

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR BIRCH

Introduced: 2/20/19

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Requesting that the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land**
2 **Management implement an oil and gas leasing program in the coastal plain of the Arctic**
3 **National Wildlife Refuge.**

4 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 **WHEREAS**, in 16 U.S.C. 3143 (sec. 1003 of the Alaska National Interest Lands
6 Conservation Act), the United States Congress reserved the right to permit oil and gas
7 development and production in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in 16 U.S.C. 3142 (sec. 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands
9 Conservation Act), the United States Congress authorized nondrilling exploratory activity in
10 the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

11 **WHEREAS** sec. 20001 of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-97) requires
12 the United States Secretary of the Interior to establish and administer a competitive oil and
13 gas program for the leasing, development, and production of oil and gas in and the
14 transportation of oil and gas from the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;
15 and

1 **WHEREAS** sec. 20001 of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-97) requires
2 that at least two lease sales be held by December 22, 2024, and that each sale offer for lease at
3 least 400,000 acres of land with the highest hydrocarbon potential in the coastal plain of the
4 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, allowing for up to 2,000 acres of federal land which is
5 equivalent to .01 percent of the 19,300,000-acre refuge, to be covered by production and
6 support facilities; and

7 **WHEREAS** the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge contains an
8 estimated 7,687,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil and 7,000,000,000,000 cubic feet of
9 natural gas; and

10 **WHEREAS** the exploration, development, and production of oil and gas in the coastal
11 plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is predicted to generate 1,430 direct jobs and
12 6,350 indirect jobs annually and 2,480 direct jobs and 10,100 indirect jobs at peak
13 employment; and

14 **WHEREAS** the estimated potential government revenue from petroleum development
15 in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge through 2050, including revenue to
16 the North Slope Borough, the state, and the federal government from royalties, income taxes,
17 production taxes, and property taxes, equals \$104,673,000,000; and

18 **WHEREAS** oil and gas development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National
19 Wildlife Refuge has the potential to extend the life of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System and
20 increase throughput, which has declined from a peak of 2,033,000 average barrels of oil a day
21 in 1988 to 509,000 average barrels of oil a day in 2018; and

22 **WHEREAS** oil and gas development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National
23 Wildlife Refuge has the potential to enhance the economic viability of the proposed Alaska
24 liquefied natural gas project; and

25 **WHEREAS** oil and gas development on the coastal plain would strengthen national
26 security and provide long-lasting benefits to the national economy by creating thousands of
27 jobs nationwide, generating billions of dollars in government revenue, providing affordable
28 energy to American consumers, and decreasing dependence on foreign energy; and

29 **WHEREAS** advances in extended-reach and directional drilling technology have
30 greatly reduced the impact area of oil and gas activities, including shrinking the average
31 drilling pad size by more than 80 percent, from 65 acres in 1970 to 12 acres today, and

1 increasing the subsurface area accessible from modern drilling pads by nearly 2,000 percent,
2 from three square miles in 1970 to 60 square miles today; and

3 **WHEREAS** safe and responsible oil and gas exploration, development, and
4 production has been demonstrated by over 50 years of activity on the North Slope of Alaska
5 without adverse effects on the environment or wildlife populations; and

6 **WHEREAS** the state continues to strive to ensure the ongoing health and productivity
7 of the Porcupine and Central Arctic caribou herds and the protection of land, water, and
8 wildlife resources during the exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic
9 National Wildlife Refuge; and

10 **WHEREAS** polling consistently shows Alaskans overwhelmingly support responsible
11 oil and gas development in the non-wilderness portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;
12 and

13 **WHEREAS** the proposed leasing area of the coastal plain of the Arctic National
14 Wildlife Refuge is located in the North Slope Borough, and many residents of the borough,
15 the population of which is predominantly Inupiat, are supportive of development in the non-
16 wilderness area of the coastal plain;

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the United States
18 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, implement an oil and gas leasing
19 program in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as outlined in the
20 December 2018 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Draft Environmental Impact
21 Statement; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the United
23 States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, in its consideration of action
24 alternatives outlined in the December 2018 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Draft
25 Environmental Impact Statement, take into account the long history of safe and responsible
26 oil and gas development on Alaska's North Slope, the enormous benefits development of oil
27 and gas resources in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would bring to
28 the state and the nation, the advances in oilfield technology that continue to shrink the impact
29 area of oil and gas activities, and the support of residents from the North Slope Borough and
30 across the North Slope of Alaska for oil and gas development in a portion of the coastal plain.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President

1 of the United States; and the Honorable Michael R. Pence, Vice President of the United States
2 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable David Bernhardt, Acting United States
3 Secretary of the Interior; Brian Steed, Deputy Director for Policy and Programs, Bureau of
4 Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior; and Nicole Hayes, Coastal Plain Project
5 Manager, Bureau of Land Management Alaska State Office, U.S. Department of the Interior.