

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC POLICY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND TOURISM

January 26, 2017
11:33 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Dean Westlake, Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Mark Neuman
Representative David Talerico

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

Urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development; urging the United States Department of the Interior to recognize the private property rights of owners of land in and adjacent to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; relating to oil and gas exploration, development, production, and royalties; and relating to renewable and alternative energy technologies.

- MOVED CSHJR 5(AET) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 5

SHORT TITLE: ENDORSING ANWR LEASING; RELATED ISSUES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) WESTLAKE

01/18/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/17	(H)	RES
01/20/17	(H)	AET REFERRAL ADDED BEFORE RES
01/20/17	(H)	BILL REPRINTED 1/20/17
01/24/17	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
01/24/17	(H)	Heard & Held

01/24/17 (H) MINUTE (AET)
01/26/17 (H) AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

LOIS EPSTEIN, Arctic Program Director
The Wilderness Society
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

KATIE LLOYD
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

RONALD YARNELL
All About Adventure
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

LYNN LARSON
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

MIKE STERLING
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

HEATHER MIRCZAK
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

BERNADETTE DEMIENTIEFF, Executive Director
Gwich'in Steering Committee
Fort Yukon, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

PRINCESS LUCAJ
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

JESSICA GIRARD
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

SHERRY LEWIS, President
Arctic Audubon Society

Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ANNE DAERPINGHAUS
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

MIKE MUSICK
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

PAMELA MILLER
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

NADIA BACON
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ELLEN MITCHELL
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ENEI BEGAYE PETER
Native Movement
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

MISTY NICKOLI
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ODIN MILLER
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ROSE OHARA
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

LOIS BARGER
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

MARTHA RAYNOLDS
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ALEXANDER GUDSCHINSKY
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

BARBARA JACKSON
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

BERNIE HOFFMAN
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

EDMUND GEINS
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

JENNIFER NU
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ROBERT THOMPSON
Kaktovik, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

RUTH WOOD
Talkeetna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

JOHN STRASENBURGH
Talkeetna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

RICHIE MUSICK
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

BYRON CHARLES
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HJR 5.

SARAH ERKMANN, External Affairs Manager
Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 5.

MARY SHIELDS

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 5.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[11:33:18 AM](#)

CHAIR DEAN WESTLAKE called the House Special Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism meeting to order at 11:33 a.m. Representatives Edgmon, Josephson, Tuck, Knopp, Talerico, and Westlake were present at the call to order. Representative Neuman arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HJR 5-ENDORSING ANWR LEASING; RELATED ISSUES

[11:33:56 AM](#)

CHAIR WESTLAKE announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5, Urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development; urging the United States Department of the Interior to recognize the private property rights of owners of land in and adjacent to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; relating to oil and gas exploration, development, production, and royalties; and relating to renewable and alternative energy technologies.

[11:34:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO moved to adopt Amendment 1, [labeled 30-LS0314\D.2, Nauman, 1/23/17], which read as follows:

Page 3, following line 26:

Insert new material to read:

"**WHEREAS**, in December 2016, President Barack Obama, through executive action, closed 125,000,000 acres of the Arctic Ocean, a vast majority of the United States Arctic offshore water, from future leasing consideration, thus preventing extraction of an estimated 27,000,000,000 barrels of oil; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Congressional delegation decried the executive action; and"

Page 3, lines 27 - 28:

Delete "President Barack Obama's recent action to withdraw millions of acres of land in the Arctic from new offshore oil and gas drilling"

Insert "the executive action"

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO stated that Amendment 1 provided clarity as to the actual resource that would be available in the area addressed in HJR 5. He referred to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) map in the committee packet, which shows estimates of the resource that would be available in the central North Slope area, area 1002, the Beaufort Sea, and the Chukchi Sea, if they were open to exploration and development. He asserted the information on the map gives a clear indication of what Alaska would be pursuing with HJR 5.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON removed his objection to Amendment 1. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[11:36:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO moved to adopt Amendment 2, [labeled 30-LS0314\D.3, Nauman, 1/24/17], which read as follows:

Page 2, following line 4:

Insert new material to read:

"**WHEREAS**, in 1998, the United States Geological Survey estimated the central North Slope and 1002 study area combined could contain up to 46,000,000,000,000 cubic feet of natural gas; and"

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said Amendment 2 provides the committee with a very clear estimate of the resource that would be available. He mentioned that the legislature has had many discussions about the resources available "up north" and the development of new infrastructure to move gas for Alaska. He stated that he was surprised to see the combined estimate for the central North Slope area and the 1002 study area to be 46 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. He stressed the importance of the estimates "for the people we're going to provide the resolution to, so they have very good information to base their decisions on."

