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Groups Call on Congressional Candidates to Sign 2020 Arctic Refuge Pledge

Washington — Today, Alaska Wilderness League Action, alongside League of Conservation Voters Action Fund, The Wilderness Society Action Fund, National Wildlife Federation Action Fund, Patagonia and Protect Our Winters Action Fund [are calling on 2020 congressional candidates](#) to take the 2020 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge pledge and stand up for this national treasure, its incomparable wildlife, and the Indigenous people who depend on this land for their subsistence and way of life.

As they seek the support of voters for election (or reelection) to Congress, we are collectively asking candidates to pledge to restore protections for the Arctic Refuge and oppose efforts to advance oil and gas leasing and drilling in this national treasure. According to [newly completed public opinion polling](#), drilling in the Arctic Refuge is incredibly unpopular across the political spectrum, and [the recent movement by U.S. and international banks](#) like Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Barclays to commit to not funding drilling in the Arctic Refuge is supported by a broad swath of people.

In fact, public polling throughout the country has year-in and year-out shown broad, bipartisan support for protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling, and the gap between those who oppose drilling and those who support it continues to widen. Our organizations together will use digital ads, grassroots pressure and earned media to press and thank candidates who take the pledge, while simultaneously educating and engaging voters in key states and districts.

The launch of the Arctic Refuge pledge campaign comes at a time when the Trump administration is expected to soon finalize its environmental review process and announce plans for the first ever oil and gas lease sale on the Arctic Refuge coastal plain.

Individual Statements:

“Just one in five registered voters now believe the Trump administration should open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling,” **said Leah Donahey, Political Director, Alaska Wilderness League Action.**

“Oil and gas development in the Arctic Refuge is incredibly unpopular with voters from across the political spectrum, even among Republicans. Americans are tired of the Trump administration and Congress repeatedly supporting fossil fuel industries at the expense of addressing climate change. And they overwhelmingly support banks making commitments not to finance Arctic Refuge drilling. The mad rush to sell off America’s public lands, embodied by Trump’s haste to lease the Arctic Refuge before the political winds shift, should be debated in congressional elections across the country. We need leaders on Capitol Hill willing to roll up their sleeves and get to work protecting our public lands and championing solutions to the climate crisis.”

“The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a national treasure that has seen some of the most devastating impacts from the climate crisis,” **said Alex Taurel, Conservation Program Director, League of Conservation Voters Action Fund.** “Drilling in the Arctic Refuge would violate the human rights of the Gwich’in people, who have relied on this land for thousands of years for subsistence and cultural practices. Poll after poll confirms that the people of this country strongly oppose turning this sacred and majestic landscape into an industrial oil field. It is both good policy and good politics to oppose drilling in the Arctic Refuge. We need more members of Congress ready to fight to restore protections for the Arctic Refuge and advance just and equitable solutions to the climate crisis.”

“The effort to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from destructive oil and gas drilling has a long history of bi-partisan support,” **said Matt Keller, Political Director, The Wilderness Society Action Fund.** “Time and time again, voters from across the political spectrum have stood up to defend this pristine wilderness from corporate polluters who intend to destroy this special place to line their pockets. The Trump administration’s actions in the Refuge are part of a disturbing trend toward putting corporations in front of our country’s dire need to address the climate crisis. As we move ever closer to the November election, it is critical that voters know where candidates stand on the Arctic Refuge and the efforts to ensure our public lands play a positive role in protecting our planet and its people.”

“The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge provides crucial habitat for iconic wildlife like caribou, polar bear, and wolves,” **said Karla Raettig, Executive Director of NWF Action Fund.** “This pristine landscape deserve better than falling victim to the Trump Administration’s push for energy development at all costs and without regard for the input of Native American and Indigenous communities. If the Trump Administration won’t listen to reason, it’s incumbent on our leaders to restore protection for this special and fragile place.”

Contact: Corey Himrod, Alaska Wilderness League Action, 202-266-0426, corey@alaskawildaction.org

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