

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We write to reiterate our strong support for the Willow Master Development Plan (Willow or Project) in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). The expeditious approval of this crucial project would greatly benefit Alaska, our nation, and the world, while demonstrating the Administration's commitment to addressing inflation, high energy costs, the need for greater energy security, and environmental justice initiatives.

On July 8, 2022, the Department of the Interior (Department or DOI) published a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for Willow. We appreciate the Department's recognition that 45 days provided sufficient time for public comment on the SEIS. After years of study and review, both the Administration and Alaskans can feel confident that the Project will abide by the strictest environmental considerations in the world, while being constructed and operated by a company with an impressive record of safe and responsible development on the North Slope.

Willow will be a significant economic driver for Alaska, creating thousands of high-paying construction jobs, primarily with labor from union workers, and hundreds of permanent positions. ConocoPhillips has already invested more than \$500 million in the development of Willow's leases, which were acquired in 1999 during the Clinton administration, and plans to spend upwards of \$8 billion in total.

The Project will also generate as much as \$17 billion in new revenues for the federal government, the State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough, and communities in and around NPR-A. In fact, the Bureau of Land Management estimated in the draft SEIS that the Project would generate \$3.91 billion in new federal revenue, \$3.54 billion in revenue for the State of Alaska, and \$1.25 billion in revenue for the North Slope Borough.

As Julie Kitka, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, wrote to you, Willow "could jumpstart our economy with thousands of jobs and be a model in community and environmental stewardship for years to come."¹ Similarly, the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, North Slope Borough, and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation wrote to you that:

¹ Letter from Julie Kitka, President, Alaska Federation of Natives, to the Honorable Debra Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior (Feb. 23, 2022).

“The current development plan for Willow incorporates local knowledge and input, and it was specifically designed to protect surface values and to protect the Iñupiat way of life, including subsistence...we are satisfied that the mitigation measures adopted by the Department will protect the land, water, and wildlife resources of the North Slope, as well as our communities’ health and wellbeing. We are united in our continuing support for the Willow project. And if this Administration is truly committed to Alaska Native self-determination and the meaningful involvement of our people in federal decisions tied to our ancestral lands, it must listen to the elected regional Alaska Native leadership who speak in unified support for Willow, not to outside interests.”²

Those are many more individuals and groups that strongly support the Willow project. For example, it has drawn backing from North Slope mayors and communities, Alaska AFL-CIO, building trades, LIUNA, Alaska’s congressional delegation, and the President of the United States.

In the midst of their strong support, it has been 14 months since a federal court remanded the alternatives analysis to BLM, so it is reasonable for the agency to move forward and complete the permitting process. We believe the final SEIS should identify the preferred alternative; appropriately weight the purpose of energy production in the NPR-A; and recognize the public interest in supporting energy security and responsible resource development. The permitting process must be completed by the end of 2022 at very latest so the project’s proponent can make a final investment decision and hire Alaskans in time for the winter construction season. That decision will not be possible, and none of those jobs will be created, in the absence of a clean and timely Record of Decision (ROD).

We urge the Department to select a preferred alternative for the final SEIS that facilitates at least as much infrastructure and access to North Slope resources as Alternative E, and look forward to the Department’s swift re-approval of the Willow Master Development Plan. This is a pivotal moment for our Alaska and our country, where the timely approval of projects today can assure needed future supply and help us avoid the type of crisis affecting many of our foreign allies.

² Letter from Morrie Lemen, Executive Director, Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope; Harry K. Brower, Jr., Mayor, North Slope Borough; and Rex A. Rock, Sr., President and CEO, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, to the Honorable Deb Haaland, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior (July 21, 2022).

The economic development and energy security benefits that Willow will provide can be realized through a ROD that is completed in time for this year's winter construction season to proceed. Alaskans are counting on you to make that happen.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Mary Sattler Peltola
Representative for All Alaska

CC: *The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior*
The Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning, Director, Bureau of Land Management