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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trump issues eleventh-hour oil leases in final act of Arctic Refuge exploitation

Washington — Today, the outgoing Trump administration issued oil and gas leases for the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, America’s ‘Serengeti’ and lands sacred to the Gwich’in people of Alaska and Canada. Despite the lease approval process generally taking months, today’s issuance comes a mere two weeks after the administration held its first Arctic Refuge lease sale — and epic failure of a sale that, despite \$1.8 billion in revenue promised by drilling advocates in the lead up to the 2017 Tax Act, yielded little more than \$14 million, less than 1% of that amount.

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

“This lease sale isn’t legitimate and won’t stand. It was based on an illegal environmental review, faulty revenue projections and sidelined science. We look forward to President-elect Biden stopping the liquidation of this national treasure and restoring protections for its iconic wildlife, wilderness and the Indigenous peoples who depend on it.

“Arctic Refuge drilling is among the least popular of the Trump administration’s misguided schemes, with Democrats, Independents and Republicans all [opposed](#).¹ More than 30 major banks and insurers have said they won’t finance it, and now, even the oil companies themselves have turned their backs, unwilling to make the long-term bet on exploiting this cherished landscape when cheaper and less risky alternatives are available.

“President-elect Biden ran on and was elected on the most ambitious climate agenda in history, and he has made protecting the Arctic Refuge a day one priority. It’s part of his climate plan, part of his commitment to tribal nations and part of the Democratic National Committee platform. We look forward to his taking strong and decisive action to ensure that no oil rig or seismic truck ever despoils an inch of this last great wilderness.”

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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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ⁱ Via Yale Center on Climate Communications: Fewer registered voters (28%) support drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), while a large majority (71%) oppose it (see Data Tables). About half of conservative Republicans (53%) support this policy, but liberal/moderate Republicans (35%), moderate/conservative Democrats (17%), and liberal Democrats (13%) are much less likely to support drilling in ANWR. <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/politics-global-warming-december-2020/>



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