



**Date:** July 19, 2024

**Contact:** [voiceofthearctic@marathonstrategies.com](mailto:voiceofthearctic@marathonstrategies.com)

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

### **Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat Statement on Further NPR-A Actions**

**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 and is dedicated to preserving and advancing North Slope Iñupiat cultural and economic self-determination. Its members include local governments, Alaska Native Corporations, federally recognized tribes, and tribal non-profits across the North Slope of Alaska. VOICE [filed a lawsuit](#) this year against the federal government to challenge its National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) Rule and the process through which it was produced.

“The Bureau of Land Management’s decision to solicit information to create new Special Areas within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) outside the confines of their newly published NPR-A rule is another disappointing example of unilateral policymaking affecting North Slope Iñupiat ancestral homelands. This development also highlights the inconsistent, confusing bureaucratic policymaking approach to our Indigenous lands, and further underscores the importance of [VOICE’s lawsuit](#).

“Just like the May final rule to limit access to over 50% of our ancestral homelands in the NPR-A – which was made without meaningful engagement with the North Slope Iñupiat, despite multiple appeals by our elected leadership to federal officials for meaningful engagement and consultation – further restrictions will impose dire consequences on our communities.

“BLM’s intent to transform more and more Iñupiaq homelands into Special Areas without meaningful input from the people that have called the NPR-A home for thousands of years, flies in the face of the Biden administration’s [pledges](#) to listen to and work with Indigenous communities. The Department of the Interior’s approach is deeply flawed and undermines our self-determination on our Indigenous homelands and puts the future of our economy, communities, and culture at risk.”

###