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON removed his objection to Amendment 2. There being no further objection, Amendment 2 was adopted.

[11:39:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK moved to report HJR 5, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[11:40:18 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 11:40 a.m. to 11:41 a.m.

[11:41:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK withdrew his motion to report HJR 5, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[11:41:34 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 11:41 a.m.

[11:41:47 AM](#)

CHAIR WESTLAKE opened public testimony on HJR 5.

[11:42:38 AM](#)

LOIS EPSTEIN, Arctic Program Director, The Wilderness Society, paraphrased from the following written testimony [original punctuation provided]:

Thank you to Chairman Westlake and to committee members for this opportunity to testify today on HJR 5. My name is Lois Epstein and I am a licensed engineer and have lived in Alaska since 2001. I am the Arctic Program Director for The Wilderness Society.

When I have given talks that include the Arctic Refuge, I emphasize that the Refuge's coastal plain is the "top of the pyramid" when it comes to sensitive ecological areas. The coastal plain, also known as the 1002 area, is a national treasure and home to polar bears, wolves, migratory birds and the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which consists of nearly 200,000, currently-healthy animals. I say currently-healthy

because Arctic conditions are changing with global warming, and it is difficult to know if the herd will remain as healthy in upcoming years. Notably, the Alaska Dispatch News reported in November that the Central Arctic Herd near Prudhoe Bay is down to 22,000 individuals from 70,000, however the reasons for that decline are unclear. According to the ADN, the size of the herd has "plummeted, leaving biologists with Alaska Department of Fish and Game concerned – and a bit flummoxed. Since it peaked in 2010 at 70,000 animals, the size of the Central Arctic herd has fallen 69 percent – to 50,000 in 2013 and 22,000 this year. The herd often calves in and around Prudhoe Bay."

My organization focuses on balance which means that we strive to prevent oil and gas operations in the most sensitive areas but we are comfortable with oil and gas development if it is done well in less sensitive areas such as on state lands. To allow a "free for all" by opening all areas – no matter how sensitive – to oil and gas development, which appears to be the new Trump administration approach, does not represent balance.

As an engineer and a member of an Alyeska Pipeline advisory committee, I am very familiar with the [Trans-Alaska Pipeline System] (TAPS). Based on engineering and economic studies that have been presented to state courts during litigation, TAPS is able to continue operating for the next half-century just with known reserves, i.e., not including additional oil from the Arctic Refuge. Recent major oil finds by Armstrong at Nanushuk and ConocoPhillips at Willow in the Greater Mooses Tooth Unit will extend TAPS' lifetime even longer. These finds each may be more than 100,000 barrels per day.

One difference between HJR 5 from previous resolutions passed by the state legislature is that, with the Trump administration, we might have an Environmental Protection Agency which is greatly scaled back. Currently EPA provides grants to Alaska [Department of Environmental Conservation] (DEC), including for spill prevention and response, and those grants have been halted as of this week. I don't believe anyone in this room supports moving forward with development in the

Arctic Refuge without environmental controls, but that is what we may have with the Trump administration and a state without sufficient revenues. As we all know, responding to spills on the North Slope is very expensive.

Because of the sensitivity of the coastal plain, the lack of need for this oil to maintain TAPS operations, the Trump administration's hostility to environmental concerns which could result in serious impacts from major spills including for subsistence, I ask those legislators who have previously supported similar resolutions to reconsider their support. For those legislators voting on such a resolution for the first time, I urge you not to support HJR 5.

