



December 5, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Natural Resources
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Westerman,

The Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS), the North Slope Borough (the Borough) and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) write in strong support of H.R. 6285, *Alaska's Right to Produce Act of 2023* (H.R. 6285).

We appreciate Representative Stauber and Representative Sattler-Peltola's efforts to ensure that Alaska, and our region specifically, can access and develop resources to support the economic foundation of our state and the North Slope of Alaska.

The natural resources of the North Slope region have sustained our people for generations. The North Slope Inupiat hold strong cultural and subsistence ties to those areas within our region where oil and gas development has been permitted in the past. Any form of future oil and gas development on our traditional lands demands careful stewardship. The three North Slope regional entities that join to submit this letter of support all serve, provide for, and enrich the lives of the North Slope Inupiat, who are the first and rightful stewards of lands within the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska and the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We submit this letter of support jointly to demonstrate our unified commitment to the development of our lands that respects and protects the views of our communities.

The North Slope region of Alaska spans an area nearly the size of the state of Minnesota. Within that area, there are eight Inupiaq communities - Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Point Hope, Point Lay, Utqiagvik and Wainwright. None of our communities are connected by a permanent road system. This creates an environment where economic opportunity is severely limited, including attracting outside investment, and the cost of living is extremely high.

Responsible oil and gas development is essential to the economic survival of the North Slope residents. Oil and gas development is the primary economic generator for our region, and North Slope oil and gas development is by far the most significant source of public revenues. For example, in 2021, the Borough received approximately \$375.3 million in revenue from oil and gas property taxes, accounting for 95% of the total property taxes

collected by the Borough that year. In 2022, the Borough received \$376.9 million in oil and gas property taxes, accounting for 95% of the Borough's total property tax receipts.

These tax revenues enable the Borough to invest in public infrastructure and utilities (including reliable sewer, water, and heat) and to provide essential services to our eight communities, including education (e.g., Alaska's only tribal college), health (e.g., clinics in each village, hospitals, schools, and increased sanitation), and emergency services (police and fire) including air and ground search and rescue operations (e.g., aircraft and crew that conduct regular medevac and search and rescue operations throughout the North Slope). These revenues also support the Borough's Department of Wildlife Management, through which the Borough deploys significant biological and traditional expertise to protect our residents' cultural and subsistence resources in the context of proposals to develop oil and gas resources and other activities. In addition to providing these services, the Borough creates employment opportunities for residents; the local government sector (primarily, the Borough government) is the largest employer of North Slope residents.

The benefits to North Slope residents from oil and gas development go beyond direct financial support from tax revenue to the Borough. The Borough, ASRC, and ICAS all work with local, state, tribal, and federal entities—through coordination, consultation, or both—to inform decision-making regarding new oil and gas development, efforts to mitigate the impacts of development on our residents and resources, and efforts to ensure that development provides ancillary benefits in the form of infrastructure and other improvements for our residents. All projects go through a local permitting process with the Borough, and development on Native lands is reviewed and approved by the indigenous landowner.

Infrastructure investments associated with oil and gas development sometimes involve new roads and local facilities that provide tangible benefits to our residents. On the North Slope, access to subsistence areas and connectivity provided by roads is viewed by many residents as a significant benefit. For example, roads and boat launches associated with industrial development near the Native villages of Utqiagvik and Nuiqsut have improved the ability of our residents to pursue subsistence opportunities. And, infrastructure investments have allowed two of our villages (Utqiagvik and Nuiqsut) to access natural gas for home heating, and the rest of our villages should likewise have this opportunity.

Exploration and development activities increase employment opportunities for the residents of North Slope villages. Currently, economic opportunities in our communities are limited due to their isolated locations. Development on the North Slope brings jobs to our communities, including for our residents.

The National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A) encompasses roughly twenty-three million acres within the boundaries of the North Slope and exists as a resource to meet the energy needs of the United States of America. Development projects within the NPR-A not only support our country in meeting its energy needs but also support our region in providing essential services to the residents and communities of our region relieving the burden on the state and federal government.

The Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or the 1002 area, was specifically set aside by Congress for its resource potential. In 2017, Congress enacted Public Law 115-97 (the 2017 Tax Act), which directed BLM to “establish and administer a competitive oil and gas program for the leasing, development, production, and transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain.” We were in support of the 2017 Tax Act and continue

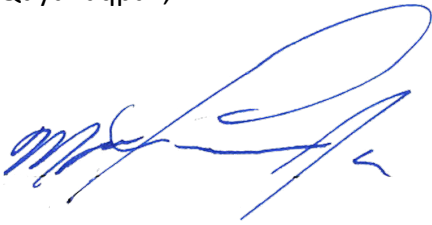
to support a responsible leasing and development program within the Coastal Plain. H.R. 6285 helps us achieve that goal.

The entities that represent the North Slope Iñupiat play an active role in oil and gas development projects that take place in our region. Our region has shown that responsible development and the continuation of our Iñupiat cultural traditions, including subsistence activities, can effectively coexist while also providing the means to deliver modern-day essential services such as police and fire protection, pre-K-12 education and water and sewer infrastructure which are largely made possible through responsible development of oil and gas resources in our region.

We are proud of our peoples' self-determination efforts over the past seven decades. We are proud that our early leaders had the foresight to demand we have a seat at the table where decisions are being made about our ancestral lands. Because of their efforts we are in a position to ensure that development projects in our region are planned and implemented in collaboration with us.

ICAS, the Borough and ASRC extend our gratitude to you and your colleagues for introducing H.R. 6285. Introducing this legislation brings attention to North Slope Iñupiat voices on issues that impact our region and our state to decision-makers in Washington, DC.

Quyanaqpak,



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Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope



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North Slope Borough



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