



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

August 5, 2025

Submitted electronically via:

kmoorman@blm.gov; kara_moriarty@ios.doi.gov

U.S. Department of the Interior
Director (630)
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C St. NW, Room 5646
Washington, DC 20240
Attention: 1004-AF02



RE: Support Rescission of 2024 NPR-A Rule; BLM reference # BLM-2025-0002;
Proposed Order 2025-10058 (90 FR 23507)

Dear Director:

The Resource Development Council for Alaska (RDC) writes in strong support of rescinding the final rule for the “Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A)” originally published on September 8, 2023 (FR 62025) and finalized on May 7, 2024 (hereafter the 2024 Rule). RDC appreciates Executive Order 14153 directed the Department to take this action. RDC further appreciates the Department’s approach to commonsense regulation in support of responsible resource development to carry out this rescission.

While we realize these comments are technically past the deadline due to unforeseen circumstances, we would appreciate your consideration to admit them to the record.

About RDC: The RDC is a statewide, not for profit business and trade association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska’s fishing, tourism, forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries. We were founded in 1975 surrounding the finalization of the right-of-way for the Trans Alaska Pipeline System. RDC’s membership includes all the land-owning Alaska Native regional corporations as well as village corporations, local communities, including the North Slope Borough, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC’s purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state’s economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

The industries RDC represents are historically significant economic drivers for Alaska's economy. Combined, these industries employ or support employment for the majority of the more than 730,000 Alaskans who call Alaska home. For more 50 years, RDC has a proud history of balancing the need for a diverse economy with the need for the responsible development of our natural resources. The 2024 Rule, if allowed to stay in place, threatens to reverse that.

History of the 2024 Rule: In 2023, we provided the comments opposing the 2024 rule to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) then-2024 Rule for the "Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A)" (originally published on September 8, 2023 (FR 62025). The 2024 Rule created a sea change in opposition to management of the NPR-A as it was originally created for and intended. The 2024 rule was unnecessary, overly burdensome, and we believe fails to comply with current law.

We believe the reasons we provided then in opposing the 2024 Rule support the Department's proposed rescission action now.

Failed Consultation with our Alaska Native Partners: The 2024 Rule spent considerable time pointing to the importance of subsistence and the needs for Alaska's Native peoples and the North Slope communities who rely on subsistence hunting and fishing to justify this 2024 Rule. RDC does not dispute that subsistence is an important and critical practice for all Alaskans, including Alaska Native peoples and their communities. However, despite this focus, at the time the BLM ignored the needs of our Alaska Native peoples during this rulemaking process. BLM published this 2024 Rule during a critical subsistence period for the communities on Alaska's North Slope: the fall whaling season. RDC was told that little to no consultation occurred during this time between the Alaska Native entities of the North Slope, the North Slope Borough, and other key stakeholders. What little consultation or public meeting process did occur was hastily convened with little to no opportunity for local communities to receive timely notice.

The 2024 Rule claims to comply with E.O. 13175, requiring consultation and coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, including Alaska Native Tribes and ANCSA Alaska Native Corporations, but the record does not support that. Sending one letter informing our North Slope stakeholders of a rulemaking effort followed by a lack of adequate consultation and doing so during an importance subsistence harvest period while denying numerous extensions of time requests from these same stakeholders failed to comply with the law and department policy. The BLM Management should not fail in its responsibility to consult with Alaska's federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporation. Meaningful consultation is required by E.O.



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

13175 (November 6, 2000), POTUS Memo on Tribal Consultation and Nation-to-Nation Building (January 26, 2021) and DOI 512 DM 4 (2015), and DOI 512 DM 5.

The 2024 Rule Exceeds BLM Authority: The 2024 rule created a new, burdensome, and time-consuming administrative process for reviewing oil and gas related development activities that are contrary to the needs and purposes of the NPR-A. The 2024 Rule takes the instruction of maximizing protection of Special Areas under the federal NPR-A Act (NPRAA) to an extreme that is not warranted and fails to balance the need for oil and gas development to occur for the nation's energy security and independence. We also believe that BLM exceeded its authority by incorporating the Integrated Activity Plan of 2022 (IAP) into the NPR-A regulations when the NPR-A is specifically exempt from the Federal Land Management Planning Act (FLPMA) planning requirement. BLM acknowledges this in the 2024 Rule but goes on to say that it "nonetheless" intended to do so. In another example, BLM proposed to change the authority of officers making oil and gas related decisions from what currently must be exercised consistent with current law and after consultation with federal, state, local agencies and Native organizations to now "regardless of any existing authority." Agencies cannot simply grant themselves the power to make decisions "regardless of any existing authority." That is simply not how our democratic process works.

Presumption Against Oil & Gas Development Violates the NPRAA: The 2024 Rule specifically explains, under section 2361.10, that BLM will now have the authority to delay or deny, without setting a timetable, on any activities it determines will have significant adverse effects on surface resources. This is overly broad, vague, and restrictive. Further, the 2024 Rule states it will "**presume ... that that oil and gas leasing or infrastructure on lands allocated as available for such activities 'should NOT be permitted'...**" (Emphasis added.) This directly contravenes the purpose and intent for which the NPR-A was established. The NPRAA directed DOI to be administered for domestic energy production through an oil and gas leasing program. BLM cannot create a presumption by rulemaking that it will not permit that very same activity specifically directed by Congress.

