

From: [Austin Ahmasuk](#)
To: [House Resources](#)
Cc: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: Opposing comments to Willow project, and HJR6
Date: Friday, February 17, 2023 11:31:25 AM

To Whom it May concern,

My name is Austin Ahmasuk I am originally from Nome, and now split my time between Nome and Palmer. I am writing to give thoughtful and meaningful input on the Willow Project. Because this project and its political consequences have bearing on development elsewhere in Alaska I am compelled to speak up for public resources, and public trust. If HJR6 were approved the oil and gas industry will have successfully obtained government advocacy for private enterprise. HJR6 essentially amounts to a subsidy of the oil and gas industry giving multinational oil and gas companies the means to sway public opinion despite dissenting local opinion. Because this resource rich part Alaska was taken from Alaska Native people but who maintain some ownership within the development footprint it is essential to listen to local people. Because those lands were taken from Alaska Native people and are now in the hands of the federal government, wealthy multinational oil and gas companies are given the means to enjoy immense profit even if they destroy ecosystems. If HJR6 were approved it would set yet another precedent whereby state government bends over backwards to support multinational oil and gas companies.

Alaska and the federal government do not have the highest environmental standards and neither government listens very well to local people nor does either government give local and rural people full consideration. Under the Drilling, Abandonment, Plugging, and Production Practice regulations both the state and federal government allow for numerous regulatory waivers that endanger communities, or there are regulatory loopholes that have meant oil spills occur. Support for willow is not reasonable considering the failure of both state and federal regulations to mitigate impacts from large oil and gas development.

Unchecked, unmitigated and the “drill it mine it kill it” mentality that exists in Alaska will have devastating consequences that could last for generations. We have a wonderful opportunity to preserve the beauty and life of Alaska for future generations and to listen to the people of the region. I have read many of the 25+ public meeting documents listed on BLM’s eplanning website and gone through hundreds of pages of public dialogue. One thing is clear, even local support is measured with caution and reasonable concern.

The Willow Oil and Gas Project would have a significant negative impact on the environment, with much of the land near the project site being sensitive habitat for wildlife species that local people have identified as important. Indigenous people rely on these habitats for a way of life and the impact to these ecosystems could be devastating.

It is reasonable to expect the project will lead to air and water pollution as has already occurred with the previous spills. The north slope of Alaska has already documented cumulative air quality impacts, and environmental mistakes that could have profound effects on the health of human communities, both in terms of physical health impacts as well as mental wellbeing.

The financial costs associated with this project could be significant and could even outweigh any potential benefits. If a disaster were to occur this would place an additional strain on public services that may already be stretched due to limited government funding.

The financial incentives promised by the project are not guaranteed and might not outweigh any potential long-term economic costs. This could result in taxpayers having to foot the bill for any future clean up, as well as greater financial pressures to deal with costs and impacts to local communities.

Land degradation WILL occur (*Willow Development Plan, ROP A-10; Section 3.2.3; Section 3.4.2.3.1; Section 3.8.1; Section 3.8.2.1.4; Section; 3.9.2.3.4*) and if it were coupled with multiple wellhead, or material handling disasters at one time the impact from pollution of local ecosystems could be far-reaching, both in terms of life on the land and potentially also for other regions that are dependent on the same ecosystems.

As with many development projects like this the jobs are likely to go to workers and contractors from outside Alaska and local labor is made to suffer economic inequality. I am not convinced the state or federal government values rural Alaskans access to wealth. This could lead to a displacement of traditional subsistence practices, putting Indigenous populations and their way of life at risk.

There are large financial incentives promised by the project. But at what long-term economic costs.? After reviewing public meeting after public meeting it seems apparent the BLM has not fully considered local alternative planning. HJR6 sets yet another dangerous precedent whereby government intrudes into private multi national oil and gas enterprise. Oil and gas developers should bear the burden of proving benefit not the State of Alaska.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Austin Ahmasuk
Nome and Palmer, Alaska 99762 and 99645