[11:47:07 AM](#)

KATIE LLOYD said she understands the need for job opportunities in Alaska but also believes that "we have to be balanced." She asserted that with unrenowable resources come unrenowable jobs, and renowable jobs and renowable energy are the future of Alaska. She stated her family enjoys hunting and fishing, and offered that caribou, not just oil, is an important resource. She opined that the coastal wildlife refuge is precious and fragile, and urged the committee not to support HJR 5.

[11:49:23 AM](#)

RONALD YARNELL, All About Adventure, said he has led wilderness trips in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) since 1976, taking hundreds of people from all over the world across the ANWR coastal plain. He attested that ANWR is a unique, national treasure and questioned the wisdom of opening the area to oil development with today's glut of oil on the market. He alleged that there are other far less controversial areas, which offer excellent prospects for oil development, such as the Smith Bay area west of Prudhoe Bay. He mentioned the variety of wildlife in ANWR: tens of thousands of caribou crossing the Hula Hula, Okpilik, Jago, and Aichilik Rivers; bands of muskoxen wintering on the plains; wolves; grizzly bears; polar bears; and other predators that follow the caribou herds. He claimed that float trips across the coastal plain will be bisected by roads, pipelines, ports, and other industrial development. He urged the committee not to support HJR 5.

[11:52:09 AM](#)

MR. YARNELL, in response to Representative Josephson, confirmed that he was based out of Fairbanks and has been leading trips in ANWR since 1976. He said the name of his company is "All About Adventure." He added that he sold the Alaska part of his business to Arctic Wild in 1999 but continues to lead trips for Arctic Wild.

[11:53:06 AM](#)

LYNN LARSON said she is a retired secondary school teacher and an artist whose subject matter is ANWR. She asked the committee not to support any legislation that opens the 1002 area to oil and gas development. She related that in 1989 she rafted the Hula Hula River in ANWR and the 1002 area. Although she had no preconceived notions beforehand about the area, whether it should be protected or developed, her experience made her "a passionate protector of the Arctic Refuge, in particular the coastal plain." She claimed that the image she had of the coastal plain from the [Atlantic Richfield Company] (ARCO) brochures was of a gray, ugly, barren wasteland when, in fact, "it is stunningly beautiful." She stated that she has spent over 140 days in ANWR, including 30 in the 1002 area, hiking, rafting, painting, and experiencing "one of the planet's last great wildernesses." She lamented that many of the people making decisions regarding the 1002 area have not spent time there and, from her experience, most people who spend time there want the area protected. She added that the 1002 area is an important calving area for the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON asked if there has been any discussion, among those opposing the development of ANWR, about allowing exploration to define "what's there." He asked, secondly, if the testifier was aware of any discussion of compromise, that is, after the resource is developed, the area might become part of the wilderness south of ANWR.

MS. LARSON responded that in her opinion, "a compromise has already been made." She reiterated that she would like to see the 1002 area remain wilderness.

[11:57:50 AM](#)

MIKE STERLING testified to ask the committee to oppose HJR 5 because of the value of ANWR as wilderness, which should be protected for future generations.

[11:58:28 AM](#)

HEATHER MIRCZAK said she is a high school teacher who came to Alaska in 2014. She claimed that the Arctic is what brought her to Alaska and keeps her coming back. She maintained she was "absolutely blown away" to experience a place so wild, open, and untouched. She offered that the Arctic, as wilderness, is a unique and amazing resource that is as valuable as oil; can't be replaced; and brings people and jobs to the state.

[12:00:50 PM](#)

BERNADETTE DEMIENTIEFF, Executive Director, Gwich'in Steering Committee, said she represents 8,000-plus Gwich'in and asked the committee to protect ANWR and the Gwich'in way of life. She stated that the ANWR coastal plain is a special place and asked the committee to "protect the heart of Alaska." She maintained the Porcupine Caribou Herd is the last known wild herd that is still healthy in numbers; all the other herds are declining rapidly. She alleged that drilling in the Arctic refuge would harm the Gwich'in, and "we deserve to protect what keeps us alive and well."

[12:02:38 PM](#)

PRINCESS LUCAJ testified that the [Gwich'in] name for ANWR means "the sacred place where life begins." She described the "balance of life" in ANWR and charged the committee members to "make decisions that are sound, that are going to ensure that these critical, last remaining, intact ecosystems on our beautiful mother earth remain protected." She opined that people are going to have to return to simpler ways of living and being. She maintained that as we use resources for our survival, we have a responsibility to ensure clean air and water.

