



**\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\***

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### **North Slope Elected Leaders Encouraged By Reconciliation Bill Signed Into Law**

**Anchorage, AK** – Today, President Trump signed the budget reconciliation bill into law, which includes provisions that will restore opportunities for North Slope Iñupiat control and self-determination in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). This important milestone reflects widespread support for opportunities the bill creates to strengthen the region's economy, communities, and culture.

"Today's passage of the budget reconciliation bill into law includes key provisions concerning our homelands located within ANWR and NPR-A," said **Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat President Nagruk Harcharek**. "While this language culminates years of dedicated advocacy by our organization on behalf of our communities, economy, and culture, we will continue to demand early and often meaningful engagement with decisionmakers in Washington to ensure that our region remains strong in the long term."

VOICE's members, which include the elected Indigenous leadership of Kaktovik – the only community within ANWR – and Atqasuk, located within the NPR-A, were [unified in opposition](#) to the previous administration's unilateral actions on our homelands without meaningful engagement and consultation.

"For years, Kaktovik's voice and support for development opportunities on the Coastal Plain has been ignored by federal and congressional policymakers," said **Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation President Charles Lampe**. "Today's decision by the President to sign the budget reconciliation bill gives us hope that a better future for our community is on the horizon."

"Development opportunities are vital for Kaktovik – they provide critical tax dollars that are reinvested into our community and good-paying jobs for local residents," said **Mayor of Kaktovik Nathan Gordon, Jr.** "By restoring our right to responsibly explore and develop our homelands located within ANWR's Coastal Plain, Congress and President Trump have created an important pathway for the Kaktovikmiut to strengthen our community, preserve our cultural traditions, and ensure that we can remain in our homelands for years to come."

"This bill recognizes the importance of our homelands located within the NPR-A to the nation," said **Native Village of Atqasuk President Mary Bordeaux**. "After years of policy uncertainty, we are optimistic that this bill will allow our tribe to shape our destiny in our ancestral homelands."

"No matter the issue, it is vital that the North Slope Iñupiaq perspective is reflected in policies affecting our lands and people," said **Mayor of Utqiagvik Asisaun Toovak**. "This bill reflects popular support for responsible development of and access to our homelands located within the NPR-A, and we look forward to continued engagement with decisionmakers in Washington on how best to ensure the impactful programs the NPR-A supports in our region are continued."

Over 95% of the North Slope's tax revenue is derived from taxation on resource development infrastructure. These funds support essential services, like schools, health clinics, modern water and sewer systems, and world-class wildlife management and research supporting Indigenous subsistence traditions. The proliferation of these services is directly connected to significant increases in average lifespan for the North Slope Iñupiat from just 34 years in 1969 to 77 years today – the [largest increase](#) of its kind in the United States over that period.

“Today's action reaffirms that Alaska's North Slope is central to America's energy future,” said **Olgoonik Corporation CEO Hugh Patkotak, Sr.** “We thank our congressional leaders and our president for standing with North Slope communities, including Wainwright, and look forward to working together to advance responsible development that respects our leadership and strengthens Iñupiaq self-determination.”

“By signing this bill, President Trump is underscoring the value of Indigenous consultation during the policymaking process,” said **Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope Tribal Secretary and Director of Natural Resources Doreen Leavitt.** “This bill reflects some key priorities that have been regularly communicated by our elected officials to federal and congressional decisionmakers over the past decades. We look forward to building this relationship further in the years ahead.”

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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 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska NPR-A rule, which was crafted 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.