

# Trump administration to open ANWR and NPR-A to oil and gas leases

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - Two months after President Donald Trump announced his administration's intentions to [“drill, baby, drill” in Alaska](#), Interior Secretary Doug Burgum [said Thursday](#) about 80% — roughly 20.3 million acres of land — of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's entire Coastal Plain will be open for oil and gas leases.

[Burgum](#) said the development of Alaska's “largely untapped resources” is a “pathway to prosperity” for all Americans.

“Interior is committed to recognizing the central role the State of Alaska plays in meeting our nation's energy needs, while providing tremendous economic opportunity for Alaskans,” Burgum said in a press release, taking the position the federal government has previously made it difficult for Alaska to realize its energy potential.

Trump's executive order directed agency heads to rescind, revoke, or revise policies or regulations the administration said hinders the fossil fuel development and production on Alaska federal and state lands.

“The news today will provide more investment opportunities, more jobs, and a better future for Alaskans,” Gov. Mike Dunleavy said in a statement. “We look forward to our continued work with President Trump and his administration to move Alaska and our country forward.”

In response, Alaska director for the Center for Biological Diversity Cooper Freeman equated the administration's decision to allowing the destruction of Alaska's lands and increasing pollution risk in favor of corporate profits.

“The damage will be severe and long-lasting,” Freeman said in a statement. “Trump wants to dig, burn and dump his way across Alaska's finest wildlife refuges and national parks, giving away our public lands to put more money into the pockets of billionaires. Alaska's most precious resources are its vast expanses of wild lands and habitat for wildlife like caribou and polar bears, and we'll keep fighting hard to protect those beautiful places.”

Burgum's actions Thursday will open 82% of the NPR-A, according to the Interior Department, or about 18.8 million acres of land on Alaska's North Slope, as well as all 1.56 million acres of the Coastal Plain in ANWR.

Alaska's Congressional delegation also reacted to the announcement via a prepared statement on Thursday.

“This is wonderful news for Alaska,” said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska. “Secretary Burgum recognizes Alaska's incredible resource potential and the increasingly onerous restrictions that have been put in place—over our objections—to stop us from responsibly producing and reaching our full potential as a state.

“These are the first steps to restoring reasonable access to our federal lands and the federal government fulfilling the terms of our statehood compact from nearly 70 years ago,” she added, “all achieved by simply partnering with Alaskans and following the law.”

Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, called the announcement “great news for our state.”

“Opening the ANWR Coastal Plain and the NPR-A to responsible resource development has been a longtime goal for Alaska’s congressional delegation,” he wrote. “Additionally, DOI’s order today lifts land withdrawals along the Dalton Highway Corridor, which contains the lifeblood of Alaska—the Trans-Alaska Pipeline—and allows those lands to be conveyed to the State of Alaska, securing this vital artery for future resource development, including access to the Ambler Mining District and the right-of-way for a future Alaska LNG pipeline.”

Rep. Nick Begich, R-Alaska, said the DOI move is a major step toward Alaska being at the forefront of America’s energy future.

“By opening access to the National Petroleum Reserve, ANWR, and critical infrastructure corridors,” he said, “we are reaffirming that Alaska’s vast resources should be developed to benefit both our state and the entire nation. Now is the time to deliver affordable, reliable energy to households and businesses in Alaska and beyond.”

[Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat](#) also came out in support of the news.

“VOICE has advocated tirelessly for durable policies and regular engagement with our North Slope leaders to support development opportunities in the region,” President Nagruk Harcharek said. “It is vital to ensure that revenue streams supporting essential services and infrastructure, many of which are ubiquitous in the Lower 48 but have only arrived in our region within the last 50 years, and institutions managing our subsistence resources remain viable in the long term.”

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