



**\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\***

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A statement from Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) on the U.S. Senate's vote to advance the One Big Beautiful Bill Act:

“The Senate’s vote to advance the One Big Beautiful Bill Act included provisions that will restore the opportunity to have local control and self-determination in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). The reconciliation bill offers opportunities to strengthen our economy, invest in our communities, and uphold our Indigenous culture.

“Today’s development reaffirms that Alaska’s North Slope – which the North Slope Iñupiat have stewarded for thousands of years – is vital to our nation. Going forward, it is imperative that federal and congressional decisionmakers engage regularly and often with our regional and local elected leaders to ensure that our Indigenous perspective is included in the policymaking process. Through cooperation, we can drive forward lasting progress for America and the North Slope Iñupiat.”

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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 Iñupiat culture.