



*Your Land.  
Your Voice.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 27, 2021

Contact: Corey Himrod  
Tel: 202-266-0426 | Email: [corey@alaskawild.org](mailto:corey@alaskawild.org)

**Biden administration to defend fast-tracked Trump oil project that threatens western Arctic**

Washington — The Biden administration [confirmed yesterday](#) that it will continue to defend the Willow oil and gas project in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska in federal court. Alaska Wilderness League is one of six groups that [filed a lawsuit in November 2020](#) in U.S. District Court charging the Bureau of Land Management and Interior Department under the previous administration with illegally and prematurely authorizing Willow despite the harm it will cause to Arctic communities, public health and wildlife, and without a plan to effectively mitigate those harms. The suit also challenged the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for underestimating Willow’s harm to protected polar bears. In February, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals [granted a temporary injunction](#) stopping ConocoPhillips from doing winter road construction, gravel mining and blasting on its Willow project while the court decides an appeal in the case.

**Statement by Kristen Miller, Acting Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“The Willow project is the poster child for the type of massive fossil fuel development that must be avoided today if we’re to avoid the worst climate impacts down the road. Allowing oil drilling in and around the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area would also threaten an essential cultural area and food source for North Slope communities. Willow would significantly increase ConocoPhillips’ presence in the western Arctic while placing all the burden of development on the people and wildlife that call that region home.

“President Biden’s early executive actions suggested a new era of bold and visionary federal leadership in fighting climate change and prioritizing environmental justice. We stand behind the work this administration is doing to meet those goals, promote clean energy and undo the damage of the past four years. Unfortunately, the decision to defend a Trump-era project that ignored the concerns of local Indigenous communities and failed to adequately address risks to our climate future is just incredibly disappointing and a decision we will continue to fight.”

###

*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.*



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

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