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Obama administration closes Arctic Ocean to future risky and reckless drilling

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, President Obama and his administration made an announcement about future drilling in America's Arctic Ocean. The 5-year leasing plan (2017-2022) that was announced today does not include the Beaufort and Chukchi Sea because of extensive public input and analysis of the best available scientific data. The Department's analysis identified significant risks to sensitive marine resources and communities from potential new leasing in the Arctic.

Statement by Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League

"Thank you to President Obama and his administration for protecting the Arctic Ocean from risky and reckless drilling. This decision prioritizes communities, wildlife, our climate and the pristine Arctic Ocean over Big Oil and its short-term interests.

President Obama and his administration had ample reason to stop these leases. Shell and ConocoPhillips, among others, have relinquished leases in the Arctic since the administration opened this comment period, [citing a laundry list of problems, including "environmental risks."](#) The risk of an oil spill is proven and it is significant – if oil was spilled it would have been disaster. As we've seen from the Deepwater Horizon and Exxon Valdez spills, there is no such thing as an effective clean up: once oil has been spilled, the battle has been lost.

With this decision, President Obama has honored our nation's joint agreement with the Nordic nations to set bold standards to address climate change, while also advancing the agreements and commitments made in Paris to keep the average global temperature rise below 2 degrees. Furthermore, this decision has honored the Tribal Government of Point Lay and the many other Alaska Natives from across the Arctic and Alaska who have asked this administration to protect their subsistence rights by saying no to Arctic drilling.

Thank you to President Obama and his administration for doing the right thing. This is an important step towards the strongest possible protections for America's Arctic Ocean and puts us on the right path to protect the Arctic from risky and reckless oil drilling."

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