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September 18, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
Submitted via email

Dear Representative Westerman and Members of the House Natural Resources Committee:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes regarding the recent actions taken by the Biden administration regarding leases on the Coastal Plain in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A), another battle in the administration's war on extractive industries critical to Alaskans and Americans.

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

While AMA represents members of Alaska's mining industry, we know full well the value of a robust oil and gas industry and the benefits it provides to our nation. For many years, AMA has been on record supporting development of the "1002" area of the ANWR Coastal Plain, as it is considered to be one of the highest potential conventional oil and gas discoveries in our nation.

Exploration in ANWR was authorized in law and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process was followed diligently by our regulatory agencies in 2019. The Final EIS was found to be consistent with the environment, conservation of habitat and protection of subsistence and wildlife resources. In 2021, the Bureau of Land Management moved to develop a supplemental EIS, signaling a shift in the regulatory management and defying the law in which activity in ANWR was authorized. Nevertheless, we [commented](#) on the DEIS to remark on a wide range of alternatives that contained mitigation measures and practices to minimize disturbance, resulting in limitations to a less than 2,000 acre production and support facility.

Unfortunately, earlier this month the Biden Administration moved to unilaterally throw out the leases in ANWR. As we said in multi industry [statement](#), this action sets a dangerous precedent by undoing legally obtained leases, and sends a clear message that investment in the United States can be undermined at any moment. Such extreme actions will have many businesses and industries asking, "who's next?" And unfortunately, with multiple lease cancellations, land withdrawals, remands of final records of decisions, and other reversals of agreements, the mining industry finds itself saying "we've been there."

The Biden administration's decisions against extractive industries strike at the heart of the business community's worst fears. When legally obtained contracts are abruptly terminated for political reasons such as the case of ANWR, it destroys the fundamental principles of fairness and predictability essential for a functioning, not to mention healthy and growing, economy.

Regaining energy and mineral independence for the United States remains an ambitious yet achievable goal, but moves like this make it next to impossible. By locking away vast resources within our own borders, we unnecessarily handicap our nation's ability to meet its needs while simultaneously slowing an already drowsy national economy. The decisions kill investment in Alaska and the rest of the country. It is possible to pursue economic growth, energy and mineral independence, and environmental stewardship in a manner that benefits Alaskans and the entire nation.

Thank you for holding the *"Examining the Biden Administration's Mismanagement of the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Program"* hearing before your committee, and we appreciate your efforts in ensuring a fair, predictable regulatory climate to strengthen our nation AND the environment, at the same time.

Sincerely,



Deantha Skibinski
Executive Director