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Obama uses executive authority, secures Arctic legacy with 125 million acres of protection

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, President Obama announced that he is withdrawing offshore areas in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans from future mineral extraction to protect these ecologically sensitive marine environments from the impacts of any future oil and gas exploration and development. The withdrawal areas announced today encompass 3.8 million acres in the north and mid-Atlantic Ocean off the East Coast and 115 million acres in the U.S. Arctic Ocean. Including previous presidential withdrawals, today's action protects nearly 125 million acres in the offshore Arctic from future oil and gas activity.

Statement by Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League

"Thank you to President Obama and his administration for permanently withdrawing 125 million acres in the Arctic Ocean from future oil and gas leasing. We thank President Obama for his bold action to proactively protect important ecological areas in the Arctic Ocean and builds on the administration's recent decision to drop leases sales in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas.

As we have seen, the Arctic Ocean is no place to drill. Shell and ConocoPhillips, among others, have relinquished leases in the Arctic in May 2016, in the midst of the 5-year plan comment planning period. The risk of an oil spill is proven and it is significant. 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.

Today is a victorious day for America's Arctic Ocean and for President Obama's environmental and climate legacy."

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