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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 13, 2016**

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Obama announces U.S., Nordic Arctic protections

WASHINGTON – Today, the leaders of the United States, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden announced a statement to build on their commitments made in 2013 to protect the Arctic from climate change. The statement reflects the cooperation made in the Paris Agreement, which promotes clean energy cooperation, advances climate action globally, and promotes energy access.

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

“Today’s joint announcement from President Obama and Nordic countries shows the commitment of our nations to set bold standards to address climate change and builds on the agreements and commitments made in Paris. This statement complements President Obama’s and Prime Minister Trudeau’s announcement in March of this year.

We are thankful that today’s announcement reiterates taking steps to make science-based decisions and appreciates the strong recommitment to conservation for the Arctic. Additionally, we appreciate the countries’ support in adhering to the president’s climate commitments when future oil and gas development decisions are considered for the Arctic. 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 Arctic management decisions adhere to the goals set out today. And we look forward to hearing more about the new, specific, and measurable steps to help all people better understand and cope with the changing conditions in the Arctic. 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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