



\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

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**Contact:** [VoiceoftheArctic@Marathonstrategies.com](mailto:VoiceoftheArctic@Marathonstrategies.com)

**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 elected 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 deadline to submit briefs in the ongoing court case against Willow puts us one step closer to realizing the project and the benefits it will bring to our communities.

"The U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska previously affirmed the widespread support for the Willow Project when it denied an effort, funded by outside organizations, to halt construction earlier this year. This lawsuit is a thinly veiled attempt by outside environmental groups to drown out local indigenous voices and undermine Alaska Native self-determination.

"This court case is being pushed by outside groups with little or no connection to our lands, culture, or way of life, and seeks to override the overwhelming support for the Willow Project by Alaska Native communities on the North Slope. Their claims also willfully ignore years of environmental impact assessments, an outside review by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the 215 days of public comment and 25 public meetings during which our community actively participated to ensure our voice was heard.

"The Willow Project will bring significant economic benefits to the North Slope by generating hundreds of long-term employment opportunities and thousands of construction jobs that will help us to maintain our communities and Iñupiaq culture in the long term. Additionally, Willow is expected to generate \$1.2 billion in tax revenue for the North Slope Borough that will support schools, health clinics, and subsistence access points, as well as a projected \$2.6 billion in additional funding for North Slope communities through the NPR-A Impact Mitigation Grant Program.

"We have waited nearly a generation for the Willow Project to advance, and we hope that the Court respects our voice and pushes Alaska Native communities one step closer to an economically secure future with its final decision."