



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOI Onshore Action in the NPR-A Will Unlock Indigenous Self-Determination on Alaska's North Slope

Washington, D.C. –Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) and its members support the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) decision to issue a final rule rescinding the 2024 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) Rule. This action, which supports onshore development opportunities in the Reserve, validates the VOICE Board of Directors' decision to sue DOI over the issuance of the 2024 NPR-A Rule and is another significant milestone in the effort to advance North Slope Iñupiaq self-determination.

VOICE's members, which include the majority of elected Iñupiaq leadership throughout the NPR-A, were [unified in opposition](#) to the previous federal administration's unilateral actions on the North Slope, which occurred without meaningful engagement or consultation, resulting in [litigation led by VOICE](#).

"DOI's decision today serves to strengthen North Slope communities and advance self-determination for Atqasuk, which has stewarded our NPR-A homelands for more than 10,000 years," said **Native Village of Atqasuk President Mary Bordeaux**, whose community sits within the NPR-A. "Our lands – and the ability for local voices to shape durable policies affecting them – are vital to both our economy and Iñupiaq culture."

"Today's action by the federal government is further evidence that it appreciates the importance of North Slope Iñupiaq self-determination," said **VOICE President and CEO Nagruk Harcharek**. "VOICE led the charge against DOI for issuing the 2024 NPR-A Rule, which violated their obligations of consultation, ignored the Iñupiaq elected leadership, and threatened our ability to live on our homelands. We appreciate the new final rule and are cautiously optimistic it proves durable as we turn the page toward respect between the federal government and the elected leadership of the North Slope."

Over 95% of the North Slope's tax revenue is derived from taxation of resource development infrastructure, not output. These funds advance North Slope Iñupiat self-determination and strengthen communities across the region by providing modern community infrastructure and services like education, health care, modern water and sewer systems, and power generation. This tax revenue is also invested in world-class wildlife management and research departments that support Indigenous North Slope Iñupiat subsistence traditions. The proliferation of these services – and the good paying job opportunities they provide – is directly connected to significant increases in average North Slope Iñupiat [life expectancy](#) from just 34 years in 1969 to 77 years today.

"We are grateful to Secretary Burgum and the Trump Administration for recognizing that the North Slope is key to unlocking American energy dominance," said **North Slope Borough Mayor Josiah Patkotak**. "The rescission of the 2024 Final Rule in the NPR-A is a meaningful step toward restoring a federal process that respects local knowledge and leadership. Good policy comes from good process, which requires hearing directly from the people who live, work, and hunt here. North Slope residents, through elected leadership, must be at the table as partners, not afterthoughts. That is how we ensure decisions

serve our communities, our culture, and our long-term stewardship responsibilities. We look forward to continuing our strong, mutually respectful partnership.”

“The Trump-Vance administration correctly understands that policies affecting our homelands should be informed by North Slope Iñupiat voices,” **Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope Executive Director Morrie Lemen**. “Engaging with federally recognized tribes and other elected leaders in the region is the most effective way for the federal government to craft durable policies that advance our Iñupiat self-determination.”

"The rescission of the 2024 NPR-A Rule is a positive sign that policymakers in Washington are recognizing and listening to North Slope Iñupiat leaders. When the Rule was released and finalized, not a single North Slope Iñupiat organization signaled its support for the rule,” said **ASRC President and CEO Rex A. Rock, Sr.** “We appreciate the administration’s continued willingness to engage with and listen to the elected leadership of the North Slope to ensure our perspectives are reflected in durable policy that impacts our people and communities.”

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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 2024, 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.