

**From:** [Susan A](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony Resler  
**Date:** Monday, March 17, 2025 11:07:37 AM

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## Public Testimony: Ethical Concerns Regarding Christine Resler's Appointment to the University of Alaska Board of Regents

To: The Alaska State Legislature, Board of Regents, and the Public

Subject: Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Concerns Regarding Christine Resler's Appointment

I submit this testimony to express serious concerns regarding the appointment of Christine Resler to the University of Alaska Board of Regents. While she meets the formal qualifications under Alaska Statutes (AS 14.40.150-170), her extensive ties to the oil and gas industry, particularly as the President and CEO of ASRC Energy Services (AES), present significant conflicts of interest that could compromise the university's independence, research integrity, and financial stewardship.

The Board of Regents is responsible for overseeing university policies, research funding, land management, and financial decisions. Given ASRC's direct economic interests in oil and gas development, Resler's appointment raises serious ethical, legal, and fiduciary concerns that must be addressed before her confirmation.

### 1. Direct Financial Conflicts of Interest

Christine Resler is the CEO of ASRC Energy Services (AES), a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC).

ASRC is one of Alaska's largest oil and gas corporations, with active investments in Arctic drilling, energy infrastructure, and federal lobbying for resource extraction policies.

ASRC's subsidiaries, including AES, profit from oil and gas development, creating a direct financial conflict when Resler participates in university decisions involving research funding, industry partnerships, and resource management.

### Legal Violations & Ethical Issues:

Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act (AS 39.52) prohibits public officials from using their position to benefit their financial interests or those of their employer.

AS 14.40.150-170 (Board of Regents Governance) requires regents to act in the best interests of the university, not private corporations.

If Resler influences research funding or land-use policies to benefit ASRC, she could violate state ethics laws and compromise public trust in the university.

### 2. Influence Over Research Funding and University Policy

The University of Alaska conducts critical research on climate change, energy policy, and

environmental protection—areas directly impacted by ASRC’s business interests.

The university receives state and federal grants for climate science, Arctic research, and renewable energy projects.

ASRC has actively lobbied for policies that weaken environmental protections, meaning Resler’s influence could shift UA’s research priorities away from independent science and toward industry-friendly narratives.

#### Specific Risks:

**Funding Redirection** – Resler could pressure UA to prioritize oil and gas-friendly research, potentially reducing grants for renewable energy and climate resilience studies.

**Suppression of Independent Research** – Researchers who publish findings critical of the oil and gas industry could face institutional pressure or funding cuts.

**Compromised Academic Freedom** – If UA’s research is tainted by industry influence, its credibility as an independent institution will be severely damaged.

#### Legal Precedents & Ethical Violations:

University governance must protect academic freedom (First Amendment protections in public institutions). If Resler’s role chills critical research due to industry pressure, it could constitute unconstitutional interference in university affairs.

AS 14.40.170 requires regents to ensure the university serves the public, not corporate interests.

### 3. Control Over University Land and Resource Management

The University of Alaska Land Grant Trust Fund holds land and mineral rights that generate revenue through leasing for resource development.

The Board of Regents controls land-use policies, including leasing UA-owned lands for oil, gas, and mineral exploration.

If Resler advocates for leasing UA land to ASRC or its affiliates, this would be direct self-dealing.

#### Legal & Ethical Concerns:

**Public Trust Doctrine** – University lands are held for the benefit of the university, not to enrich private corporations.

If Resler participates in decisions that financially benefit ASRC, this would constitute a serious breach of fiduciary duty and could lead to legal challenges or lawsuits.

### 4. Political Influence and Corporate Control of Public Institutions

ASRC is a major lobbying entity with extensive ties to state and federal policymakers.

Resler's dual role as a regent and oil executive creates an unprecedented conflict, blurring the lines between corporate lobbying and public education governance.

#### Potential Violations:

If UA policies are shaped by corporate interests rather than educational priorities, this could trigger federal oversight or loss of public trust.

Under AS 36.30 (Alaska Procurement Code), all university contracts must be awarded fairly. Resler's influence could steer lucrative contracts toward ASRC, raising ethical concerns.

#### Conclusion: Resler's Appointment Must Be Challenged or Subject to Strict Ethical Oversight

Christine Resler's appointment presents unacceptable conflicts of interest that could:

Compromise university research integrity

Shift public funding to benefit private corporations

Undermine UA's independence from industry influence

Create legal liabilities for ethics violations and self-dealing

#### Recommendations:

Resler must formally recuse herself from all decisions involving ASRC, energy policy, land leases, and research funding.

A formal ethics review should be conducted before confirming her appointment.

The Alaska Legislature should consider additional conflict-of-interest policies for university regents with corporate ties.

If Resler refuses to recuse herself, legal challenges should be pursued under Alaska's ethics and public trust laws.

#### Final Call to Action

The University of Alaska must remain a public institution serving Alaskans, not private corporate interests. If the Board of Regents is allowed to become a tool of oil and gas lobbyists, the credibility, independence, and future of UA are at risk.

I urge lawmakers, students, faculty, and concerned Alaskans to demand accountability, transparency, and an immediate ethics investigation into Christine Resler's appointment.

