



**House Committee on Natural Resources
Hearing on H.R. 1964
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**Written Testimony
Of**

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Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member Markey, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide comments today. My name is Richard Glenn and I am the Executive Vice President of Lands and Natural Resources for Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. I live in Barrow, Alaska. My professional background is in geology and Arctic geologic processes. Like most of my fellow community members, I also depend on the land and sea for what we call subsistence resources, the food and cultural web that has sustained us for centuries.

The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation is one of the 12 land-based Native regional corporations created by Congress pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

ASRC owns approximately 5 million acres of land, and represents the interests of approximately 11,000 Iñupiat Eskimo shareholders, that mostly reside in eight communities within Alaska's North Slope. The mandate prescribed by law to ASRC requires ASRC to return benefits back to our people. The only asset transferred to ASRC through this act was land entitlement. We continue to explore options on how to use this asset to return those benefits back to our people. ASRC lands are impacted by the federal management decisions in NPR-A. As one of the largest private landowners within the NPR-A, its decisions affect our corporation and our people.

The North Slope and State of Alaska economies are dependent upon finding and developing new oil and gas resources. Communities within NPR-A are even more dependent. They are at the tip of the spear on the effects of management decisions on public lands in Alaska.

Our villages are small and separated by great distance in an area about the size of the state of Montana. No roads connect our villages. My hometown of Barrow is a coastal community located inside NPR-A, 340 miles north of the Arctic Circle, near the boundaries of both the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas.

The proportion of federal land owned by the federal government in one region is remarkable. It does not exist anywhere else in the United States. NPR-A, 23 million acres, ANWR, 19 million acres, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park, 7 million acres – these are huge swaths of land controlled by decisions made in Congress and federal agencies such as the Department of Interior. The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska is the center of our home. Larger than some eastern seaboard states, the NPR-A has no roads and only four of our Iñupiat communities. The region hosts huge populations of migratory animals. Caribou, fish, waterfowl and others; they do not recognize lines on a map, but move in and out of the area in sweeping migrations.

The NPR-A is also a petroleum reserve; it holds the potential of oil and gas resources of national interest. Within its boundaries are also the corridors for the development of important resources in Alaska's outer continental shelf.

Committee members, in just my lifetime, our communities have gone through great change, with developments that have improved the quality of life from formerly very harsh conditions. Today, our "villages" are actually small cities with small city needs: reliable power, water and sewer treatment facilities, health services, fire protection, airports and schools.

Our people depend on these services. We have not looked to many federal or even state-funding sources to build our community improvements. They were developed thanks to our home-rule municipality, the North Slope Borough, and a locally-derived property tax base based on oil and gas exploration. There is essentially no other economy in our region. Safe and responsible oil and gas development is the only industry that has remained in our region long enough to foster village improvements that have improved our quality of life. There is no agriculture, no fishing, and only a modest tourist presence. In short, Alaska's North Slope Native people, depend upon continued development to sustain their communities. So oil and gas development is important to us, perhaps even more than to our state and nation.

The volume of oil being produced in Alaska is in deep decline, producing today at less than one-third the rate of its peak production of two million barrels per day and continues to drop every year. This decline has caused us to question the future of the communities that we have worked so hard to improve. We have asked ourselves: where will our grandchildren go to school, what will power their villages, how will their communities be sustained? With prospective onshore areas now off-limits, we may be unable to offset it in the near term. This decline is not just a lingering tail of decreasing production, but can become a "brick wall" when the pipeline reaches its minimum throughput limits and is unable to move production. Hence, the need for significant new production.

We understand that the currently-known onshore resources are not enough to stem the decline in production; they only reduce its severity. New exploration is needed. Oil, as they say, is where you find it. We have hydrocarbons-coal, natural gas and oil, and in some places we have them in abundance. Resource potential exists on both State- and federally-owned lands, as well as private lands owned by North Slope Alaska Natives, including prospects in the NPR-A. NPR-A and the Alaskan offshore represent the future; they will help fill the gap in throughput capacity in coming years.

ASRC and the people of the North Slope have a heightened concern for the environmental effects of oil and gas exploration and development. We live there. Regarding environmental risks, no one has more at stake than we do.

