

Alaska Oil and Gas Association



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TESTIMONY KATE WILLIAMS, ALASKA OIL AND GAS ASSOCIATION
ON
SCOPING STAGE
NPR-A INTEGRATED ACTIVITY PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Anchorage, Alaska – September 23, 2010

My name is Kate Williams and I am the Regulatory Affairs Representative for the Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA). AOGA is a private, nonprofit trade association whose member companies account for the majority of oil and gas exploration, development, production, transportation, refining and marketing activities in Alaska. We appreciate this opportunity to provide input during the scoping phase of the development of a new Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for NPR-A.

NPR-A has the potential to boost Alaska production and contribute to the nation's energy needs, based on the USGS estimate of technically recoverable reserves of approximately 9.3 billion barrels of oil and 59 tcf of natural gas. Production from NPR-A could help stem the decline of Alaska production and increase the life of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Further, Alaska's production previously accounted for about 20% of the entire nation's domestic production (1980-2000). Today, Alaska's production only accounts for 9%. Clearly, production from NPR-A has the potential to make a significant contribution to the nation's domestic supply.

As BLM has acknowledged in the announcement of this scoping stage, oil and gas activity within NPR-A has a long history dating back to 1923 when the National Petroleum Reserve was established by President Harding. During early exploration programs the U. S. Navy and USGS drilled 136 wells and core holes. In the last 10 years alone, 29 wells have been drilled and over this entire history, wildlife populations have continued to flourish.

Improvements in technologies over the past 40 years of development on the North Slope have significantly reduced the surface footprint while expanding the subsurface drillable area. In the 1970's a 20-acre gravel pad was utilized to access a subsurface area of less than one mile. Today's technologies allow a subsurface drillable area of over eight miles from a mere 6-acre pad. In addition, advancements in 3-D and 4-D seismic technology allow industry to focus their "targets", further reducing the surface impact.

AOGA strongly urges BLM to develop an Integrated Activity Plan that provides for oil and gas development within NPR-A without unnecessary restrictions or deferrals. History has shown that application of appropriate stipulations and mitigation measures, along with industry's implementation of best practices, can achieve two important goals that are not mutually exclusive—development of the nation's resources and protection of wildlife populations and the environment.