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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2016**

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President Obama, Prime Minister Trudeau outline Arctic protections

WASHINGTON – This morning President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau jointly announced a U.S.-Canada agreement to address clean energy and conservation.

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

“Today’s joint announcement from President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau shows the commitment of our nations to set bold standards for the management of our lands and waters and has the stage for a future in which our nation’s shared Arctic resources are managed under the strongest environmental ethic. The United States and Canada have a history of recognizing the shared responsibility of conservation between our borders, working together to protect areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This action shows that today’s leaders have a vision to continue this path forward in the face of the immediate threats to our lands and waters from the increasing effects of climate change and intense pressure for industrial development.

We are particularly thankful that today’s announcement reiterates the commitment from both nations to working directly with Indigenous partners, and specifically incorporating Indigenous science and traditional knowledge into decision making and building resilient communities. We further appreciate the strong recommitment to conservation and that future decisions will be made only when the highest safety standards and national and global climate environmental goals are met.

As the Arctic ice melts due to climate change, it has opened the way to increasing demands from commercial shipping, oil and gas development, and commercial fishing, while devastating wildlife habitat and the communities that live there. We look forward to working with the Obama administration to ensure that all future of the Arctic management decisions adhere to the goals set out today. The administration will have an important test of this with the release of its soon to be announced plan for future offshore oil and gas development. The Arctic should be taken off the table for development in this plan and the administration should place its management focus on future protections for this fragile marine ecosystem area and the lands that surround it.”

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