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Lame-duck Trump makes last-second push to destroy America's Arctic

Washington — The Trump administration is preparing to issue a “call for nominations” in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, asking oil companies to identify preferred areas on the Arctic Refuge’s ecologically sensitive coastal plain to lease for oil drilling — the latest step in the administration’s illegal push to allow oil and gas drilling there. Meanwhile, recent [polling](#) has [reinforced](#) the fact that [Americans do not support](#) opening this iconic place to oil development, however, [they do support](#) decisions by banks to not fund Arctic oil drilling.

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

“With its electoral fate sealed and its days left in office numbered, this lease sale is one more box the Trump administration is trying to check off for its oil industry allies before vacating the White House in January. It’s not surprising that Trump’s Interior is pushing a last-second lease sale in the Arctic considering its political appointees are essentially industry insiders, but it is disappointing that this administration until the very end has maintained such low regard for American’s public lands, or the wildlife and Indigenous communities that depend on them.

“The Interior Department’s Arctic Refuge leasing process has violated numerous bedrock environmental laws, laws put in place to protect our most cherished wild places and wildlife. This administration failed at every step to sufficiently analyze the impacts drilling will have on climate change, air and water quality, keystone species like caribou and polar bears, or local Indigenous communities. Any further leasing activities must be stopped until the courts have fully reviewed the administration’s reckless leasing plan.

“Arctic Refuge drilling has never made sense from a climate change, human rights or wildlife protection perspective, and with continued volatility in oil markets and major U.S. and international banks unwilling to invest in Arctic oil, the economic argument no longer holds water either. What we’re left with is an administration rushing to sell off one of the wildest places left on earth for pennies on the dollar before President-elect Biden takes office in January.

“President-elect Biden ran and won on a platform of protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, confronting climate change and upholding environmental justice. The American public continues to categorically oppose Arctic Refuge drilling, and voters, including large majorities of Republicans and Independents, overwhelmingly support banking policies that reject funding for Arctic oil and gas. Any oil



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company seeking to drill in the Arctic Refuge will face not only economic challenges, but enormous reputational and legal risks as well.”

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Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters, and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.



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