



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Republican Members  
**From:** Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Staff: Michelle Lane  
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Annika Erickson ([Annika.Erickson@mail.house.gov](mailto:Annika.Erickson@mail.house.gov)); x5-0500  
**Date:** Monday, September 15, 2025  
**Subject:** Oversight Hearing titled “*Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential*”

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The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold an oversight hearing titled “*Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential*” on **Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at 10:15 a.m. in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Jace McNaught ([Jace.McNaught@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jace.McNaught@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on September 15 if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

## **I. KEY MESSAGES**

- With expedited permitting and deregulation, Alaska’s abundant oil and gas, mineral, and timber resources can contribute significantly to our national security and resource needs.
- The Biden administration, however, chose radical preservation over responsible development and production, forfeiting opportunities for energy independence, economic prosperity, and pragmatic conservation.
- President Trump’s executive orders (EOs) and Congressional Republicans’ efforts to overturn harmful Biden-era regulations will unleash Alaskan energy development, mineral production, and infrastructure projects, most notably restoring critical activity in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).
- With the repeal of restrictive roadless rules, Alaska’s vast timber landscape can once again boost local employment, contributing to manufacturing and craftsmanship around the world.
- Responsible management and use of Alaska’s untapped natural resources would create a ripple effect of job creation and economic growth nationwide, fulfilling future resource needs and ending resource dependence on foreign adversaries.

## II. WITNESSES

### Panel I (Outside Experts)

- **Mr. Nagruk Harcharek**, President, Voice of the Arctic Inupiat, Anchorage, AK
- **Ms. Deantha Skibinski**, Executive Director, Alaska Miners Association, Anchorage, AK
- **Mr. Dutch Kuyper**, Vice President, Lands and Development, Cook Inlet Region, Inc., Anchorage, AK
- **Mr. John Christensen Jr.**, Tribal President, Native Village of Port Heiden, Port Heiden, AK (*Minority witness*)

### Panel II (Outside Experts)

- **Mr. Ethan Tyler**, Senior Director, Public Policy and Lands, Aleut, Anchorage, AK
- **Mr. Clark Penney**, President, Penney Capital, Anchorage, AK
- **Mr. Clarence Clark**, Owner, Southeast Alaska Resources, Ketchikan, AK
- **Mr. Philip Wight**, Associate Professor of History and Arctic & Northern Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK (*Minority witness*)

## III. BACKGROUND

### *Introduction*

The State of Alaska, also known as “The Last Frontier,”<sup>1</sup> “holds an abundant and largely untapped supply of natural resources.”<sup>2</sup> These resources include vast amounts of energy, like oil and gas, critical and other hardrock minerals, timber, seafood, and public lands open to recreation.<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing the unfortunate reality that the Biden administration allowed Alaska’s exceptional natural resources to languish, President Trump issued EO 14153, *Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential*, to encourage development of Alaska’s resources “to the fullest extent possible.”<sup>4</sup> The EO aims to “deliver price relief for Americans, create high-quality jobs for our citizens, ameliorate our trade imbalances, augment the Nation’s exercise of global energy dominance, and guard against foreign powers weaponizing energy supplies in theaters of geopolitical conflict.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Representative Nick Begich (R-AK) and Congressional Republicans have acted quickly to emphasize Alaska’s resource potential, support President Trump’s EO, and immediately end “the assault on Alaska’s sovereignty and its ability to responsibly develop [its] resources for the benefit” of all Americans.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Last Frontier*, State Symbols USA, <https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol/alaska/state-nickname/last-frontier>.

