



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of the [Voice of Arctic Iñupiat](#) (VOICE) on the U.S. Department of the Interior's latest [announcement](#) concerning North Slope Iñupiat Indigenous homelands in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). 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.

"Once again, the Biden administration's efforts to push through last-minute decisions like today's NPR-A announcement demonstrate its disregard for the elected leadership of the North Slope Iñupiat. This is another unilateral decision by an administration that [pledged](#) to listen and work with Indigenous communities on policies affecting our lands and people. VOICE, reflecting a majority consensus of the North Slope, [opposed](#) this effort given its potential impact on the very subsistence resources and traditions it claims to protect.

"The Biden administration is selectively citing Indigenous voices, while ignoring wide swaths of the North Slope Iñupiat, and fails to understand the implications of this announcement. Instead, it selectively listened to voices that agreed with its policy agenda to justify its actions while ignoring the overwhelming majority of North Slope residents and locally elected leaders who opposed today's decision.

"This is no way to create durable policy on Alaska's North Slope. Today's development exemplifies the Biden administration's broken policy process, prioritizing short-term political wins over lasting solutions for the communities directly impacted by its actions. It is deeply insulting that our lands, communities, and culture continue to be treated as the outgoing Biden administration's pet legacy project – especially after voters in our region and around the country resoundingly rejected the federal government's policy agenda.

"The North Slope Iñupiat will continue to fight the Biden administration's attempts to deny our self-determination in our ancestral homelands. We look forward to building a more collaborative relationship, characterized by mutual respect, with the Trump-Vance administration following its inauguration next week."

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