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ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE * NATIVE VILLAGE OF POINT HOPE

While Shell's Spill Spreads in the North Sea the Obama Administration Sanctions Drilling in the Arctic Ocean

*Today's draft analysis ignores 240,000 comments to address missing scientific information
essential to leasing decisions*

WASHINGTON – Today, the Bureau of Ocean Energy, Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) released a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Chukchi Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 193, held in February 2008. While Shell scrambles to resolve oil gushing in the North Sea the Obama administration sanctions risky and aggressive drilling in America's Arctic Ocean. What's more, the administration has ignored the people who rely on the Arctic Ocean as well as the 240,000 people who commented in opposition – out of 360,000 received.

Following is a statement from Caroline Cannon, President, Native Village of Point Hope: "Point Hope, Alaska is the oldest settlement in North America. The cultural and subsistence traditions of Point Hope are inextricably linked to the health of the Arctic ecosystem and the resources of our traditional lands and waters. I am haunted by the worry that an oil spill will occur in our waters. Shell's proposed oil and gas activities affect the very foundations of who we are as individuals and as a people. We have a right to life, to physical integrity, to security, and the right to enjoy the benefits of our culture. To risk our people for the profit of oil companies is heartbreaking."

Following is a statement from Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League: "The government's final draft of an environmental analysis of the 2008 lease sale in the Arctic's Chukchi Sea once again fails to take into account crucial gaps in information about this pristine, abundant marine environment. In the final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Chukchi Lease Sale 193 that was released today, the Bureau of Energy Management and Regulatory Enforcement (BOEMRE) determined 'that while many statements of incomplete or unavailable information were broadly relevant to the important issues at hand, none were essential for a reasoned choice among alternatives.' The draft SEIS concludes that hundreds of pieces of missing information are not necessary before moving forward on Chukchi Sea oil leases.

Today's announcement ignores the U.S. Geological Survey's Arctic Science Initiative which was released in June and exposed the huge gaps in data in the Arctic Ocean – from simple species counts of marine mammals such as the threatened polar bear and the endangered bowhead whale to



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information about currents and tidal systems – that must be filled before any decisions about drilling in the Arctic Ocean can be made. Similarly, today’s announcement flies in the face of information from experts such as those at National Marine Fisheries Service, who recommended that more information on the effects of oil and gas activities on marine life must be researched before proceeding.

Alaska Wilderness League calls on Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to hold off on any final decisions about drilling in the Arctic Ocean until a plan is in place to gather the basic essential information about this imperiled place, and oil spill response technology for the Arctic is developed and proven.”

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