<sup>2</sup> Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

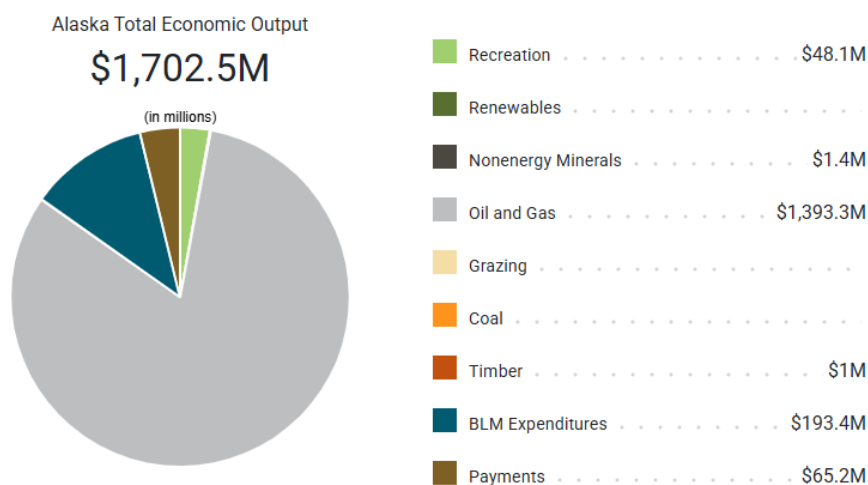
<sup>4</sup> Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*; see also Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to “Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan,” H. J. Res. 106 (2025), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-joint-resolution/106/text?s=2&r=1>.

## Unleashing Alaska's Energy Resources: Oil & Gas

### Overview



Alaska's total economic output, graphed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) using data from BLM's Valuing America's Public Lands 2024 publication.<sup>7</sup>

Alaska's oil and gas industry is "the single most important economic engine in the state," with oil field discoveries dating back to 1959 in the Kenai Peninsula.<sup>8</sup> In a single year, the industry supports 69,250 Alaskan jobs and generates \$4.5 billion in state and local revenue.<sup>9</sup> Alaska's proved crude oil reserves are the fourth largest of any state at 3.4 billion barrels.<sup>10</sup> Yet, in 2023, the state's oil production averaged 3 percent of total U.S. production—about 426,000 barrels per day—which was the lowest level since 1976.<sup>11</sup>

Since revenues from the oil and gas industry fund most of the state government, Alaska has been able to prosper without a state sales tax or a personal income tax.<sup>12</sup> In fact, every Alaska resident receives an annual dividend from the Alaska Permanent Fund based on the value of oil royalty revenue.<sup>13</sup> In 2024, the dividend totaled \$1,702.<sup>14</sup>

The North Slope of Alaska alone contains six of the 100 largest oil fields in the United States and one of the 100 largest natural gas fields.<sup>15</sup> Alaska's proved natural gas reserves rank third among

<sup>7</sup> *Valuing America's Public Lands 2024*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (2024), <https://www.blm.gov/about/data/socioeconomic-impact-report>; *The BLM: Valuing America's Public Lands 2024*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (2024), [https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2024-11/BLM-Valuing-Americas-Public-Lands-2024\\_508.pdf](https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2024-11/BLM-Valuing-Americas-Public-Lands-2024_508.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> *The Role of the Oil & Gas Industry in Alaska's Economy*, ALASKA OIL AND GAS ASS'N & MCDOWELL GROUP (Jan. 2020), <https://mckinleyresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/mcdowell-group-aoga-report-final-1-24-2020.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> *See Benefits of Oil & Gas to Alaska*, ALASKA OIL AND GAS ASS'N (Nov. 2023), <https://www.aoga.org/benefits/>.

<sup>10</sup> *See Alaska State Energy Profile*, U.S. ENERGY INFO. ADMIN. (Aug. 21, 2025), <https://www.eia.gov/state/print.php?sid=AK#:~:text=Alaska's%20proved%20crude%20oil%20reserves,the%20lowest%20level%20since%201976>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

all U.S. states, with about 100 trillion cubic feet of gas.<sup>16</sup> In 2023, Alaska's natural gas withdrawals hit 3.5 trillion cubic feet, the fourth largest in the nation after Texas, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana.<sup>17</sup> However, most of the state's gas production is not brought to market because the North Slope's natural gas volumes far exceed local demand, and there is no pipeline to transport gas to consumers further south.<sup>18</sup> Operators therefore reinject most of Alaska's natural gas withdrawals back into oil reservoirs to maintain crude oil production rates.<sup>19</sup>

