



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) on the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Natural Resources advancing its portion of the budget reconciliation bill out of committee last night:

“The House Committee on Natural Resources’ portion of the budget reconciliation bill includes provisions that will advance Iñupiaq self-determination on our homelands and support economic development opportunities in our region that are crucial to sustaining our Indigenous culture.

“This includes language that would restore our right to develop our National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) homelands and mandate six lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The Committee’s actions reflect overwhelming support for economic development projects in our region – including Kaktovik, the only community within ANWR’s boundaries – and are aligned with our efforts to advance Iñupiaq self-determination on the North Slope.

“Over the past few months, we have been cautiously optimistic that executive branch officials and legislative leaders are hearing and reflecting our voices in policies affecting our region. The Committee’s decision to advance its portion of the reconciliation bill is another encouraging step in the right direction for our communities. We look forward to continued engagement with Congress and the White House to create durable policies, crafted through meaningful consultation with North Slope leaders, that will benefit our region in the long term.”

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About Voice of the 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.

In 2017, VOICE’s board passed a resolution in support of opening the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas exploration and development, and it filed a lawsuit last year against the deeply flawed National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) 2024 rule. VOICE was the first organization to [file a lawsuit](#) to challenge the 2024 NPR-A rule, which was crafted without meaningful engagement with those who live on the North Slope, significantly hinders economic development in the region, and presents serious risks to survival of Indigenous communities and North Slope Iñupiaq culture.