[12:04:54 PM](#)

JESSICA GIRARD, Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC), proclaimed that NAEC stands in solidarity with the Gwich'in and their request for protection of "this sacred area." She reminded the committee of the damages that are occurring to the Arctic at a dramatic rate as a result of climate change, which she contended is caused by oil and gas production, development, and use. She asserted that by the time a pipeline is completed, connected to the TAPS, and moving oil to market, "we should be

off fossil fuels." She added, "We need to justly transition to renewable energy." She opined, "We, as a state and as a nation, have taken enough away from indigenous cultures, and it is time that we leave things so that they can remain intact." She added her belief that the Porcupine Caribou Herd keep the culture of the Gwich'in people alive.

[12:06:42 PM](#)

SHERRY LEWIS, President, Arctic Audubon Society, said that ANWR has been of special interest to the Arctic Audubon Society for many years because of the large migration of birds to the coastal plain to have their young. She stated that ANWR is special and unique. She mentioned the diminishing wilderness in the Lower 48 and offered that ANWR is a complete, intact ecosystem, which needs to be preserved.

[12:08:21 PM](#)

ANNE DAERPINGHAUS testified that she is a nurse, who is married to a geologist, and she has lived in Fairbanks since 1993. She stated she is looking to the committee for vision and leadership in moving away from a fossil fuel-based economy to a sustainable, diversified economy for Alaska. She opined that ANWR is a huge draw for tourism and a treasure "for all people of all times." She urged the committee to "take the long view" and act now to value, protect, and preserve this irreplaceable resource.

[12:09:18 PM](#)

MIKE MUSICK said that he has been a resident of Interior Alaska since before statehood. He offered his concern for his grandchildren and their children, and stated his belief that "it is not possible to continue to burn fossil fuels and leave a habitable planet." He emphasized the need to transition to renewables, conservation, and efficiency, and cited other countries that have done so successfully. He said that in regard to the two amendments brought to committee, there was no mention of the Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation (KIC) data that has already been gathered on oil resources in ANWR, and he opined, "I don't think we need to drill more."

[12:11:14 PM](#)

PAMELA MILLER identified herself as a former biologist who has spent time in ANWR, both as a wilderness guide and as someone

who has evaluated the impacts of oil development at Prudhoe Bay and monitored seismic exploration in the ANWR coastal plain. She said she is concerned about the impacts of oil development, especially seismic impacts. She expressed a need for Alaska to diversify away from fossil fuels and emphasized the importance of preserving the wilderness, Alaska Native cultural ties, and Native subsistence. She said there would be great impacts to the tundra of the refuge and unknown impacts to its wildlife, "without any great results." She added that she would provide a 2,000-acre map that shows more realistically the extent of the oil and gas development areas.

[12:13:43 PM](#)

NADIA BACON testified that she has lived in Fairbanks for over 18 years. She compared Alaska to Central Europe, her homeland, and stated that although tourism and the beauty of landscape are important in Central Europe, there is no wilderness area left in Central Europe like northern Alaska. She claimed that ANWR is a valuable resource. She urged the committee to take a long-term outlook, not just for the next five years but the next 20 years, and consider what the destruction of open, natural landscape would mean.

[12:16:42 PM](#)

ELLEN MITCHELL identified herself as a University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) student, born and raised in Alaska. She declared her appreciation of trees, which provide her oxygen, and the state of Alaska, which provides her food, water, shelter, and entertainment. She claimed that her desire to preserve ANWR was a selfish interest, but also a conservative interest. She defined conservative as conserving the current values, laws, and environment, and maintained that closing ANWR to drilling is in keeping with conserving those values. She conceded the importance of maintaining Alaska's economy, but contended that oil and gas are non-renewable resources and will be depleted eventually. She offered her support of developing sustainable resources, which would provide just as many jobs and energy as oil and gas. She expressed her concern for the impact of climate change and of oil and gas depletion on Alaskans.

