



*Your Land.
Your Voice.*

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Obama gives Shell the go-ahead for Arctic drilling

Conservationists say the fight is far from over

WASHINGTON – Today, the [Obama administration gave a conditional approval](#) of two Applications to Drill for Shell Oil to conduct exploratory drilling in America’s Arctic Ocean. These permits prohibit drilling into oil-bearing zones.

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

“President Obama and his administration made the wrong decision today for our Arctic and our climate. This decision puts the fate of the fragile Arctic Ocean, and our climate future, in the hands of Shell Oil. The Obama administration may have given Shell the go-ahead for risky and reckless drilling in the Arctic Ocean, but this is only the beginning. Whether or not Shell is successful in drilling this season, the fight is hardly over.

Shell has proven time and time again that they are incompetent and careless in pursuing drilling in America’s Arctic Ocean—right up to this latest announcement. In fact, Shell is heading to the Arctic without one of its primary ice breakers and its capping stack—leaving behind key equipment from its approved safety plans, thanks to damage caused after poor management on Shell’s watch. As we all remember, Shell’s mishaps in 2012 culminated with the *Kulluk*, its drilling rig, running aground near Sitkalidak Island, Alaska, and ending its season in China as scrap metal. The *Noble Discoverer* had 16 safety and environmental violations and slipped an anchor, nearly running aground, and caught fire at one point.

Just last week, Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) joined five other senators in introducing [legislation to stop drilling in the Arctic Ocean](#) because of the threats of climate change to the Arctic and to our nation as a whole. What’s more, hundreds of citizens banded together this past Saturday for a “Shell No” Day of Action. More than 20 events in 15 different states were held to protest Shell’s planned drilling in the Arctic. The millions of Americans that have come forward will not be silenced.

We can’t ignore the signs and impacts of climate change in the Arctic, or the impacts that an Arctic drilling program will have on our nation’s climate future. Arctic oil should not be produced and must stay in the ground to stay in line with what science tells us is necessary for a safe climate future. Key species like the beloved walrus are already impacted by the disappearance of Arctic ice and other long term impacts from climate change, and now they will be subjected to drilling and other disturbances from Shell’s drilling program.



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America's Arctic Ocean is home to our nation's entire population of polar bears. The Arctic Ocean is one of the most unique marine ecosystems in the world. Many of America's most beloved marine creatures thrive here, including whales, seals and countless birds."

About Alaska Wilderness League – Your Land. Your Voice.

Alaska Wilderness League's mission is to lead the effort to preserve Alaska's wilderness by engaging citizens, sharing resources, collaborating with other organizations, educating the public, and providing a courageous, constant and victorious voice for Alaska in the nation's capital. It is the only organization dedicated solely to the preservation of Alaska's wilderness in the nation's capital.

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