

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C St., NW-6156
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As organizations and businesses from across the country committed to fighting the climate crisis, we are writing to submit our strong opposition to ConocoPhillips' massive Willow oil and gas project in Alaska's Western Arctic. This proposed project, in the climate stressed Alaskan Arctic, is a massive and far-reaching oil and gas drilling proposal which would lock in at least three decades of Arctic fossil fuel development at a time when the world is focused on climate solutions and a clean-energy transition. Your reassessment of and response to this damaging proposal will be a significant test of this administration's commitment to bringing the management of our nation's public lands into line with the urgent need to combat the climate crisis and your goal to preserve 30 percent of our nation's public lands by 2030. Careful analysis will confirm that declining to approve the Willow project is aligned with climate science and essential for the Biden administration to exercise global climate leadership.

Much more must be done to slash our nation's greenhouse gas emissions to at least meet the Biden administration's goal of 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Pivoting from fossil fuel production on federal public lands—which accounts for 25 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions—is a crucial part of achieving this goal and preventing climate disaster. Willow is the single largest oil extraction project currently proposed on U.S. federal lands, estimated to produce 590 million barrels of oil over thirty years, which is more potential carbon than 56 million cars would emit in a year. This project alone would offset a substantial portion of the carbon reductions achieved from the revised light-duty vehicle emissions standards announced in December 2021. Furthermore, the Willow project will enable even more industrial expansion into ecologically sensitive areas of the Western Arctic, producing billions more barrels of oil for decades to come. Numerous scientific studies have long concluded that expanded oil drilling activities in the Arctic is incompatible with meeting necessary climate targets.

The Willow project's climate impact is heightened by its location in the Western Arctic, the cultural homeland and subsistence area for a number of Alaska Native communities. The

Willow project would bring significant industrial impacts to this remote region, which is suffering severe stress as it warms three times faster than rest of the world. The project would include up to five drill pads with up to fifty wells on each pad, an extensive road system that includes hundreds of miles of water-intensive ice roads, hundreds of miles of pipelines, a gravel mine, and a new processing facility. What's more, because the permafrost is rapidly thawing due to the accelerating impact of climate change, ConocoPhillips' has admitted that it plans to artificially chill the melting tundra to even sustain this expansive oil and gas infrastructure. This high level of development investment would cause direct damage on the ground as it threatens to lock in oil production for decades.

The Willow project would also irreparably damage a sensitive and globally significant ecosystem around Teshekpuk Lake. The world has lost two-thirds of its wildlife in the last 50 years and the Teshekpuk Lake area provides vital nesting habitat for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds from around the globe, supporting the highest density of shorebirds in the circumpolar Arctic. It is also the primary calving ground and a key foraging and insect-relief area for the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd, a vital subsistence resource for communities in Arctic Alaska. This is the only herd that stays in the Arctic all year and this project would expose the herd to year-round industrial activity, while also threatening to cut off the animals' migration route, exacerbating the stress this herd is already suffering from climate change. The Western Arctic and the Willow project area also provide critical denning habitat for threatened polar bears. Impacts from Willow's industrial sprawl would further exacerbate the stress these irreplaceable species are already suffering from climate change.

In responding to the court decision vacating the Gulf of Mexico lease sale, the Department reiterated its commitment to follow "the law, science and sound policy," and "make significant and long overdue programmatic reforms" in its federal oil and gas program "in the face of the climate crisis." Recent court decisions from across the country, including the Alaska District Court decision that invalidated the Willow project's approval, and the D.C. District Court's decision invalidating an 80-million-acre lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico, underscore the government's legal obligation to accurately consider the long-term climate impacts of oil and gas development.

The decision your administration will make on the Willow Project is a legacy-defining decision that could commit us to at least another 30 years of fossil fuel extraction. It will also begin the aggressive development of a region that houses enough fossil fuels that, if burned, would equal more than double the carbon emissions of burning all the oil that the Keystone XL pipeline would have carried over its 50-year lifespan, had it been approved.

Declining to approve the proposed Willow project and its highly problematic carbon

implications would be an important step in the fulfillment of the Biden administration's commitments to sound policy and science, as well as in the work to fully deliver on your long-term climate and environmental justice promises.

Sincerely,

350.org
350 Juneau
350 New Hampshire
350 Seattle
A Community Voice- Louisiana
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action
Arctic Treks LLC
Alaska Soles Broadband- Great Old Broads
for Wilderness
Alaska Wilderness League
All About Adventure
American Packrafting Association
Anthropocene Alliance
Archeology Southwest
Audubon Alaska
Azul
Blue Water Ventures
Braided River
Businesses for a Livable Climate
Call to Action Colorado
Capitol Heights Presbyterian
CatholicNetwork US
Center for American Progress
Center for Biological Diversity
Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition
Chequamegon Audubon Society
Chicago Audubon Society
Climate Hawks Vote
CO Businesses for a Livable Climate
Community for Sustainable Energy
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Conservation Communications

Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Deer and Antelope, LLC
Defenders of Wildlife
Detroit Audubon
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Care
Earthjustice
EarthKeepers 360
EcoFlight
EGG350.org
Endangered Species Coalition
Energy 22
Environment America
Environmental Action
Environmental Protection Information
Center- EPIC
Evergreen Action
Eyak Preservation Council
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
Figure 8 Investment Strategies LLC.
Food & Water Watch
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice
Franciscan Action Network
Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Lost Coast
Friends of the San Pedro River
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Glasswaters Foundation

Great Bear Foundation
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Green America
Greenpeace USA
Harrington Investments, Inc.
Healthy Oceans Coalition
Honor the Earth
I-70 Citizens Advisory Group
Indigenous Environmental Network
Indivisible Ambassadors
Inland Ocean Coalition
Klamath Forest Alliance
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of
North America
League of Conservation Voters
Littleton Business Alliance
Love is King
Mattole Restoration Council
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association
Board
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement
Association
Mountaineers Books
Movement Rights
Native Movement
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Canaan Winter Club
New Energy Economy
North Range Concerned Citizens
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Olympic Peninsula Prairies
Omni Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology
Patagonia
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
People for Climate Action- Kenmore
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine
Project Impact, LLC

Pueblo Action Alliance
RapidShift Network
Rivers and Birds, Inc.
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Sanctuary Forest, Inc.
Save EPA (former employees)
Seeding Sovereignty
Seventh Generation interfaith Inc
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mary Reparatrix
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New
York
Small Business Alliance
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Soul River Inc
South Umpqua Rural Community
Partnership
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southwest Organization for Sustainability
Sovereign Inupiat For A Living Arctic
Stand.earth
Sunrise Movement
System Change Not Climate Change
The Climate Museum
The Green House Connection Center
The Mountain Pact
The Northcoast Environmental Center
The Wilderness Society
The Writer's Block Bookstore and Cafe
Tidelines Institute
Trustees for Alaska
Unite North Metro Denver
Utah Diné Bikéyah
Wall of Women
Waterway Advocates
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable
Climate
Wild Connections

Wild Montana
Wilderness Watch
Wilwerding Consulting
Winter Wildlands Alliance
Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
(WECAN)
Womxn from the Mountain
Woodstock Fishers LLC
Working for Racial Equity