### *Alaska LNG Project*

To bring Alaska's vast North Slope natural gas resources to market in the rest of the state, across the United States, and in closely allied foreign nations, the Trump administration has prioritized completion of the Alaska LNG Project (AK LNG).<sup>20</sup> AK LNG, which is expected to deliver 3.5 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day once complete, is already "permitted as an integrated project and has completed a full review under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)."<sup>21</sup> The project is set to include a gas treatment plant in the North Slope that will remove gas impurities, an 800-mile pipeline from the North Slope to Nikiski in Southcentral Alaska that includes multiple gas interconnection points to feed in-state gas demand, as well as a liquification facility in Nikiski that will cool and condense the Alaskan gas for transportation to domestic and international markets.<sup>22</sup>

Within Alaska, completion of AK LNG will ensure that state residents "gain a long-term and affordable source of natural gas for home heating, power generation, and industrial needs."<sup>23</sup> AK LNG is anticipated to create up to 10,000 jobs during design and construction, and another approximately 1,000 jobs once operational.<sup>24</sup> In the rest of the United States, AK LNG will provide immense economic and social benefits through its "clean, energy-efficient, and safe production methods," and its stable supply of natural gas to power homes and businesses nationwide.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, however, is that completion of AK LNG will solidify American national security interests. Given the Alaskan North Slope's enormous quantities of natural gas and Alaska's geographic proximity to Asia compared to other natural gas producing parts of the United States, AK LNG is ideally positioned to supply the rising natural gas needs of strategic American allies like Japan and South Korea who otherwise rely on foreign antagonists like Russia and some countries in the Middle East to meet their energy needs.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> See Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>21</sup> *Alaska LNG Permits*, ALASKA LNG, <https://alaska-lng.com/regulatory-process/permits/>.

<sup>22</sup> *Project Overview*, ALASKA LNG, <https://alaska-lng.com/>.

<sup>23</sup> *Project Overview*, ALASKA LNG, <https://alaska-lng.com/project-overview/>.

<sup>24</sup> *Economic Benefits*, ALASKA LNG, <https://alaska-lng.com/project-overview/benefits/>.

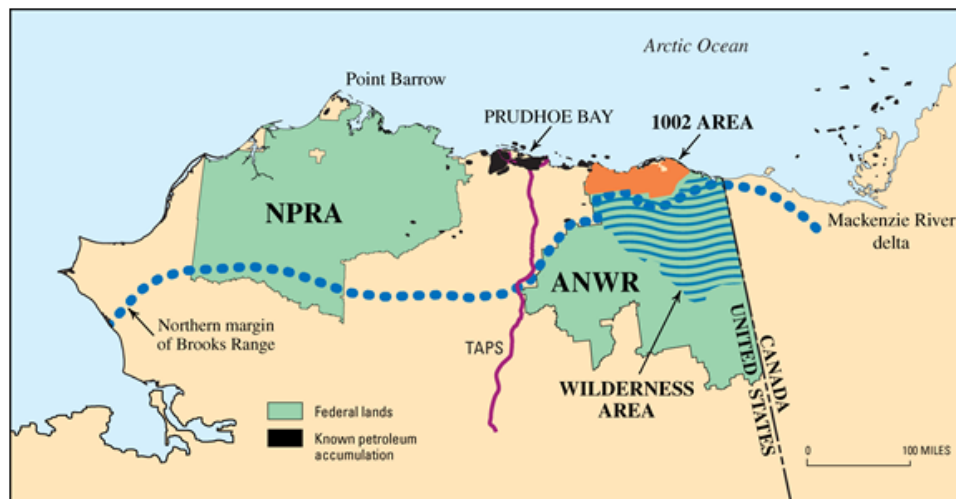
<sup>25</sup> *Project Overview*, ALASKA LNG, <https://alaska-lng.com/project-overview/>.

<sup>26</sup> See *Id.*; see also James Brooks, *Japanese electric company signs tentative agreement for gas from trans-Alaska pipeline project*, ALASKA BEACON (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://alaskabeacon.com/briefs/japanese-electric-company-signs-tentative-agreement-for-gas-from-trans-alaska-pipeline-project/>.

