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**Broad Coalition joins Congressional Delegation in  
Opposing Bureau of Land Management's misguided NPR-A request**

**ANCHORAGE-** Sept. 18, 2024- Alaska business, union and trade organizations joined all three members of Alaska's Congressional Delegation and local governments to strongly oppose the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recent Request for Information (RFI) on the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). The organizations urge BLM to halt the RFI process, wait for the courts to rule on the NPR-A rule, and adhere to a transparent, tried-and-true approach that respects Alaska's communities and industries.

**Background**

In May, the BLM released their final version of a new NPR-A rule, which was built on a flawed process and ignored the input of elected leaders and North Slope communities. This RFI furthers the goals of that rule and is harmful to Alaskan businesses, the State of Alaska and North Slope communities.

The RFI is a step in the wrong direction for responsible development on the North Slope. It is premature, unnecessary, and creates more confusion for all Alaska's resource industries at a time when clarity and certainty are needed.

The final rule is tied up in the courts and being challenged by Alaskan oil and gas operators, the State of Alaska, and North Slope organizations. Moving forward with this RFI while litigation is unresolved undermines trust in the process and risks making the situation even less transparent for businesses and local communities.

**Flawed Public Process**

On top of that, BLM's approach to gathering public input using this RFI is unclear and a departure from how they have engaged with Alaskans in the past. Asking for comments to be emailed, instead of using a public, accessible platform, allows the BLM to solicit input in secret and never make it public. This lends credence to the argument that the BLM continually ignores the input of North Slope residents and elected officials despite Secretary Haaland's [pledge](#) to "ensur(ing) that Tribal leaders have a seat at the table and can work directly with federal leaders on issues of importance." We need more transparency in these decisions, not less.

This RFI appears to be a backdoor approach for BLM to push new policies and restrictions without providing stakeholders clear criteria to evaluate what information they seek and what the outcome will be. Congress set up the NPR-A to support responsible petroleum production; expanding special areas or creating new ones while ignoring consultation is at odds with that intent, adding uncertainty for the industry and spooking investment. That's bad news for Alaska's economy.

Changes to special areas need to go through the established Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) process, which ensures full public review, transparency, and input from all stakeholders. It has always been done this way, and it has worked because it results in decisions that balance development with environmental protection.

Below are comments specific to various groups/organizations: <https://www.aoga.org/policy-and-issues/npr-a-rfi-comments/>

**Alaska Congressional Delegation:** "BLM's actions are simply not a reasonable interpretation of federal law, let alone the best interpretation of federal law, as the agency has dramatically upended its management mission in the NPR-A from one led by responsible resource development to one defined by relentless conservation," Alaska's Congressional Delegation wrote. "We therefore request that BLM immediately abandon the RFI process. BLM should have allowed the courts to review and make a decision on the multiple challenges to the final rule before issuing the RFI and used the next IAP process to decide the future of Special Areas within the NPR-A. The process by which BLM is undertaking the RFI is not transparent, will hide relevant information from policymakers and the public, and any decisions based on it will be unilaterally made behind closed doors without a true public process."

**Resource Development Council for Alaska:** "The BLM is once again trying to restrict development in the NPR-A, an area that was specifically established to ensure American energy independence," said Leila Kimbrell, executive director for RDC. "This time they are doing so behind closed doors without an adequate public process. While the BLM's recent NPR-A final rule is under legal challenge, BLM is now rushing the RFI process. RDC stands with our fellow trade associations and North Slope communities and stakeholders in opposing this RFI."

**Armstrong Oil and Gas:** "Even the BLM itself recognized that the decisions in the 2022 Petroleum Reserve IAP Record of Decision makes available for leasing the *minimum* amount of public lands necessary to allow for oil and gas development while providing necessary protection for subsistence users and resources. Based on BLM's own statements within the 2022 IAP, it has already reduced the amount of lands available to oil and gas development to the minimum potentially allowed under the Petroleum Reserve's authorizing act."

**ConocoPhillips Alaska:** "BLM's new regulations are unlawful, as is the process BLM apparently envisions with the RFI. It has strayed from the law and the IAP, diminished public engagement, and upset the balance that supports the leasing program and serves the public interest. BLM

should adhere to the process that it has already established as a matter of law and precedent, and to serve the value of transparency.”

**Alaska Oil and Gas Association:** “This current approach not only contradicts the statutory framework established by Congress but also threatens the responsible development of vital oil and gas resources in Alaska,” said Kara Moriarty, AOGA president and CEO. “We urge BLM to refrain from taking further action until the litigation surrounding the new NPR-A rule is resolved, and to commit to a transparent, legal process that balances development with the protection of critical resources.”

**American Petroleum Institute:** "API opposes the Bureau of Land Management's recent Request for Information as it represents an unnecessary and unlawful attempt to expand restrictions on oil and gas exploration in the NPR-A," said Amy Emmert, senior policy advisor, American Petroleum Institute. "Our industry has a proven 50-year track record of responsible energy development while protecting Alaska's environment and wildlife. We remain committed to working collaboratively with BLM to ensure that any management measures respect Congressional intent and continue to balance both energy production and environmental stewardship."

#### **About the Alaska Chamber**

The Alaska Chamber is a non-profit founded in 1953 working to promote a positive business environment in Alaska. The Chamber is the voice of small and large business representing more than 700 businesses, manufacturers, and local chambers across Alaska. Our member companies employ more than 55,000 hard-working Alaskans. The Chamber advocates for a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for Alaska.

#### **About the Alaska Miners Association**

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. AMA's more than 1,400 members come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Alaska's miners are individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

#### **About the Alaska Oil and Gas Association**

AOGA is a professional trade association whose mission is to foster the long-term viability of the oil and gas industry in Alaska for the benefit of all Alaskans.

#### **About the Alaska Support Industry Alliance**

The Alaska Support Industry Alliance is a 45-year-old professional trade association representing 500 Alaska companies with 35,000 employees who provide support to the oil, gas and mining industries in Alaska.

**About the American Petroleum Institute**

API represents all segments of America's natural gas and oil industry, which supports more than 11 million U.S. jobs and is backed by a growing grassroots movement of millions of Americans. API was formed in 1919 as a standards-setting organization and has developed more than 800 standards to enhance operational and environmental safety, efficiency and sustainability.

**About the Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.**

RDC is a statewide professional trade association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's fishing, forestry, mining, oil and gas, and tourism industries. RDC's membership includes Alaska Native corporations, local communities, government entities, 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.

**About Teamsters Local 959**

Teamsters Local 959 was originally chartered for the Anchorage area on October 27, 1941, just before the United States entered into World War II. The Union's founding Executive Board was named on the original charter, including Charles MacDougall, Benjamin C. Turner, Chester Brown, Wilbur Headley, E. B. Hixon, Richard Barr, and H. R. Thorson. On May 19, 1964, Secretary-Treasurer Jesse L. Carr successfully merged the then-five local Alaska Teamster unions into Local 959 and was given jurisdiction over the entire state, thus securing the future of the Local. IBT General President James R. Hoffa signed the new charter creating Local 959 as it exists today. Through the years Teamsters Local 959 has provided outstanding Union services to nearly a total of 60,000 Alaskans and their families. It is the most robust private sector Union in Alaska and has advanced the quality of life for the entire state through its collective bargaining efforts.

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