



*Your Land.
Your Voice.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2011

Contact: Betsy Beardsley
907-830-0184 or betsy@alaskawild.org

NATIVE VILLAGE OF POINT HOPE

Point Hope, AK to Obama: Stop Bad Arctic Drilling Decisions and Protect our Home

Record of decision affirms Chukchi Lease Sale 193, despite missing science and lack of oil spill response

Statement from Caroline Cannon, President, Native Village of Point Hope:

“With today’s decision to finalize an illegal lease sale in waters that have been my people’s traditional hunting grounds for thousands of years, President Obama tells the Inupiat people of Alaska’s Arctic coast that our culture is disposable. Because without adequate information about the ways in which the Chukchi Sea’s marine ecosystem functions and without a proven plan to clean up an oil spill in this ice-covered, extreme environment, oil drilling in our Arctic waters will spell disaster for our survival as a people.

Point Hope is known to be the oldest continuously inhabited village in North America. The population varies from 800 to 900 community members depending on the season. We rely on subsistence resources such as bowhead whale, beluga, seal, polar bear, fish, caribou, ducks and geese. 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.

My Inupiaq traditions and subsistence way of life are precious to me and my community. Our ocean is our garden; it is what sustains us physically and spiritually as individuals and as community members. This way of life is what I hope to pass onto my 25 grandchildren.

I have traveled to Washington, D.C. many times on behalf of my community to bring this message to decision makers in the Obama administration. Today’s decision tells me that my words fell on deaf ears. I can only hope that as President Obama considers Shell Oil’s plans to drill six wells in the Chukchi Sea next summer, that he will finally hear our plea to protect our Arctic home.

I know that we deserve to be respected and heard not just as individuals or as community members but as a sovereign government to whom the United States owes a trust responsibility. We expect the Obama administration to honor this tradition and work cooperatively with communities in order to preserve our traditional way of life.



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197

The proposed oil and gas activities affect not simply our ability to feed ourselves and others in the community, or the cultural traditions around our subsistence activities, or just our enjoyment of those activities but they 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. For this, we will fight. Our culture can never be bought or repaired with money. It is priceless.”

#



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197