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Realignment to 2020 NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan Reflects North Slope Iñupiat Voices and Community Priorities

Washington, D.C. – Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) and its members support the U.S. Department of the Interior’s (DOI) decision to update the Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) in their National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) homelands. This action marks another meaningful step toward strengthening North Slope Iñupiat self-determination and ensuring durable policies that reflect the voices of the communities who have stewarded the region for thousands of years.

North Slope elected leaders and their communities were critical of the 2022 Record Of Decision, which was implemented despite the objections raised by the elected leadership of the region because it impacted Indigenous-owned lands and restricted development in the NPR-A. Today’s decision replaces those policies with a framework informed by decades of local knowledge and grounded in consistent, collaborative engagement between policymakers and North Slope leaders to develop the 2020 IAP.

“DOI’s decision to essentially revert back to the 2020 IAP shows that federal policy affecting the NPR-A can – and must – be informed by those who call these lands home: the North Slope Iñupiat,” **said VOICE President & CEO Nagruk Harcharek**. “For decades, we have advocated for a decision-making process that respects our self-determination and creates durable policies reflecting the realities of life on the North Slope. This move signals that federal decisionmakers are listening and that they recognize the expertise of the people who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial.”

“Predictable, balanced NPR-A policy is essential for Atqasuk and other communities that rely on responsible development to sustain our economies and cultural traditions,” **said Native Village of Atqasuk President Mary Bordeaux**. “Our community has always insisted that federal actions in the Reserve must be shaped with—not for—us. This change acknowledges that principle and creates opportunity for our communities to thrive in our Indigenous homelands for years to come.”

More than 95% of the North Slope’s tax base comes from taxation of resource development infrastructure, not production output. These revenues fund modern community services, including education, health care, water and sewer systems, power generation, and wildlife management programs that preserve Iñupiaq subsistence traditions. The expansion of these services has contributed to a [dramatic rise](#) in average life expectancy on the North Slope—from just 34 years in 1969 to 77 years today.

“For village corporations across the North Slope, including Olgoonik, durable policies affecting our NPR-A lands supports the investments that sustain our community and advance our self-determination,” **said Olgoonik Corporation Chairman Oliver Peetook**. “When federal

decisions are grounded in respectful consultation and informed by local knowledge, they greatly improve our ability to pursue economic opportunities that create shareholder jobs in Wainwright and allow us to continue thriving in our homelands for decades to come.”

DOI’s action follows an emerging pattern of stronger engagement between federal officials and North Slope leaders, building on a series of recent policy shifts and high-level visits to the region. Collectively, these developments represent progress toward a more respectful relationship shaped by early and frequent engagement by DOI.

“Reestablishing the 2020 ROD shows that the federal government understands the importance of steady, transparent policy in the NPR-A,” **said Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) Executive Director Morrie Lemen.** “Our position has always been clear: durable federal policies start with listening to the people who live here. Today’s decision reflects that approach.”

“When it was originally released, we were proud to see that the 2020 IAP reflected the input and will of the North Slope Iñupiat. The Department of the Interior’s decision to revert to the 2020 IAP is a step in the right direction and lays the foundation for future economic, community, and cultural opportunities across our region – particularly for the communities within the NPR-A,” **said ASRC President and CEO Rex A. Rock, Sr.**

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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 federally recognized tribes, local governments, Alaska Native Corporations, and tribal non-profits across the North Slope of Alaska.