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Trump administration cannot dominate the Arctic

WASHINGTON – Today, President Donald Trump and his administration announced that it would release a Request for Information on Monday, July 3. This is the first step in a new 5-year planning process for the Outer Continental Shelf. The new plan would include potential leasing in the pristine Arctic Ocean, 125 million acres of which President Obama moved to protect in 2015 and 2016.

Statement from Kristen Miller, Alaska Wilderness League:

“President Trump and his administration can’t dominate the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic is fragile and remote with little to no infrastructure – the nearest Coast Guard station is 1,000-miles away. Simply put, it would be irresponsible to drill there.

Shell and others have already tried and failed in the Arctic. In 2015, Shell and ConocoPhillips relinquished billions of dollars in Arctic leases citing a laundry list of problems, including [environmental risks](#). Shell closed up its operations in the Arctic due to its own mistakes and mishaps. Shell’s drill ship engine went up in flames; its containment dome was [‘crushed like a beer can;’](#) and, its other [drilling rig ended up as scrap metal in Asia](#).

What’s more, a 5-year plan was just finalized where millions of Americans supported protecting our oceans, including the Arctic. There is no need to reopen a just-concluded process that carried broad public support.

Oil drilling is inherently risky. As we have seen time and time again, it is not a question of whether we will spill, but when. And the Deepwater Horizon and Exxon Valdez spills prove that there is no such thing as effective clean up; once oil has been spilled, the battle has been lost. The government—by its own estimate—has said that there is up to a 75 percent risk of a major spill if drilling were to move forward in the Chukchi Sea in Alaska.”

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