For example, in 2024, Japan—the world’s second largest natural gas purchaser—imported 65.9 million metric tons of natural gas, only approximately ten percent of which came from the United States, due mainly to the U.S.’s lack of natural gas export terminals on the West Coast.<sup>27</sup> AK LNG will not only open such a terminal, but also directly link it to a massive supply of Alaskan North Slope gas. Accordingly, through AK LNG, American natural gas would “flow in massive quantities to Japan and South Korea and then would flow downstream...so that Southeast Asia would become economically dependent on the United States” rather than remain reliant on America’s adversaries like Russia.<sup>28</sup> Toward this end, in September 2025, Japan’s largest electric company agreed to purchase one million tons of natural gas annually from AK LNG.<sup>29</sup> This agreement follows other similar agreements between America’s AK LNG and Taiwanese and Thai state-owned energy companies to purchase AK LNG natural gas, further solidifying America’s strategic position in Asia’s natural gas market and pushing nations like Russia out.<sup>30</sup> By selecting key allied partners in Asia, like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, to which to sell American natural gas, AK LNG also serves to reduce the economic and geopolitical stranglehold that adversarial nations to the U.S. have over the region.

Fundamentally, completing AK LNG will “strengthen the U.S. geostrategic position in the North Pacific, provide vital energy security for [Alaskan] residents, our military bases, our businesses, and our Asian allies, and unlock billions in economic benefit at home and abroad.”<sup>31</sup>

#### ANWR and NPR-A



A map of Northern Alaska showing ANWR and the Coastal Plain 1002 Area, sourced from the U.S. Geological Survey.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> John Geddie, Tim Kelly, and David Brunnstrom, *Trump seeks to reshape Asia’s energy supplies with US gas*, REUTERS (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/trump-seeks-reshape-asias-energy-supplies-with-us-gas-2025-02-21/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> James Brooks, *Japanese electric company signs tentative agreement for gas from trans-Alaska pipeline project*, ALASKA BEACON (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://alaskabeacon.com/briefs/japanese-electric-company-signs-tentative-agreement-for-gas-from-trans-alaska-pipeline-project/>.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Glenfarne Becomes Lead Developer for the Alaska LNG Project*, ALASKA LNG (Mar 27, 2025), <https://agdc.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/FOR-IMMEDIATE-RELEASE-20250327.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Dana Van Wagener, *Analysis of Projected Crude Oil Production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*, U.S. ENERGY INFO. ADMIN. (May 23, 2018), <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/anwr.php>.

In northeast Alaska, ANWR comprises 19 million acres and includes the Coastal Plain, an onshore oil prospect.<sup>33</sup> ANWR was first established in 1960 by Public Land Order 2214 as the Arctic National Wildlife Range.<sup>34</sup> The Range was eventually expanded and redesignated as ANWR under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980.<sup>35</sup> In its northwest corner, ANWR contains the Coastal Plain, or 1002 Area, which was defined and explicitly set apart by Congress due to its significant potential for oil and gas development.<sup>36</sup> According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Coastal Plain includes a mean value of 7.7 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil on federal lands.<sup>37</sup>

In the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), Congress established an oil and gas leasing program in the Coastal Plain to initiate oil and gas activities in ANWR, as authorized by ANILCA.<sup>38</sup> The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was tasked with establishing and administering the program and conducted the first oil and gas lease sale in January 2021, offering 22 tracts on 1.1 million acres.<sup>39</sup> However, after President Biden took office and issued EOs directing a moratorium on all activities in the Coastal Plain program, the Department of the Interior (DOI) suspended operations on all leases awarded during the 2021 sale and eventually cancelled them completely.<sup>40</sup>

In January 2025, President Trump rescinded the lease cancellations and ordered agencies to issue the necessary authorizations for lease development through EO 14153.<sup>41</sup> In that same EO, President Trump revived the 2020 record of decision (ROD) for the initial lease sale, as well as the 2019 environmental impact statement (EIS), which potentially allows the inclusion of additional acreage and fewer restrictions in future lease sales.<sup>42</sup> The fiscal year 2025 budget reconciliation bill, H.R. 1, requires BLM to conduct a minimum of four new lease sales on the Coastal Plain by certain dates, offering at least 400,000 acres at each sale.<sup>43</sup> Through fiscal year 2033, half of the revenue from those sales will be shared with the state of Alaska; beginning in fiscal year 2034, 70 percent of the revenues will go to Alaska.<sup>44</sup>

In the early 20th Century, the federal government established several naval petroleum reserves on public land, including Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4 in Alaska in 1923.<sup>45</sup> The Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (NPRPA)<sup>46</sup> designated the roughly 23-million-acre

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<sup>33</sup> See Laura B. Comay, *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Status of Oil and Gas Program*, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (July 24, 2025), <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IF12006>.

