

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/20/23

Referred: Today's Calendar

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES PATKOTAK, Rauscher, Fields, Tomaszewski, Stapp, Cronk, Carpenter, Prax, McKay, Saddler, Vance, D.Johnson, Sumner, Ruffridge, Tilton, C.Johnson, Edgmon, McCabe, McCormick, Coulombe, Foster, Shaw, Schrage, Stutes, Galvin, Allard, Ortiz, Groh, Eastman, Josephson

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting oil and gas leasing and development within the National Petroleum Reserve**
2 **in Alaska; and urging President Biden and the United States Department of the Interior**
3 **to approve the Willow Master Development Plan.**

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

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1923, President Warren G. Harding issued an Executive Order
6 establishing Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 on the North Slope region to provide a potential
7 supply of oil for the United States Navy; and

8 **WHEREAS** 42 U.S.C. 6501 (Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976)
9 redesignated Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 as the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska
10 and transferred responsibility for its administration to the Secretary of the Interior; and

11 **WHEREAS** the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska encompasses 23,500,000
12 acres, with boundaries extending south from Icy Cape to the drainage divide of the Brooks
13 Range, then following the divide eastward to 156 degrees west longitude, then north to the
14 Colville River, and following the Colville River downstream to its mouth; and

15 **WHEREAS** the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska falls entirely within the

1 boundary of the North Slope Borough and includes the communities of Anaktuvuk Pass,
2 Atkasuk, Nuiqsut, Utqiagvik, and Wainwright; and

3 **WHEREAS**, in 2017, the United States Geological Survey estimated there to be
4 8,700,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil and 25,000,000,000,000 cubic feet of recoverable gas
5 reserves in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska; and

6 **WHEREAS** the 2020 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan
7 and Environmental Impact Statement estimates potential annual government revenue,
8 including local, state, and federal taxes and royalties, of \$730,000,000 to \$4,750,000,000 from
9 oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska; and

10 **WHEREAS** the 2020 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan
11 and Environmental Impact Statement estimates that the exploration, development, and
12 production of oil and gas in the reserve could generate 3,600 direct jobs and 2,750 indirect
13 jobs annually over a period of 30 years; and

14 **WHEREAS** the Willow oil and gas prospect, known as the Willow project, is located
15 in the Bear Tooth Unit of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and would be the
16 farthest-west producing field on the North Slope; and

17 **WHEREAS** the Willow project would tap into reserves of an estimated 600,000,000
18 barrels of oil and, at peak production, produce 180,000 barrels a day; and

19 **WHEREAS** the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Willow
20 Master Development Plan was developed over multiple years through a rigorous process with
21 significant involvement by and support from local communities and Alaska Native entities
22 and was specifically designed to protect surface values and the Inupiat way of life; and

23 **WHEREAS**, on February 1, 2023, the United States Department of the Interior
24 released its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Willow project,
25 which demonstrates that the project is legally sufficient and environmentally sound; and

26 **WHEREAS** the Inupiat people are the first and rightful stewards of the land on which
27 the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska sits, and take seriously the need for careful and
28 balanced stewardship; and

29 **WHEREAS** the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the Inupiat Community of the
30 Arctic Slope, the North Slope Borough, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Alaska Native
31 Village Corporation Association, the ANCSA Regional Association, the City of Utqiagvik,

1 the City of Wainwright, the City of Atqasuk, and the Kuukpik Corporation are all united in
2 support of the Willow project; and

3 **WHEREAS** the Willow project has received the support of labor unions and trade
4 groups, including the Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council, the Alaska Support Industry
5 Alliance, the Alaska AFL-CIO, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers'
6 International Union of North America, the National Association of Manufacturers, the North
7 America's Building Trades Unions, and the Alaska Chamber of Commerce; and

8 **WHEREAS** Representative Mary Peltola, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Senator Dan
9 Sullivan, the Alaska delegation in Congress, unanimously support approval of the Willow
10 project; and

11 **WHEREAS** state royalties from oil and gas development in the National Petroleum
12 Reserve in Alaska are allocated to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Impact
13 Mitigation Fund, which is used to provide the local communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atqasuk,
14 Nuiqsut, Wainwright, Utqiagvik, and the North Slope Borough with grants to mitigate
15 impacts related to oil and gas development; and

16 **WHEREAS** oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska
17 would strengthen national security and provide long-lasting benefits to the national economy
18 by creating thousands of jobs nationwide, generating billions of dollars in government
19 revenue, providing affordable energy to American consumers, and decreasing dependence on
20 foreign energy; and

21 **WHEREAS** resource development in the state has benefited rural communities by
22 bringing family-supporting jobs and wages, increased educational opportunities, safe water
23 and wastewater facilities, and expanded health care services to those communities; and

24 **WHEREAS**, because of resource development, compared with the national average,
25 rural areas of the state experienced greater increases in life expectancy between 1980 and
26 2014 in locations where resource development activities, including oil and gas development,
27 mining, and fisheries operations, have occurred; and

28 **WHEREAS** safe and responsible oil and gas exploration, development, and
29 production has been demonstrated by over 50 years of activity on the North Slope region
30 without adverse effects on the environment or wildlife populations; and

31 **WHEREAS** the state's leadership in the nation's energy future includes robust support

1 for the development and implementation of renewable energy systems and sources to ensure
 2 that cost-effective energy and power are provided to communities and individuals in the state;
 3 and

4 **WHEREAS** responsible resource development today equips communities in the state
 5 to make investments in technology and infrastructure to support the use of renewable sources
 6 of energy and power; and

7 **WHEREAS** the Willow project is an important part of a diverse energy future for the
 8 state and the nation;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
 10 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, to maximize the area available for
 11 oil and gas leasing and development within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska while
 12 conserving and protecting valued fish, wildlife, subsistence, and cultural resources; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges President Biden and
 14 the United States Department of the Interior to move forward with final approval of the
 15 Willow project by selecting the preferred Alternative E plan, which allows three drill sites, the
 16 minimum for the project to remain economically viable; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that a further delay in approval or construction of the
 18 Willow project undermines the values and benefits of the project to the state and its residents
 19 and is not in the public interest; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
 21 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, when considering management
 22 activities related to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, to take into account the long
 23 history of safe and responsible oil and gas development on the North Slope region and the
 24 enormous benefits that development of oil and gas resources in the National Petroleum
 25 Reserve in Alaska would bring to local communities, tribal governments, the state, and the
 26 nation.

27 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President
 28 of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and
 29 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the
 30 Interior; the Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning, Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S.
 31 Department of the Interior; Steve Cohn, Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

- 1 U.S. Department of the Interior; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan
- 2 Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of
- 3 the Alaska delegation in Congress.