[12:18:45 PM](#)

ENEI BEGAYE PETER, Native Movement, said that she is Navajo, married into the Gwich'in Nation, and the mother of three daughters. She urged the committee to oppose HJR 5 to protect

ANWR, because it is a sacred place; it is calving ground for caribou that sustains the Gwich'in; and climate change demands transition away from fossil fuel extraction. She claimed that oil and gas drilling impacts not only the climate, but "our land, our water, and our future." She added that the fiscal budget for the state demands that Alaska transition away from a fossil fuel economy, and she emphasized the need to diversify for the good of all Alaskans.

[12:21:20 PM](#)

MISTY NICKOLI maintained that [TAPS] does not employ as many Alaskans as it does out-of-state workers, so it is not bringing as much money back to Alaska's economy as it should. She stated that oil [extraction] is not a sustainable industry but is a shorted-sighted solution to the current budget deficit. She opined it would lead to long-term budget hardships caused by adverse environmental impacts and the potential reduction of the sustainable industry - tourism - when oil spills occur.

[12:23:20 PM](#)

ODIN MILLER testified that he is a graduate student at UAF studying cultural anthropology. He urged the committee to consider the impact of oil development on the Porcupine Caribou Herd. He claimed that reindeer and caribou have been an invaluable subsistence and cultural resource throughout the history of human habitation of the Arctic and subarctic; many northern Alaska communities still rely on them. He said that caribou are already experiencing stress due to climate change, and many herds are declining. He also mentioned reports from the Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB) residents regarding impacts of the road to the Red Dog Mine on the migration pattern of the Western Arctic Herd. He asked the committee to "please look at our state's long-term economic picture and not just the next decade or two." He went on to say, if protected, caribou provide primary wealth for Alaska in perpetuity. He speculated that the oil will be depleted, and he offered his hope that the state's recent economic troubles "have taught us something about the long-term shortcomings of pursuing a boom-bust economic strategy."

[12:26:04 PM](#)

ROSE OHARA stated that she is a special education elementary school teacher. She offered her opposition to opening ANWR to development in solidarity with the Native population of the

region because of the effects it would have on their cultural, spiritual, and sustainable resources. She added that she also opposes HJR 5 because of the potential impact it would have on an irreplaceable, wild place - one that is important for all Alaskans and the health of the entire planet.

[12:26:52 PM](#)

LOIS BARGER, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, said that becoming a parent has "magnified" her opposition to drilling in the 1002 area. She urged the committee to "take the long-range view" and consider what Alaska's environment and economy will look like in 40 years. She opined that "continuing with gas development, especially in [the] 1002 area, is looking backward and not forward."

[12:28:15 PM](#)

MARTHA RAYNOLDS identified herself as a biologist who specializes in Arctic ecosystems. She said she studied the seismic exploration in ANWR in the mid-'80s and contended that seismic exploration today, which is more intense than in the '80s, would definitely have impacts on the vegetation of ANWR and specifically on the coastal plain where the caribou calve. She maintained that HJR 5 would be symbolic, since the oil industry is currently focused on a new find west of the Colville River in the National Petroleum Reserve, Alaska (NPRA). She added that the attempt to open ANWR gives a poor impression of Alaska in light of new finds and the lack of support from the Lower 48.

[12:30:37 PM](#)

ALEXANDER GUDSCHINSKY expressed his concerns: it would be difficult to limit oil drilling in ANWR to the very small area proposed; there are large oil finds in uncontested lands; and Alaska natural gas is not competitive in today's market. He claimed oil should be extracted from land that is available and not "in conflict" and ANWR is irreplaceable.

[12:32:08 PM](#)

BARBARA JACKSON said that as a resident of Alaska for over 35 years, her experience kayaking in ANWR has "helped to define me as the Alaskan that I am." She maintained that regardless of the wealth and jobs provided by resource development, wilderness

is "another type of wealth" that sustains Alaskans. For that reason, she concluded, ANWR must be protected, not developed.

[12:33:44 PM](#)

BERNIE HOFFMAN reported that she does not support HJR 5. She maintained that climate change is "real" and Alaskans are experiencing its impact. She offered her support of developing renewable energy resources and not continuing "on the path toward the precipice." She stated Alaskans value clean air and water and "places to go for spirituality."

