

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

1999

Source

SCS HJR 11(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.

8



Urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska, to oil and gas exploration, development, and production.

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

WHEREAS, in sec. 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the United States Congress reserved the right to permit further oil and gas exploration, development, and production within the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska; and

WHEREAS the oil industry, the state, and the United States Department of the Interior consider the coastal plain to have the highest potential for discovery of very large oil and gas accumulations on the continent of North America, estimated to be as much as 10,000,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil; and

WHEREAS the residents of the North Slope Borough, within which the coastal plain is located, are supportive of development in the "1002 study area"; and

WHEREAS oil and gas exploration and development of the coastal plain of the refuge and adjacent land could result in major discoveries that would reduce our nation's future need

for imported oil, help balance the nation's trade deficit, and significantly increase the nation's security; and

WHEREAS domestic demand for oil continues to rise while domestic crude production continues to fall with the result that the United States imports additional oil from foreign sources; and

WHEREAS development of oil at Prudhoe Bay, Kuparuk, Endicott, Lisburne, and Milne Point has resulted in thousands of jobs throughout the United States, and projected job creation as a result of coastal plain oil development will have a positive effect in all 50 states; and

WHEREAS Prudhoe Bay production is declining by approximately 10 percent a year; and

WHEREAS, while new oil field developments on the North Slope of Alaska, such as Alpine, Badami, and West Sak, may slow or temporarily stop the decline in production, only giant coastal plain fields have the theoretical capability of increasing the production volume of Alaska oil to a significant degree; and

WHEREAS opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now allows sufficient time for planning environmental safeguards, development, and national security review; and

WHEREAS the oil and gas industry and related state employment have been severely affected by reduced oil and gas activity, and the reduction in industry investment and employment has broad implications for the state's work force and the entire state economy; and

WHEREAS the 1,500,000-acre coastal plain of the refuge comprises only eight percent of the 19,000,000-acre refuge, and the development of the oil and gas reserves in the refuge's coastal plain would affect an area of only 2,000 to 7,000 acres, which is less than one-half of one percent of the area of the coastal plain; and

WHEREAS 8,000,000 of the 19,000,000 acres of the refuge have already been set aside as wilderness; and

WHEREAS the oil industry has shown at Prudhoe Bay, as well as at other locations along the Arctic coastal plain, that it can safely conduct oil and gas activity without adversely affecting the environment or wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS the state will ensure the continued health and productivity of the Porcupine Caribou herd and the protection of land, water, and wildlife resources during the exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska; and

WHEREAS the oil industry is using innovative technology and environmental practices in the new field developments at Alpine and Northstar, and those techniques are directly applicable to operating on the coastal plain and would enhance environmental protection beyond traditionally high standards;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the Congress of the United States is urged to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska, to oil and gas exploration, development, and production, and that the Alaska State Legislature is adamantly opposed to further wilderness or other restrictive designation in the area of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that that activity be conducted in a manner that protects the environment and uses the state's work force to the maximum extent possible.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and president of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and to all other members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives serving in the 106th United States Congress.