



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) on the release of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources' budget reconciliation language:

“The released Senate’s budget reconciliation language includes provisions that represent meaningful progress for North Slope Iñupiaq cultural and economic self-determination. Most importantly, it restores our opportunity to access and responsibly develop our homelands in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). The Senate's proposal corrects the House’s omission—an important and encouraging development in the reconciliation package process and our efforts to advance Iñupiaq self-determination on the North Slope.

“We were encouraged to see both the House and Senate include provisions for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge’s (ANWR) Coastal Plain to responsibly explore and develop, an issue that has spanned decades and been supported by the elected leadership of the only community located within ANWR, Kaktovik.

“For months, we’ve been cautiously optimistic that both executive and legislative leaders are listening to our communities. The Senate’s action – as well as the recent visit by National Energy Dominance Council members Secretary Burgum, Secretary Wright, and Administrator Zeldin – moves us closer toward durable policies that recognize our rights, respect our voices, and invest in the long-term future of our people and culture.

“We look forward to continued engagement with Congress and the White House to ensure that final reconciliation legislation is informed by North Slope Iñupiat leaders and meets the needs of our region for generations to come.”

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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. 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.