



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Iñupiat (“VOICE”). VOICE is a nonprofit organization established in 2015 by the region’s collective Iñupiat leadership to speak with a unified voice on issues impacting the North Slope Iñupiat, their communities, their economy, and their culture. Its members include local governments, Alaska Native Corporations, federally recognized tribes, and tribal non-profits across the North Slope of Alaska. VOICE’s board unanimously passed a resolution in support of advancing the Willow Project to support the economic well-being of the North Slope Iñupiat.

“Today’s decision from the Biden administration to advance the Willow Project consistent with the project’s minimum requirements is an important step for Alaska, Alaska Native self-determination, and for America’s energy security. The decision reaffirms the widespread support across Alaska Native communities for the carefully designed resource development project and the long-term economic stability it offers for the people of Alaska’s remote North Slope.

“The Voice is grateful to President Biden and his senior leadership team for heeding the will of Alaska Native communities in support of the Willow Project. Ultimately, today is a recognition that Willow will provide overwhelming benefits to Alaska Native communities while coexisting with our subsistence lifestyle. We thank Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, Rep. Mary Sattler Peltola, Gov. Mike Dunleavy, the state legislature, labor leaders, and Alaska Native leaders for their steadfast, bipartisan leadership on this issue and their strong support for Alaska Native communities and Alaska residents in general.

“The Willow Project is a new opportunity to ensure a viable future for our communities, creating generational economic stability for our people and advancing our self-determination. Willow is estimated to generate hundreds of direct jobs and thousands of construction jobs, along with contracting opportunities for Native-owned businesses. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) estimates that Willow will result in approximately \$6 billion from federal royalties and state and local taxes. For North Slope communities, more than \$1 billion in property taxes paid to the North Slope Borough would help provide basic services like education, police, fire protection, and more. Willow is also projected to add \$2.5 billion to the NPR-A Impact Mitigation Grant Program, supporting social services, youth programs, civic facilities, and more throughout our communities.

“The project also offers a valuable opportunity for the United States to seize its energy independence from countries who do not share our environmental values. The oil produced in Alaska will be subject to more rigorous environmental standards than that produced overseas. It will also help insulate U.S. consumers from price hikes by foreign suppliers by ensuring a robust supply of domestically produced energy for Americans.

“We Iñupiat have sustained ourselves in the United States’ most extreme and remote climate for more than 10,000 years by staying true to our time-honored cultural values, including subsistence hunting. And we have coexisted with responsible resource development for nearly 50 years, ensuring that our ancestral homelands and traditional lifestyles are protected while development occurs. Understanding and embracing that interdependence is paramount to the longevity of North Slope Iñupiaq culture and traditions.

“The Biden administration’s ROD to advance the Willow Project will make it possible for our community to continue our traditions while strengthening the economic foundation of our region for decades to come. The North Slope Iñupiat are ready to get to work.”