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Record of Decision Sets Stage for Major Lease Sale in National Petroleum Reserve Alaska

In a Record of Decision issued today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced that it will make land available for oil and gas leasing in the northeast portion of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A).

“This action sets the stage for a major lease sale this fall. This is welcome news at a time when Americans are paying record prices at the pump,” said C. Stephen Allred, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals, in signing the ROD.

At the same lease sale, the BLM also plans to offer land in the northwest portion of the NPR-A.

“The rapid increase in energy costs facing our nation is driven by a worldwide imbalance in energy supply and demand,” Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne said. “Developing the NPR-A in an environmentally sound manner will contribute to our domestic oil and natural gas supplies. Together with new production from other offshore and onshore areas, these increased supplies will help stabilize energy costs.”

The lands made available for leasing under plans for NPR-A northeast and northwest could result in as much as 8.4 billion barrels of oil being developed. The lands could also provide trillions of cubic feet of natural gas for shipment to North American markets through gas pipelines currently in the planning stages.

“This decision provides for the protection of high value wildlife, including waterfowl and caribou, and meets the subsistence needs of North Slope residents while making lands with oil and gas potential available for leasing,” said BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie.

The plan includes protections for the polar bear, including requirements to consider impacts on areas used by polar bears for denning. Additionally, with the listing of the polar bear the agency will continue to work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on future oil and gas activities.

According to the Record of Decision, the BLM defers leasing for 10 years on land currently unavailable for leasing north and east of Teshekpuk Lake.

The Record of Decision for the Northeast NPR-A Final Supplemental Plan can be reached through a link on BLM-Alaska’s home page at www.blm.gov/ak.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land — 258 million surface acres than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is in 12

Western states, including 80.8 million surface acres in Alaska. The Bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

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