[12:35:32 PM](#)

EDMUND GEINS testified that he worked in the environmental consulting business and is familiar with oil and gas development on the North Slope. He offered his belief that with the new [federal] administration and the threat of weakened environmental regulations, there is no guarantee that oil and gas can be developed environmentally responsibly. He declared the ANWR 1002 area to be one of unparalleled natural and cultural resources. He characterized Alaska's dependency on oil and gas development as "an addiction," which needs to be changed through diversification. He said the cyclical "boom and bust" that Alaska experiences is untenable for the future of Alaska. He urged the legislature to oppose any oil and gas development in ANWR as, in his opinion, the risks and costs are too great. He added that "change" is going to come to Alaska and the world, and the state now has an opportunity to make those changes the easy way, through actions like opposing HJR 5.

[12:37:31 PM](#)

JENNIFER NU related that a 15-day kayak trip through ANWR gave her the opportunity to experience one of the world's last great wilderness areas. She claimed that no other area is comparable for diversity, clean water, and wildlife. She said that ANWR's intact ecosystems provide clean water, vegetation, and food security to local communities, as well as help mitigate the effects of a changing climate. She added that the land in ANWR is meant to be a resource for future generations, and the value and economic potential of the above-ground resources is unknown. She mentioned ANWR lands are indigenous sacred places and are important for the long-term well-being of the Gwich'in. She advocated for Alaska to pursue new, innovative ways to invest in the economy and touted the protection of ANWR as a long-term investment in Alaska's future.

12:39:42 PM

ROBERT THOMPSON mentioned that Kaktovik borders ANWR. He stated that the area being discussed for oil and gas development represents 5 percent or less of the land available to the oil industry in the North Slope, and there are other more productive areas to consider. He maintained that he does his subsistence hunting in ANWR and does not know if he will be able to continue if it is opened to development. He relayed his concern for the loss of muskox due to climate change. He reminded the committee that ANWR is a wildlife refuge and opined that this last 5 percent of North Slope land should be protected.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON asked if residents of Arctic Village generally oppose Arctic drilling and residents of Kaktovik generally support it.

MR. THOMPSON responded there have been several polls. He mentioned a petition with 70 signatures against drilling in ANWR; a poll which Senator Lisa Murkowski cited in Congress to support drilling, but Mr. Thompson didn't feel people in opposition had been consulted; a poll by Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), a for-profit corporation with business affiliations with the oil industry; and a poll by Arctic Voices, a nonprofit human rights/environmental organization.

12:45:13 PM

RUTH WOOD asked the committee to introduce a committee substitute that opposes drilling in the 1002 area. She asked that the amendments to HJR 5, citing 46 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 27 billion barrels of oil, not be released to the public unless the source of the information is identified. She referred to language in HJR 5, page 2, lines 8-11, which states the U.S. depends on oil produced by hostile foreign nations, and reminded the committee that the U.S. is a net exporter of oil and is not dependent on any foreign nations. She referred to language in HJR 5, page 3, line 6, which says the coastal plain makes up less than 8 percent of ANWR. She conceded that was true, since the area includes the Brooks Range, but offered her belief that this is the last area of the coast of Alaska that is not open for drilling and asked that HJR 5 reflect that information. She said HJR 5 references President Barak Obama withdrawing land from offshore oil and gas drilling but makes no mention of the additional leases that have been provided in NPRA. She stated that she suspects HJR 5 to be a

"retread" of a previous resolution and asserted that it should not be passed with incorrect or unsubstantiated facts. She recommended HJR 5 and the amendments be withdrawn, updated with the correct information and supporting evidence, or "better yet" withdrawn in favor of a resolution stating the people of Alaska do not want oil and gas development in the refuge.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON confirmed that President Obama did set aside parts of the area near Teshekpuk Lake and NPRA, and the implication that President Obama was anti-oil was, in his opinion, dubious. He also confirmed President Obama was concerned with off-shore drilling. He stated that he shared Ms. Wood's concerns regarding off-shore drilling and reported that he has raised that concern in previous resolutions and on the House floor multiple times. He confirmed that HJR 5 is about Arctic drilling and offered that he respects Ms. Wood's position on that.

