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### **Big Oil abandons Arctic leases**

WASHINGTON – Last night Jen Dlouhy from Bloomberg reported that Shell and ConocoPhillips, among others, have relinquished \$2.5 billion worth of oil and gas leases in the Arctic.

[According to Bloomberg](#), companies have relinquished 2.2 million acres of drilling rights in the Chukchi Sea -- nearly 80 percent of the leases they bought from the U.S. government in a 2008 auction. Oil companies spent more than \$2.6 billion snapping up 2.8 million acres in the Chukchi Sea during that sale, on top of previous purchases in the Beaufort Sea. And, Shell relinquished 274 Chukchi leases and dozens in the neighboring Beaufort Sea. Of the hundreds of leases, Shell will retain one lease in the Chukchi -- the site of last year's drilling -- to retain the rights to the data they collected last year.

#### **Statement from Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“Today’s news is further proof that no oil company should drill in America’s Arctic Ocean. With a high risk of a large oil spill, drilling in the Arctic is risky and irresponsible. Shell’s low point in the Arctic came when it wrecked the *Kulluk* drill rig off the coast of Kodiak Island, Alaska. Yet, Shell came back in 2015 only to abandon drilling for the ‘foreseeable future,’ as the oil giant didn’t find enough oil to warrant continued exploration.

Shell and ConocoPhillips decision to give up Arctic leases provides yet another reason for the Obama administration to take the lease sales out of the next 5-year program in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas.

The president has made a commitment to address climate change and protecting the Arctic must be part of that equation.”

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