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Shell bows out of Arctic drilling for 2013

WASHINGTON – Shell Oil Company announced today that it would not drill in the Arctic in 2013 to “prepare equipment and plans for a resumption of activity at a later stage.” In 2012, Shell drilled top holes on two wells in the Beaufort and Chukchi, but failed to drill into oil bearing formations. Today’s announcement comes on the heels of an assessment by the Coast Guard that one of Shell’s drill rigs, the *Noble Discoverer*, had 16 safety and environmental violations. And, Shell’s failed 2012 drilling program ended with its other drill rig, the *Kulluk*, running aground off of Alaska’s Kodiak Island at the end of 2012.

Statement by Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

“Today’s announcement from Shell Oil Company is no surprise. Shell’s failed 2012 drilling program proved to the nation and to the world that no oil company is ready to drill in the Arctic. From grounding both of its drilling rigs in 2012 to having its oil spill containment dome ‘crushed like a beer can’ in the calm waters of Washington state, Shell has shown that it cannot be trusted to safely drill in America’s Arctic Ocean.

This pause is a real opportunity for President Obama to revisit his position on Arctic Ocean drilling. If the top oil company in the world has failed in its quest to drill in the harsh and unpredictable conditions in the Arctic, it is time to assess whether any oil company can safely drill in the Arctic Ocean. With no infrastructure or ability to clean up an oil spill in ice and Shell’s continual laundry lists of mishaps and failures, it is a no brainer to suspend drilling in the Arctic. If President Obama truly wants to address his climate change legacy, saying no to Arctic Ocean drilling would be a huge first step.”

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