It is for these reasons that we support H.R. 1964. Specifically, Sections four (4) and five (5).

We appreciate the committee's efforts to require the Department of Interior to "go back to the drawing board" with respect to the recently finalized NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan. We met with Interior representatives only after they formed a Record of Decision for the NPR-A. If you ask me, I would say there was insufficient meaningful consultation with Native landowners or municipalities.

The current NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan is ambiguous with respect to rights-of-way. Clarity and certainty is needed, and H.R. 1964, provides both. When preferred and alternate routes for pipelines are identified, our communities will need a seat at the table to discuss the options. We want to be part of the process that preserves the subsistence hunting and fishing rights of our people, while delivering domestic energy to our region and to the nation.

Further, we believe it is important to recognize that the subsistence resources do not recognize lines on a map. The areas of special habitat protection in general will do nothing to protect those resources. Caribou, waterfowl and fish move across the petroleum reserve and far beyond as part of their annual migration. I believe that much of the NPR-A affected by the recent Record of Decision will remain untouched, due to its large size and widely-spaced energy potential, not because of any special environmental protection. It is for these reasons that we allow development in the places where such potential exists, especially if it is shown to have little or no impacts on wildlife species.

We were frustrated with the lack of meaningful consultation during the IAP/EIS process with tribal and other Native groups. The Record of Decision now includes a role for the North Slope Borough, as well as our village and regional corporations who are landowners within the

petroleum reserve. That is a good thing, but the Interior Department should have incorporated local input before, and not after the Record of Decision.

ASRC and the North Slope Borough have participated in all four of the NPR-A IAP/EIS processes since 1999. Through extensive consultation and collaboration with all of the stakeholders in NPR-A, prior administrations including those under Interior Secretaries Babbitt Norton accepted and considered local input prior to forming their management decisions. The result was a more “balanced plan” to which all parties generally agreed.

ASRC believes that responsible oil and gas development on the North Slope and offshore allows ASRC to meet its congressionally-mandated obligations to its Alaskan Native shareholders. We continue to believe that responsible resource development and appropriate management of resources, including subsistence resources, are not mutually exclusive goals. Responsible development also provides a safe and secure source of energy to the nation, creates important jobs, and helps ensure future flow through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. Public law states the NPR-A is to be managed “in a manner consistent with the total energy needs of the Nation.” The discovery and development of oil and gas resources in the Arctic, including in the NPR-A, is needed to meet the “total energy needs” of the country.

We have opposed any designations that would erect additional barriers to responsible oil and gas exploration in the NPR-A where there is no demonstrated need. Millions of acres on the North Slope are already essentially locked up as Wilderness, National Parks or similarly restrictive status, and more of these efforts threaten to “paint us into a corner” within our own region.

The petroleum reserve, set aside by President Warren Harding in 1923, was explored by the U.S. Navy in the 1940's and -50's using older methods that polluted some lands and damaged the landscape. The Bureau of Land Management recently published its management plan for the cleanup of what are now called legacy wells in NPR-A. We support the plan, and our residents will benefit from the BLM's goal of remediating the most hazardous legacy wells first. The cleanup of the legacy wells is a debt owed to North Slope residents and the American

public. It should be supported by the federal budget, as is the case with formerly used defense sites, for example, and not from federal proceeds that would otherwise be going to North Slope communities.

We are encouraged that Congress is taking the appropriate steps to require the DOI to revisit its decision.

Perhaps the Committee is also aware that yesterday the State of Alaska proposed to Interior Secretary Jewell the wintertime exploration of the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). We support the State's proposal because it is directly aligned with our message on ANWR that has been unchanged now for more than twenty years. Exploration of the Coastal Plain, mandated by law, can be performed in the wintertime and leave no lasting impacts on the land. Seismic evaluation of the Coastal Plain will give Congress and the American people the information needed to make reasonable decisions of the public lands in the wildlife refuge.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this process. Our intent is to remain at the table with both government agencies and industry explorers. Please do not prevent us from meeting our responsibility to our grandchildren and future generations. As Congress goes forward to debate this issue, I ask you to remember the impacts that that your decisions will have on our communities, our culture and our people.