

**From:** [Alonso, Shantha R](#)  
**To:** [Justin Meuse](#); [Daniel-Davis, Laura E](#); [Stone-Manning, Tracy M](#); [Williams, Martha M](#); [Feldgus, Steven H](#); [Culver, Nada L](#); [Gray, Morgan](#); [Rezaeerood, Paniz](#); [matthew.g.lee-ashley@ceq.eop.gov](mailto:matthew.g.lee-ashley@ceq.eop.gov); [Hardin, Sally A. EOP/CEQ](#)  
**Cc:** [Jamie Williams](#); [Lydia Weiss](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] TWS statement on DOI announcements in Alaska  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 2:12:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[Outlook-5m0g2qkr.png](#)

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Hi Justin,  
Thank you for sharing!  
Best,

Shantha Ready Alonso *(she/her)*  Hear my name

Director, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (OIEA)  
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
202-538-2965 (mobile)

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**From:** Justin Meuse <Justin\_Meuse@tws.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 3:36 PM  
**To:** Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura\_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Stone-Manning, Tracy M <tstonemanning@blm.gov>; Williams, Martha M <martha\_williams@fws.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve\_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Culver, Nada L <nculver@blm.gov>; Alonso, Shantha R <shantha\_alonso@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan <Leslie\_Morgan\_Gray@ios.doi.gov>; Rezaeerood, Paniz <paniz\_rezaeerood@ios.doi.gov>; matthew.g.lee-ashley@ceq.eop.gov <matthew.g.lee-ashley@ceq.eop.gov>; Hardin, Sally A. EOP/CEQ <Sally.A.Hardin@ceq.eop.gov>  
**Cc:** Jamie Williams <Jamie\_Williams@tws.org>; Lydia Weiss <lydia\_weiss@tws.org>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] TWS statement on DOI announcements in Alaska

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Good afternoon, everyone –

Thank you for the strong conservation and climate announcements in the Arctic today. Please see our statement below.

Best,

**Justin Meuse** (he/him)



## **Biden administration takes sweeping steps for Arctic conservation**

Contacts:

Tim Woody, (907) 223-2443, [tim\\_woody@twso.org](mailto:tim_woody@twso.org)

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA (September 6, 2023) – In an extraordinary trio of announcements today, the Biden administration renewed its emphasis on addressing conservation and climate change to protect America’s Arctic by:

- Canceling the sole remaining oil leases held by the state of Alaska in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, issued illegally by the Trump Administration.
- Issuing a [draft supplemental environmental impact statement](#) that recognizes conservation needs and Indigenous rights in the Arctic Refuge region.
- Shoring up [protections for designated Special Areas](#) in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, also known as the Western Arctic.

In response, The Wilderness Society issued the following statements.

### **From Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams:**

“It is nearly impossible to overstate the importance of today’s announcements for Arctic conservation,” Williams said. “President Trump’s Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was an underhanded ploy that opened one of the last great wild landscapes in America to destructive development, and resulted in a failed lease sale that was sloppily and hurriedly held in the waning days of the Trump administration as a gift to the fossil-fuel industry.

“But today – with positive announcements on both the Arctic Refuge and the Western Arctic – the Biden administration took huge steps to protect vast, beautiful landscapes for future generations,” Williams added. “More acres are set aside for conservation in the Western Arctic and, once again, the Arctic Refuge is free of oil leases. Our climate is a bit safer and there is renewed hope for permanently protecting one of the last great wild landscapes in America.”

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**From Karlin Itchoak, The Wilderness Society's senior regional director for Alaska:**

“Oil drilling on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge endangers not only one of the most beautiful and intact landscapes left in America, but it poses an existential threat to Alaska Native communities that depend on clean air and water, and plentiful subsistence resources such as a healthy Porcupine Caribou Herd. We are grateful to the Biden administration – which has shown a strong commitment to conservation and Indigenous rights – for taking these meaningful steps.

“We appreciate that the administration is recognizing the importance of what the Gwich'in know as *lizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit* – The Sacred Place Where Life Begins – and we call on Congress to repeal the Arctic Refuge oil and gas leasing provision in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and take action to permanently protect the coastal plain for future generations.”

Despite no major oil companies bidding in the 2021 lease sale, and [every major bank in America](#) announcing policies against financing drilling projects in the Arctic Refuge, another lease sale for the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain is required by the 2017 legislation, which can be overturned only by an act of Congress.

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*The Wilderness Society is the leading conservation organization uniting people to care for America's wild places. Founded in 1935, and now with more than one million members and supporters, The Wilderness Society has led the effort to permanently protect 111 million acres of wilderness and to ensure sound management of our shared national lands. [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org).*

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