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Contact: Gwen Dobbs

Tel: 202-329-9295 or Email: gwen@alaskawild.org

Time to Take the Arctic off the Table to Drilling

WASHINGTON – Today, the Obama administration closed its second comment period for the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The proposed program includes 10 potential sales in the Gulf of Mexico and three potential sales off the coast of Alaska, including two in the Arctic.

Statement by Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

“The people have spoken and it is high time to stop offshore drilling, particularly in places like the sensitive and pristine Arctic Ocean.

Shell and Conoco Phillips, among others, have relinquished their leases in the Arctic since the administration opened this comment period. In addition, President Obama and Nordic countries announced a joint agreement to set bold standards to address climate change and build on the agreements and commitments made in Paris. And, seven members of the Tribal Government of Point Lay, Alaska, traveled to DC to meet with decision makers to say no to Arctic drilling.

Today, groups will deliver more than 1 million comments against offshore drilling in the Gulf, Atlantic and Arctic Ocean. The administration took a good first step in protecting the Atlantic, by excluding it from oil and gas drilling for the next five years, but the proposal leaves the Arctic and Gulf vulnerable to offshore development. Offshore drilling is risky and reckless – instead of leasing our public waters and lands, the administration should focus on protecting our most special places from development.”

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www.AlaskaWild.org

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