Further, the 2024 Rule states it will not impact any current leasing approvals or permitted activity. This is not true. The 2024 Rule threatens harm to existing lease contracts given its clear conflict with NPR-A's original purposes when created in 1923 and as directed by Congress through the NPRAA.



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

Flawed Economic Assessment: The 2024 Rule summarily concluded it will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act and only affects businesses in the oil and gas industry operating in the NPR-A. This is simply wrong and we continue to disagree with this conclusion.

The then-DOI's analysis in support of the 2024 Rule failed to account for significant economic benefits delivered to local Alaska communities (including Alaska Native organizations) as a direct result from NPR-A development. Federal law then mandated that 50% of lease revenue from NPR-A projects go towards a unique grant program that prioritizes improvement projects that will deliver social and environmental justice benefits to impacted communities, many of which are Alaska Native communities. The economic analysis of the 2024 Rule failed to consider the impact of local communities losing these benefits. The economic analysis also wholly failed to consider the social implications of eliminating or dramatically restricting future development in the NPR-A that would remove jobs and a substantial portion of the tax base.

Responsible development on the NPR-A creates enormous economic benefits. The economic analysis the DOI used for the 2024 Rule ignored benefits like the NPR-A Impact Mitigation Grant program. This grant program creates a legal requirement for local Alaska North Slope communities to receive generous revenues from projects. If project development is slowed or halted by the 2024 Rule, Alaska Native communities will lose enormous revenues for public services, health facilities and educational resources—to name a few impacted areas.

Further, the 2024 Rule will stifle future development in currently approved areas of the NPR-A as companies will be wary to invest into developments in areas where the government can seemingly outlaw further development without cause. This chilling effect will have a dramatic economic impact.

Alaska's North Slope (ANS) energy production and infrastructure has had significant economic impact and contribution to Alaska's economy and our nation's energy security. In 2022, ANS produced an average of 482,000 bpd. Since the Trans Alaska Pipeline Systems (TAPS) was created, ANS has produced over 18.5 billion barrels of oil. In 2022, this support 69,250 jobs in Alaska, or 16% of employment in Alaska and accounting for \$5.9 billion in wages, or 17% of wages in Alaska. Alaska's oil and gas industry contributed \$4.5 billion in revenue to state and local governments, comprising 47% of state revenue in 2022. Over time, since statehood in 1959, the oil and gas industry has produced \$274 billion in petroleum revenues to the State. Because of the investment climate created in the first Trump administration, we are seeing



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

investment in our Alaska North Slope oil fields to a degree not seen since our 1970's oil boom. This is a significant economic impact that is threatened by this 2024 Rule.

Failed Unfunded Mandates Reform Act Assessment: In 2023, RDC also opposed the final 2024 Rule because concluded without explanation that it would not have a significant or unique effect on State, local, or Tribal governments. This is simply false for reasons already expressed. Diminished oil production from the NPR-A would result in diminished production tax and ad valorem tax revenue for the State and local governments in Alaska. This means less revenue for the State of Alaska to provide services to all Alaskans. The BLM's reasoning in this regard also likely violates its conclusion that this does not have federalism implications under E.O. 13132.

The 2024 Rule is a Direct Threat to America's Energy Security: The 2024 Rule concluded it will not adversely affect our national energy security in contravention of E.O. 13211. In almost the same breath, the agency states the 2024 Rule will **"presume ... that that oil and gas leasing or infrastructure on lands allocated as available for such activities 'should NOT be permitted'... ."** (Emphasis added.) There is no way to explain the logic of this assessment. A presumption against approving oil and gas leasing absolutely equates to less development of oil and gas energy resources.

Analysis from the U.S. Geological Survey estimates there are at least 8.7 billion barrels of undiscovered oil in the NPR-A, an area set aside by the Federal government specifically for petroleum development. By denying or dramatically restricting development in the region, the Administration is denying Alaskans—and all Americans—reliable, affordable energy, as well as billions of dollars in revenues.

We cannot afford to further limit U.S. production, which will only increase our reliance on foreign nations, including adversarial nations, amid rising geopolitical threats. At a time when oil prices are rising and global supply can be easily constricted by foreign governments, investing in domestic oil production is a matter of national and energy security. The misguided 2024 Rule will almost certainly lead to higher energy prices for working class families across America. Restricting access to energy development limits consumers' access to affordable, reliable and secure energy.

Furthermore, oil production on the North Slope and in the NPR-A contributes to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), a vital piece of U.S. critical infrastructure. Oil produced in the NPR-A will keep TAPS economically viable and capable of providing oil to the rest of the United States



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

and beyond. Restricting future development of the NPR-A by creating a presumption against permitting the uses for which the NPR-A was specifically developed, as the 2024 Rule does, directly threatens our energy security.

Conclusion: As indicated above, the 2024 Rule process was fast-tracked, lacked transparency, probably exceeds the agency's legal authority, and lacked proper consultation as required by department policy.

For these reasons, RDC supports the Department's proposal to rescind the 2024 Rule in full and return the regulations in [43 CFR part 2360](#) to their prior status quo under the rule promulgated in 1977 ([42 FR 28721](#), June 3, 1977)

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Leila Kimbrell
Executive Director
Resource Development Council for Alaska

Celebrating 50 Years of Responsible Resource Development in Alaska

CC: The Hon. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
The Hon. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
The Hon. Nick Begich (R-AK)
Kara Moriarty, Senior Advisor for Alaskan Affairs, Department of Interior



TOURISM



FISHERIES



OIL & GAS



MINING



FORESTRY