

STATE OF ALASKA SENATE

2008

FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION

Source
SR 401

Senate
Resolve No.
9



Urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration, development, and production.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

WHEREAS, in 16 U.S.C. 3142 (sec. 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)), the United States Congress reserved the right to permit further oil and gas exploration, development, and production within the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

WHEREAS the oil and gas industry, the state, and the United States Department of the Interior consider the Arctic coastal plain to have the highest potential for discovery of very large oil and gas accumulations on the continent of North America, estimated to include as much as 10,000,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil and significant amounts of natural gas; and

WHEREAS, while new oil and natural gas field developments on the North Slope of Alaska, such as Alpine, Northstar, and West Sak, may temporarily slow the decline in production, only giant coastal plain fields have the theoretical capability of increasing the

production volume of Alaska oil and gas to a significant degree; and

WHEREAS the state's future energy independence would be enhanced with additional natural gas production from the North Slope of Alaska, including what are expected to be significant gas reserves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the development of those reserves would enhance the economic viability of the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline; and

WHEREAS the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline and the Trans Alaska Pipeline System are transportation facilities that will be and are national assets that are integral to satisfying the present and future needs of the United States; and

WHEREAS the "1002 study area" is part of the coastal plain located within the North Slope Borough, and many of the residents of the North Slope Borough, who are predominantly Inupiat Eskimo, are supportive of development in the "1002 study area"; and

WHEREAS enhancements in technology can be used in a manner that minimizes the area within the refuge that is used for exploration and development, while providing the nation with a needed supply of oil and gas; and

WHEREAS the oil and gas industry is using innovative technology and environmental practices in the new field developments at Alpine and Northstar, and those techniques are directly applicable to operating on the coastal plain and would enhance environmental protection beyond traditionally high standards; and

WHEREAS the oil and gas industry has shown at Prudhoe Bay, as well as at other locations along the Arctic coastal plain, that it is capable of conducting oil and gas activity without adversely affecting the environment or wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now allows sufficient time for planning environmental safeguards, development, and national security review; and

WHEREAS the state will ensure the continued health and productivity of the Porcupine caribou herd and the protection of land, water, and wildlife resources during the exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

WHEREAS 8,900,000 of the 19,000,000 acres of the refuge have already been set aside as wilderness; and

WHEREAS the 1,500,000-acre coastal plain of the refuge makes up only eight

percent of the 19,000,000-acre refuge, and the development of the oil and gas reserves in the refuge's coastal plain would affect an area of only 2,000 to 7,000 acres, which is less than one-half of one percent of the area of the coastal plain; and

WHEREAS the continued competitiveness and stability of the state and its economy require that the Senate consider national trends toward renewable energy development; and

WHEREAS the Senate encourages the use of revenue from any development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for the development of renewable energy resources in the state;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate urges the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration, development, and production, and that the Senate is adamantly opposed to further wilderness or other restrictive designation in the area of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the oil and gas exploration, development, and production be conducted in a manner that protects the environment and the naturally occurring population levels of the Porcupine caribou herd on which the Gwich'in and other local residents depend, that uses directional drilling and other advances in technology to minimize the development footprint in the "1002 study area," and that uses the state's work force to the maximum extent possible; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate urges the United States Congress to pass legislation opening the "1002 study area" for oil and gas development while continuing to work on measures for increasing the development and use of renewable energy technologies; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate opposes any unilateral reduction in royalty revenue from exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and any attempt to coerce the State of Alaska into accepting less than the 90 percent of the oil, gas, and mineral royalties from the federal land in Alaska that was promised to the state at statehood.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, United States Secretary of

the Interior; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 110th United States Congress.