

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 2/10/23

Referred: Resources

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 Atqasuk, 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 Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the Inupiat Community of the
27 Arctic Slope, the North Slope Borough, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Alaska Native
28 Village Corporation Association, the ANCSA Regional Association, the City of Utqiagvik,
29 the City of Wainwright, the City of Atqasuk, and the Kuukpik Corporation are all united in
30 support of the Willow project; and

31 **WHEREAS** the Willow project has received the support of labor unions and trade

1 groups, including the Alaska Petroleum Joint Crafts Council, the Alaska Support Industry
2 Alliance, the Alaska AFL-CIO, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers'
3 International Union of North America, the National Association of Manufacturers, the North
4 America's Building Trades Unions, and the Alaska Chamber of Commerce; and

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

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

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

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

21 **WHEREAS**, because of resource development, compared with the national average,
22 rural areas of the state experienced greater increases in life expectancy between 1980 and
23 2014 in locations where resource development activities, including oil and gas development,
24 mining, and fisheries operations, have occurred; and

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

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

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

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

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
9 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, when considering management
10 activities related to the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, to take into account the long
11 history of safe and responsible oil and gas development on the North Slope region and the
12 enormous benefits that development of oil and gas resources in the National Petroleum
13 Reserve in Alaska would bring to local communities, tribal governments, the state, and the
14 nation.

15 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President
16 of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and
17 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the
18 Interior; the Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning, Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S.
19 Department of the Interior; Steve Cohn, Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management,
20 U.S. Department of the Interior; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan
21 Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of
22 the Alaska delegation in Congress.