kaktovik is the only village within the project area. Our involvement in this appeal is about protecting the rights and future of our people. The decisions made by the Department of Interior have significant implications for our community, and it's essential that our voices are heard in this matter."

**Mayor Josiah Patkotak of the NSB** remarked, "The Department of the Interior seems to believe that they care about this land more than we do. The elected leaders of the North Slope spoke in unison in opposition to this rule and the rulemaking process. To refuse to listen to our voices is to say that you know better - better than the people who have been this land's stewards for the past 10,000 years, and who depend on its continued health for their own survival. We deserve the same right to economic prosperity and essential services as the rest of this country, and are being denied the opportunity to take care of our residents and community with this decision. It is insulting and, unfortunately, representative of the federal government's treatment of our indigenous voices for decades."

**Senator Lisa Murkowski** said, "As the lead author of Title II of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which mandated this program and at least two lease sales by the end of this year, I know as

well as anyone that the Department of the Interior's recent actions violate the law. My team and I invested countless hours in crafting this legislation, ensuring it balanced economic development with environmental stewardship. It's crucial that the clear intent and plain direction of this law, to responsibly harness the energy potential of the 1002 Area for the benefit of Alaskans and the nation, are fully realized."

"The cancellation of lawfully-issued ANWR leases was a flagrant violation of the 2017 Tax Cuts & Jobs Act and a clear demonstration of the Biden administration's utter disregard for the voices of Alaskans—most importantly, the Alaska Native people of the North Slope who've inhabited these lands for thousands of years," said **Senator Dan Sullivan**. "Not only did this decision harm the economic interests of Alaskans, it also undermined our national security, furthering the Biden administration's unilateral surrender of one of America's greatest strategic advantages: our abundant energy resources. I commend AIDEA, Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation, ASRC and the North Slope Borough for taking up this fight to defend the rule of law and to protect the interests of Alaskans and all Americans."

**Representative Mary Peltola** said, "In Alaska, we live in a unique balance with our environment, both respecting and relying on it. It should be *Alaskans* who are deciding whether we are expanding development in their regions, not the federal government. The appeal filed today is about ensuring that their voices are heard and respected."

**Randy Ruaro, AIDEA Executive Director**, stated, "This appeal represents our steadfast commitment to advocating for Alaska's economic interests. The suspension and moratorium of the ANWR oil and gas leases not only impede Alaska's economic development but also disregard the vital interests and rights of Alaskans. We are determined to pursue all available legal avenues to ensure that the potential of ANWR can be realized for the benefit of our state and its people."

AIDEA, Kaktovik, ASRC, and NSB remain united in their efforts to overturn the suspension and moratorium of the ANWR oil and gas leases, seeking a resolution that upholds the economic and environmental interests of Alaska and its communities.

For a copy of the lawsuit filed, click [here](#). 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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