



**\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\***

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE), on the U.S. Department of the Interior's [announcement](#) that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is rescinding "Special Area" expansions and designations in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A):

"Effective, durable policies that support the North Slope Iñupiat's economy, communities, and culture are defined by frequent consultation with our elected leaders. BLM's now-rescinded designations did not meet this standard, and their withdrawal is another step toward recognition of our right to self-determination on our homelands by the federal government."

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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.

VOICE's Board of Directors passed a resolution in "Opposition to the Request for Information on Special Areas and Expansion or Restrictions in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska." The RFI and other actions taken by the previous administration were crafted "without extensive consultation and engagement with the elected leadership of the North Slope," without meaningful engagement with those who live on the North Slope and presented serious risks to survival of Indigenous communities and North Slope Iñupiaq culture.