



ALASKA PETROLEUM JOINT CRAFTS COUNCIL

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February 6, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary Nominee
The Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Urgent Support for Willow Project in Alaska's NPR-A

Dear Secretary Nominee Haaland:

As labor organizations representing workers in the oil and gas industry in Alaska, representing 19,800 workers, we urge the Department of Interior to allow the Willow Project in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) to proceed with the currently issued Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision (ROD). We are disappointed about reports that the Department intends to review current Environmental Impact Statements and RODs with the potential to review the EIS ROD for the Willow Project, causing harmful delay for a project that has incorporated the best mitigation practices available.

The Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council (APJCC) represents the Alaska workers who maintain critical energy infrastructure of national importance from the North Slope to the Valdez Marine Terminal. Through our exceptional training programs and adapting with improving technology, we have achieved exceptional safety and environmental records while skillfully executing significant projects under challenging conditions. We appreciate President Biden's plan to "Build Back Better" and incorporate clean energy into our country's energy plan. At the same time, the transition must include family-supporting jobs and maintain environmentally responsible projects like the Willow project to ensure the economic health of Alaska and our communities.

The Willow Project was planned based on the requirements of the 2013 NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) under the Obama-Biden Administration and Secretary Salazar with the highest standards for environmental stewardship. The permitting and environmental review process encompassed a period of well over 2 years. There were multiple rounds of public comment and public meetings; numerous meetings between the

International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Local 959

Laborers' International Union of North America
Locals 942 and 341 - District Council

International Union of Operating Engineers
Local 302

United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters
Locals 375 and 367

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Local 1547

agencies and ConocoPhillips; over 100 public meetings involving Alaska Native stakeholders; and multiple significant revisions to the project to respond to suggestions and concerns from the Alaska Native community. The project is subject to over 270 mitigation measures and best practices from the 2013 Integrated Activity Plan. In addition, the Willow Project involves many proactive mitigations by ConocoPhillips. Specifically, the Willow Project has focused on lowering emissions and powering drilling rigs electrically once facilities are installed as well as increasing energy efficiency over traditional installations on the North Slope. During the North Slope Borough Rezoning Process, there were additional mitigations incorporated in the project. These include using foam insulation in roads to reduce road height and gravel quantities. The airport footprint was reduced along with adding restrictions for traffic and airport plans. There is also an extended and expanded oil spill mitigation agreement. In addition to the in-depth mitigation measures of the Willow project, hallmarks of the project planning have been community involvement, stewardship, and respect for subsistence and caribou.

This project has met all regulatory requirements in addition to working with local residents to further reduce impacts, and many are relying on the benefits it brings. The Department should not create last minute unnecessary delays and obstacles, but should allow the Willow Project to move forward as permitted and planned.. The economic benefits will be immense, and Alaska has never needed these gains more than now. Alaska's economy was first hit with a crash in oil prices followed by the ravages of the pandemic. By any measure, Alaska workers and their families are hurting. Our state budget is reaching an unprecedented crisis, and unemployment levels reflect the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on our jobs and local businesses. These challenging conditions are hitting Alaskans while they are already on economically precarious footing, and the Willow Project has the opportunity to both jumpstart our economy with jobs and be a model in community and environmental stewardship. To highlight a few of the many economic benefits of the Willow Project, the project would generate over 2,000 construction jobs and hundreds of long-term jobs. Consistent with the Administration's goals to increase middle-class union jobs, 75% of anticipated total North Slope installation work hours would be union labor. Again, the Willow Project gives us the opportunity for the Administration to work with unions to help set records with labor-management apprenticeship hours, workplace safety, and stewardship. In addition to an influx of much-needed jobs, according to BLM estimates, the Willow Project will generate \$2.3 billion in revenue for the State of Alaska; \$7.6 billion in federal royalties, income taxes and gravel sales; and \$1.2 billion in revenues for the North Slope Borough.

By implementing the best mitigation measures and incorporating deep engagement with stakeholders, the Willow Project can be a model to show what we accomplish when we bring together workers, responsible industry partners, environmental partners, and local communities. For the future of Alaska's jobs and our economy, I urge you to support the

current Record of Decision and allow the Willow project to move forward as planned and previously approved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A.J. Merrick II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "A" and "J".

A.J. "Joey" Merrick II

CC:

Scott de la Vega, Acting Secretary, Department of Interior
Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Dan Sullivan
Congressman Don Young