



*Your Land.  
Your Voice.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 8, 2019**

Contact: Corey Himrod

Tel: 202-266-0426 or Email: [corey@alaskawild.org](mailto:corey@alaskawild.org)

**Seismic exploration on hold for Arctic Refuge; polar bears breathe a sigh of relief**

Washington – [Media inquiries to the Department of the Interior have confirmed](#) that SAExploration will not be conducting seismic exploration on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge this winter during the 2018-2019 seismic season. We continue to await BLM's release of its Environmental Assessment of SAE's seismic proposal, to be followed by a 30-day public comment period.

The current proposal in front of BLM would utilize a 3-D technique that requires a dense grid of trails—the 1984-85 2-D trails on the coastal plain were approximately four miles apart, while 3-D seismic trails proposed by SAE would be a mere 660 feet apart. Seismic activities would involve convoys of 45-ton thumper trucks and caravans of bulldozers and trailers traveling over extensive areas of fragile tundra. These intrusive surface exploration activities—typically employed year after year throughout the life of an oil field—would cause severe and long-lasting damage to the Arctic Refuge.

More than 250,000 people have contacted SAExploration directly through emails or phone calls urging the company to abandon plans to conduct seismic on the coastal plain. And last month, [Indigenous advocates led by the Gwich'in Nation](#) hand-delivered boxes containing 100,000 of those letters directly to the company's office in Houston.

**Statement by Adam Kolton, Executive Director at Alaska Wilderness League:**

“Polar bears can rest a little easier in their dens this winter. The delay of seismic exploration is welcome news, and really owes itself to the myriad scientific and legal issues that have arisen as the Trump administration's reckless push to develop the coastal plain ran headlong into the priceless wildlife and wilderness values of the Arctic Refuge.

SAExploration's seismic proposal is the polar opposite of what drilling proponents promised during the tax bill process. Instead of a small footprint and a careful process, SAE's plan envisions a small army of industrial vehicles and equipment with a mandate to crisscross every square inch of the Refuge's biological heart, putting denning polar bears at risk and leaving lasting scars on the fragile tundra and its vegetation. And that's before a single drill rig has been placed or length of pipeline installed.

That BLM is still planning to move forward with a lease sale in 2019 without the seismic data it claimed it needed underscores that the administration's primary goal is to sell leases before a change in the political landscape. It's vital that Congress put the brakes on the administration's reckless rush to drill the wildest place left in America and instead restore protections for this iconic landscape.”

###



[www.AlaskaWild.org](http://www.AlaskaWild.org)

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