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U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
*“Examining the Biden Administration’s Unprecedented Obstruction of the BOEM Offshore Leasing Program”*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the State of Alaska and Governor Mike Dunleavy.

The Governor very much appreciates this Committee’s oversight of the impacts of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)’s September 29, 2023 release of the 2024 – 2029 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Proposed Final Program (PFP) and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on our state and its residents, and the opportunity to dispel the significant errors and omissions in the asserted justifications for this federal action.

Biden Administration policy has been an unmitigated disaster for Alaska and its people. No other federal administration in our state’s brief history has so brazenly and recklessly worked to forestall nearly every type of natural resource development opportunity.

We in Alaska, like all Americans, are threatened by these types of actions that restrict our domestic energy production opportunities and make our entire country less energy secure. We maintain our demand that, consistent with the spirit and letter of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA), the Biden Administration acknowledge that additional leasing is necessary in Alaska and in other outer continental shelf (OCS) regions in order to meet our national energy needs. In this time of increasing geopolitical turmoil, we should be doing everything within our power to grow our national economy and boost development of our nation’s energy resources.

*There is demand and need for Cook Inlet Natural Gas justifying leasing in the Federal OCS in Alaska*

Our longstanding source of natural gas to power our businesses and heat Alaskan homes is the Cook Inlet, which has seen the development of oil and natural gas for nearly 70 years. As these fields have aged, additional supplies have been increasingly challenging to develop, leading to higher production costs and, consequently, higher consumer prices. We are looking at all available options to address this critical public necessity.

One option that is off the table is developing the federal resources that are right next door in the Cook Inlet OCS. There is no shortage of potential resources on these lands – BOEM’s own

estimates show billions of cubic feet of gas resources could be produced from the Cook Inlet program area. And we know why it is off the table-- BOEM's own internal memoranda indicate that avoiding speculative and hypothetical climate impacts is more important to the agency than ensuring a reliable and affordable energy supply for hundreds of thousands of Alaskans. We believe this is unconscionable.

This administration hides behind the rhetoric of limited demand for leases or limited interest to develop these resources. The full story is that through overregulation and collusion with litigious environmental non-governmental organizations, the federal government has successfully destroyed any reasonable expectation of obtaining permits or authorizations to explore for resources, build infrastructure to develop resources, or get those resources to market in Alaska's OCS. In other words, claims of limited interest are nothing more than BOEM's self-fulfilling prophecy.

BOEM's policy is entirely at odds with OCSLA, the public interest, and common sense. BOEM has zero lease sales scheduled in an area with known resources, the known technical capacity to safely develop those resources, and countless Americans who need those resources. This policy stands as yet another example of this administration's brand of eco-imperialism.

*There are additional resources in the Alaska OCS that would benefit the State and the Country as a whole but are withdrawn contrary to long-term public interests*

This testimony prioritizes Cook Inlet's natural gas supplies because of the urgency of finding solutions to our energy needs in Alaska. However, it is important to highlight for the Committee that the same restrictive and detrimental policies that are starting to be applied in the Gulf of Mexico have already been deployed in Alaska.

Today, essentially all of the most prospective OCS areas off our North Slope – where we have successfully and safely developed nearly 18 billion barrels of oil to date – are not only omitted from the five-year plan but are subject to presidential withdrawals that limit any leasing or activity in the area. This includes huge areas that were previously under lease, which saw billions of dollars in prior exploration efforts, and/or saw significant drilling activity – but are now off the table for further development. The State of Alaska has been unjustifiably targeted with these expansive OCSLA withdrawals, which will produce long-term economic harm to our state and the nation.

We believe this Committee should examine how this OCSLA withdrawal authority has been abused and make clear to this administration that this authority is not meant to block opportunity across entire regions.

*We believe the effects of this policy are detrimental to Alaska and the nation*

As a resource state, Alaska has a friendly rivalry with our peer states to compete on production. However, when the federal government limits opportunities in certain areas we all lose. We lose because the national economic benefits, consumer benefits, and quality of life that are supported by domestic energy production are lost for future generations.

Geopolitical instability is all around us and seemingly increasing every day. Nearly every energy jurisdiction around the world is embroiled in conflicts that threaten U.S. interests. Inexplicably, this administration is meeting that energy supply threat with the most restrictive five-year plan since the enactment of OCSLA. The economies, coastal communities, and Americans that work in the energy industry will feel the pain from these perverse federal policies – Alaskans deal with roadblock after roadblock to our resources every day. As a result, we suffer directly from higher fuel prices. All Americans need the resources in the Gulf of Mexico to be produced and utilized for the benefit of our nation.

*These anti-Alaska, anti-energy policies have unfortunately become the norm*

Finally, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to how consistently harmful this administration's anti-energy policies are. In Alaska, we have seen cancellation of existing leases and stalling of the statutorily required future lease sales in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The federal approval of the Willow project took a bipartisan 60-0 vote from our state legislature and a broad coalition to demonstrate how unquestionably in the public interest it was. Now we are seeing a hyper-restrictive rulemaking in the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska (NPR-A) intended to take those resources off the table forever, as well. The bar is almost insurmountably high for oil and gas development, no matter how beneficial it is to local and indigenous communities, how small its environmental footprint, or how minimal its emissions profile may be.

Further, we seek resource development of critical minerals to see the potential for clean and renewable energy unlocked. However, the Ambler Road project to the Ambler mining district in Alaska is trapped in a loop of remands and revisions and new restrictions. Other mining projects on State lands cannot even go through the permitting process due to ad hoc federal pre-disapprovals. Environmental reviews for other mineral activities languish for years without an end date in sight. We unfortunately believe the Biden Administration is taking a none-of-the-above approach to energy strategy, of which the BOEM five-year plan is yet another example of.

### *Conclusion*

Thank you for inviting me to testify today on this topic, which is so vitally important to our state. The State of Alaska believes the current PFP is fundamentally deficient because it fails to hold even one lease sale in Cook Inlet to support the critical energy needs of the residents of Alaska. Since this administration seems intent on offering up Alaska as a sacrifice on the altar of climate extremism to appease radical environmentalists, we implore this Committee and Congress to restore sanity and promote rational energy policy at this critical time in our nation's history.