MS. WOOD opined, "If you give one statement that ... there's no oil available, you need to include statements that there is oil available."

[12:50:00 PM](#)

JOHN STRASENBURGH said he has recreated in ANWR many times and the experiences have been some of the most memorable and inspirational of his life. He declared it was a magnificent wilderness and the coastal plain, particularly the 1002 area, is integral to ANWR. He reported that the biological significance of the 1002 area for caribou and other wildlife is well-documented and readily apparent. He opined that oil and gas exploration would widely and significantly alter the biological and ecological processes of the area and would alter the wilderness experience through helicopter noise and scars on the land. He claimed that the notion of development being limited to 2,000 acres is a political ploy, since the 2,000 acres would not be contiguous. He emphasized that the impacts of development would be significant, widespread, and unacceptable, and he agreed with Ms. Wood's assessment that the resolution should be accurate for legitimacy.

[12:53:11 PM](#)

RICHIE MUSICK, a retired biology teacher, claimed the 1002 land to be a special and unique intact tundra ecosystem. She mentioned that Canada has established a national park across the border from ANWR to protect its tundra ecosystem. She advised

against "selling" the area for short-term profit, as most countries are trying to move away from oil. She urged the committee members to consider the special properties of the 1002 land and to preserve it for the future.

[12:54:56 PM](#)

BYRON CHARLES testified that he helped build the original pipeline in Alaska. He added that the job opportunities were good for him and many others. He relayed his work experience with the veneer plant in Ketchikan and said that building a pipeline would create employment opportunities for Alaskan youth in skilled trade jobs. He added that he only asks that federal regulations, guidelines, and policies be respected.

[12:58:11 PM](#)

SARAH ERKMANN, Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA), paraphrased from the following written testimony [original punctuation provided]:

My name is Sarah Erkmann, and I am the external affairs manager for the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, commonly referred to as AOGA. AOGA is a professional trade association whose mission is to foster the long-term viability of the oil and gas industry for the benefit of all Alaskans. Our members have been exploring, developing, producing, transporting, and refining Alaska's abundant natural resources in the arctic for more than 40 years. AOGA is proud of the industry's partnership with the people of Alaska, providing revenue to the state, economic opportunities, and infrastructure to the arctic region.

AOGA supports HJR5 for the opportunity it brings for all Alaskans, including economic opportunities. Responsible development in the 1002 area would provide an invaluable boost to America's energy security and bring much-needed economic growth to Alaska, at a time when we need it most. Our pipeline also desperately needs the new oil ANWR could provide.

ANWR has incredible potential for oil and gas, more than 10 billion barrels by some government estimates. For reference, The Trans Alaska Pipeline has moved

just more than 17 billion barrels of oil since start up, so the resource is truly massive.

A project the size and scope of ANWR would create thousands of high-paying jobs for Alaskans. With an industry-wide Alaska hire rate of about 70 percent, these family-sustaining job[s] would go mostly to Alaska residents, who would spend their wages in our local communities, boosting both the State and local economies.

In addition, with the recent development of the Point Thomson field just to the west of ANWR, ANWR is closer than ever to existing infrastructure, and could feed into TAPS with a much smaller footprint than in years past.

Last but not least, polls of Alaskans' attitudes about ANWR continually show the vast majority of Alaskans support opening a small portion of ANWR to oil and gas development: 70 percent of Alaskans support it, and have for decades. We thank you for introducing a resolution that reflects most Alaskans' desires, and offer our whole-hearted support.

[1:01:01 PM](#)

MARY SHIELDS testified that Alaskans are the caretakers of the valuable northeast corner of the state, and she opined that even though the area is valuable for the oil, it is more valuable for the integrity of ANWR. She cited the unrest in the world and offered the importance of a quiet place. She asked the committee members to protect ANWR by not allowing drilling in the 1002 area and to preserve ANWR as a refuge for future generations.

[1:02:37 PM](#)

CHAIR WESTLAKE closed public testimony on HJR 5.

[1:03:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK moved to report HJR5, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[1:03:59 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:03 p.m. to 1:04 p.m.

[1:04:10 PM](#)

There being no objection, CSHJR 5(AET) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism.

[1:04:17 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:04 p.m.

[1:04:50 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.