Respectfully submitted,



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Subject: Conflicts of Interest, Ethical Violations, and Legal Risks in the Appointment of Christine Resler

## I. Introduction

This testimony raises significant concerns regarding the appointment of Christine Resler to the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents. While she meets the statutory qualifications under Alaska Statutes (AS 14.40.150-170), her role as President & CEO of ASRC Energy Services (AES)—a major oil and gas contractor—creates an inherent conflict of interest that violates state ethics laws, undermines academic independence, and exposes the university to legal and financial risks.

The Board of Regents has fiduciary responsibility over UA's funding, research priorities, and land-use policies. Given that ASRC Energy Services profits directly from fossil fuel development in Alaska, Resler's dual role as a regent and energy executive poses serious ethical and legal threats to the integrity of UA governance.

## II. Direct Financial Conflicts of Interest

### A. ASRC's Business Interests Conflict with UA's Mission

ASRC Energy Services (AES) is a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), one of Alaska's largest oil and gas corporations.

ASRC and AES profit from energy extraction in Alaska, including oil drilling in the Arctic, federal lobbying for pro-industry policies, and energy infrastructure development.

UA conducts research on Arctic climate change, sustainable energy, and environmental policy—areas that directly affect ASRC's financial interests.

ASRC has a history of opposing federal environmental regulations that limit oil drilling and fossil fuel expansion (U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, 2021).

### B. Legal Violations: Conflict of Interest and Fiduciary Breach

Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act (AS 39.52.110-960) states:

"A public officer may not take official action in a matter in which the officer has a personal or financial interest."

As a regent, Resler will oversee research funding decisions that could financially benefit ASRC Energy Services—a clear violation of AS 39.52.

If UA awards grants, partnerships, or land leases to ASRC or affiliates, Resler's participation could constitute self-dealing, leading to legal challenges and possible removal from the Board

under AS 39.52.960.

### III. Influence Over Research Funding and University Policy

#### A. Industry Influence on Academic Research

UA receives millions in federal research grants for studies on climate change, energy policy, and Arctic sustainability (National Science Foundation, 2022).

Resler's corporate ties create a risk of redirecting research funding to favor industry priorities, rather than independent science.

Studies show that corporate involvement in university governance leads to suppression of climate science and biased research agendas (Oreskes & Conway, 2010).

#### B. Case Law Precedent: Academic Freedom and Industry Influence

*Keyishian v. Board of Regents* (1967): The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that academic freedom is a constitutional right, and public universities must remain independent from external political and financial pressures (*Keyishian v. Board of Regents*, 1967).

If Resler's influence results in funding decisions that undermine independent research, this could violate First Amendment protections on academic freedom.

### IV. Control Over University Land and Resource Management

The University of Alaska Land Grant Trust Fund manages public lands and mineral rights, generating revenue through leasing for resource development (UA Board of Regents Policy, 2022).

As a regent, Resler would have oversight over land-use decisions that could benefit ASRC directly.

If UA leases land for oil development to ASRC or its affiliates, Resler's role would present a direct financial conflict of interest.

#### A. Legal Violations: Public Trust Doctrine & Fiduciary Duty

The Public Trust Doctrine (*Illinois Central Railroad v. Illinois*, 1892) prohibits public institutions from using public lands to enrich private entities.

If UA leases university land to ASRC with Resler's involvement, it could violate public trust principles and expose UA to litigation.

### V. Political Influence and Corporate Control Over Public Institutions

#### A. ASRC's Lobbying Efforts Conflict with Public University Governance

ASRC is a major lobbying entity that advocates for reduced environmental protections and increased oil leasing on state and federal lands (Center for Responsive Politics, 2023).

Resler's appointment effectively grants the oil and gas industry a seat at the highest level of UA governance.

This creates an unacceptable risk of corporate influence over public education policy.

## B. Legal & Ethical Concerns

AS 36.30 (Alaska Procurement Code) requires competitive bidding for contracts and prevents public officials from influencing contract awards.

If UA enters into agreements with ASRC or its affiliates under Resler's oversight, it could lead to ethics violations and procurement lawsuits.

## VI. Conclusion & Recommendations

Christine Resler's appointment presents an unavoidable conflict of interest that violates Alaska's ethics laws, compromises UA's research independence, and risks legal action against the Board of Regents.

### Recommendations:

Christine Resler must be required to recuse herself from any university decisions related to ASRC, energy policy, research funding, and land-use policies.

A formal ethics review should be conducted by the Alaska State Ethics Commission before confirming her appointment.

The Alaska Legislature should introduce additional safeguards preventing corporate executives with direct financial interests from serving on the UA Board of Regents.

If Resler fails to recuse herself from conflicts of interest, a legal challenge should be pursued under Alaska's ethics statutes and the Public Trust Doctrine.

### Final Call to Action

The University of Alaska must remain an independent public institution, free from corporate control and industry influence. Resler's appointment jeopardizes the integrity of UA governance, the credibility of its research, and its ability to act in the best interests of Alaskans.

I urge lawmakers, students, faculty, and concerned Alaskans to demand accountability, transparency, and an immediate ethics investigation into Christine Resler's appointment.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Two Rivers  
Myself

### References

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