



*Your Land.
Your Voice.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 20, 2018

Contact: Corey Himrod

Tel: 202-266-0426 or Email: corey@alaskawild.org

Surprising no one, Trump administration to do no impact studies prior to Arctic Refuge leasing

BLM to pay private contractor more than \$1.6 million for an environmental impact statement based solely on existing data.

Washington – Today, the [Washington Post revealed](#) details of a [contract](#) between the Bureau of Land Management’s Alaska office (BLM) and Environmental Management and Planning Solutions (EMPS) dated April 18, 2018, to produce an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Trump administration’s Arctic Refuge coastal plain oil and gas leasing program. In reviewing the contract, several things become clear:

- The Trump administration will not gather any new data about the Arctic Refuge that could inform its decision on drilling location – the EIS will be based solely on existing data regardless of how incomplete it may be, even though an [earlier Interior Department report](#) noted several major science gaps.
- The EIS will be confined to 150 pages, and BLM will have less than three months to analyze potential drilling and development alternatives. And these limitations are being applied to what will be the most controversial drilling project in American history, [a project opposed by 70% of the American public](#). There is no precedent for such a speedy and hasty review on fragile public lands in the Alaskans Arctic or, for that matter, any similar scale project in the United States.
- The BLM will have complete control of the leasing process, leaving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – which manages the Arctic Refuge – out in the cold. FWS and its biologists and scientific expertise may have a consultation role, but all final decisions will be agreed to and made by BLM staff.

Statement by Adam Kolton, executive director, Alaska Wilderness League:

“We the American people are witnessing the stealing of one of our most iconic public lands happen right before our eyes. This is grand theft refuge, and it couldn’t be more clear that regardless of what this administration says publicly about ‘doing it right’. They want to do this quickly, no matter the impacts to wildlife or to the Alaska Native peoples whose subsistence depends on the Arctic Refuge.

More than 700,000 Americans weighed in opposing this rush to drill. So did the majority of those who turned out at public hearings. And the overwhelming majority of Americans do not want to sacrifice one of the wildest places left in the world for a speculative fix of oil for export to China and other countries.

During the tax bill debate, U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials testified regarding lease sales that ‘two would occur four to five years from now, with drilling being potentially as far out as 7-10 years.’ Now the Fish and Wildlife Service has been cut out of the process and the Trump administration is trying to advance a lease sale in the heart of the Arctic Refuge by next summer, years in advance of the promised timeline.



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197

Despite promises not to undercut environmental laws, the intent is clear: beat the clock and rush oil leasing before potential shifts in the political landscape can occur.”

###



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197