



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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The Honorable Josiah Patkotak
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau, Alaska 99801

As the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, I submit this letter of support for House Joint Resolution 34 (HJR34), National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently in the process of yet another reevaluation of the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A), Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) and will be selecting a new alternative when they publish a new Record of Decision in the federal register. The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to support a NPR-A, IAP which maximizes responsible oil and gas leasing and development throughout the NPR-A. The guiding legislation for NPR-A allows for full commercial development of the Reserve's crude oil, natural gas, and liquid products to market. It has been nearly 50 years since that legislation was passed and the State of Alaska continues to fight for these rights to be properly enacted through a fair and balanced IAP, which meets the intent of the NPR-A's purpose. Past attempts by BLM to revise the IAP have left stakeholders with a plan in direct contrast with the National Petroleum Reserve Production Act. DNR strongly encourages BLM to select an alternative which maximizes future development potential, while conserving valued fish, wildlife and subsistence resources and has the flexibility to allow communities and residents of the NPR-A to grow and build infrastructure as they see necessary.

The State of Alaska and the North Slope have demonstrated over decades that oil and gas exploration, development, production, and transportation under some of the harshest environmental conditions in the world can occur safely and responsibly with the appropriate regulatory controls and environmental protections in place. Activities on the Slope must meet or exceed the high standards demanded by one of the most rigorous environmental regulatory regimes of any state for balancing development with the protection of resources using best management practices and mitigation measures. This rigorous regulatory regime continues to ensure that subsistence practices can be sustained while providing economic benefits for residents in terms of health care, public safety, and education. BLM needs to recognize this reality and long factual history when finalizing the NPR-A IAP/Record of Decision (ROD).

Considering that a preferred alternative has not been identified by BLM at this time, it is unclear what this new plan will ultimately require. That said, BLM has stated publicly that they intend to return to past IAP terms which will place more acreage off limits to use and increase mitigation measures on the remainder. While DNR remains hopeful, we are concerned that alternatives (or portions of alternatives) will be selected as BLM's ROD and that this plan will once again leave the

stakeholders of this region feeling land-locked, unreasonably limit economic opportunity, and ultimately be in violation of the National Petroleum Reserve Production Act.

Resources from the NPR-A can power America, provide thousands of family-supporting jobs, and greatly benefit the people and communities of Alaska. Responsibly developing NPR-A resources is an important step towards our energy independence as a Nation. TAPS is one of this nation's treasured assets and another key component to energy independence. Adding additional oil to TAPS is essential to prolonging its life and reducing maintenance costs. The United States no longer needs to choose to rely on other countries for the oil and gas resources that power our nation. The federal government has an opportunity to develop NPR-A resources in a way that significantly moves our Nation towards responsible energy independence and further away from relying on foreign countries. DNR along with the State of Alaska's other resource agencies continues to offer staff and resources as needed to assist BLM with developing an IAP which maximizes resource development potential while protecting valued wildlife and cultural resources. The Department of Natural Resources appreciates your sponsorship of HJR 34.

Sincerely,



Corri A. Feige
Commissioner

Cc: Akis Gialopsos, Governor's Legislative Office, Director