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**Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat Applauds Alaska State Legislature Passage of HJR20,
Alaska Rep. Thomas Baker's Joint Resolution to Reverse Biden Administration
Actions on the North Slope**

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 of Directors previously passed a resolution in opposition to the federal government's Proposed Rule affecting the North Slope Iñupiat's ancestral homelands in the NPR-A.

"The Biden administration's [September 6, 2023 mandate](#) to 'protect' 13 million acres of our ancestral homelands was made without fulfilling legal consultative obligations to our regional tribal governments, without engaging our communities about the decision's impact, and with an incomplete economic analysis that undercuts North Slope communities.

"In February 2024, VOICE's Board of Directors voted unequivocally in support of [HJR20](#), a joint resolution from Rep. Thomas Baker which calls on the federal government to withdraw its proposed rule affecting the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) and to more thoroughly involve North Slope regional governments, communities, and Indigenous voices in future rulemaking processes. We strongly support Alaska Rep. Baker's resolution, and we applaud the state legislature for its strong action today, unanimously voting in favor of HJR20.

"VOICE and our Board have also highlighted the federal government's inadequate attempts to capture the economic impact of their unprecedented actions. VOICE, along with others in the region, have formally requested the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), a Division within the Office of Management and Budget, to reassess the economic significance of the Biden administration's proposed rule and ensure the analysis submitted by the Department of the Interior (DOI) reflects the real-world financial impacts to the North Slope Iñupiat, including North Slope local and regional governments' ability to continue providing essential services to the eight Iñupiat communities in the region. The current action fails to properly consider the economic ramifications on North Slope communities.

“Despite President Biden himself [highlighting](#) the importance of listening to Indigenous and tribal leaders in formulating federal policy — our elected North Slope Iñupiat leadership were excluded from policy discussions. In fact, when announced, we learned of these new rules only through the press. The NPR-A rule not only fails to consider our perspective as North Slope Iñupiat, the Indigenous stewards of these lands, but also goes against the wishes of our communities and elected leaders.

“Our communities and elected leaders remain steadfast in our support for responsible development projects in our region that are undertaken with the inclusion and engagement of the North Slope Iñupiat.”

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