<sup>34</sup> *Public Land Order 2214: Establishing the Arctic National Wildlife Range*, FED. REG. DOC. 60-11519, 12598 (Dec. 8, 1960), [https://archives.federalregister.gov/issue\\_slice/1960/12/9/12596-12599.pdf#page=3](https://archives.federalregister.gov/issue_slice/1960/12/9/12596-12599.pdf#page=3).

<sup>35</sup> See LAURA B. COMAY ET AL., CONG. RSCH. SERV., RL33872, ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (ANWR): AN OVERVIEW (Apr. 25, 2025), <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33872>.

<sup>36</sup> See 16 U.S.C. § 3142.

<sup>37</sup> See Kenneth J. Bird & David W. Houseknecht, *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 1002 Area, Petroleum Assessment, 1998, Including Economic Analysis*, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURV. (Nov. 29, 2016), <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/fs-0028-01/fs-0028-01.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> See LAURA B. COMAY, CONG. RSCH. SERV., IF12006, ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE: STATUS OF OIL AND GAS PROGRAM (July 24, 2025), <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IF12006>.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

<sup>41</sup> *Id.*

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

<sup>45</sup> See *National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska*, U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MGMT., <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/about/alaska/NPR-A>.

<sup>46</sup> See Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (NPRPA), Pub. L. No. 94-258 (1976), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/94th-congress/house-bill/49/text>.



area specifically for oil and gas development, renamed it the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A), and transferred administration from the Navy to the BLM. Congress then amended the NPRPA in 1980 to direct the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to “conduct an expeditious program of competitive leasing” in the area.<sup>47</sup> To that end, section 102 of the NPRPA states that the Secretary is authorized to take certain actions, as necessary, “for appropriate use by Alaska Natives and the North Slope Borough” and “to permit the North Slope Borough to provide energy supplies to villages on the North Slope.”<sup>48</sup> The most recent lease sale in the NPR-A occurred in 2019, when the BLM leased over a million acres, which generated over \$11 million, including roughly \$5.6 million for the state of Alaska.<sup>49</sup> Approximately 2.5 million acres of the NPR-A are currently leased, mostly in an area of high development potential between Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River.<sup>50</sup>

DOI issues Integrated Activity Plans (IAP) to allocate land uses in the NPR-A, which is currently divided into five special areas intended to protect a wide range of significant subsistence, recreational, fish and wildlife, historical, and scenic values.<sup>51</sup> In 2020, the Trump administration developed a new NPR-A IAP in close partnership with the North Slope Borough and in consultation with North Slope Tribes and Alaska Native corporations.<sup>52</sup> The 2020 IAP updated the Obama administration’s 2013 IAP and included safeguards for wildlife, while allowing for responsible energy development in the NPR-A.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, the Biden administration reverted management of the NPR-A to the 2013 IAP.<sup>54</sup> BLM issued a proposed rule in 2023, “Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska,”<sup>55</sup> which further limited oil and gas leasing in the Teshekpuk Lake, Utukok Uplands, Colville River, Kasegaluk Lagoon, and Peard Bay Special Areas, and entirely prohibited new leasing for 10.6 million acres.<sup>56</sup> The rule also required BLM to review and gather public input at least every five years to determine whether existing special areas should be expanded, new special areas should be designated, or additional resources within special areas should be identified for protection.<sup>57</sup> President Trump rescinded this BLM rule, as well as all

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<sup>47</sup> Making Appropriations for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1981, and for Other Purposes, Pub. L. No. 96-514 (1980), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/7724/text>.

<sup>48</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 6502.

<sup>49</sup> See *NPR-A Lease Sale Summary*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (Dec. 11, 2019),

[https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/OilandGas\\_Alaska\\_2019\\_NPR-A\\_Lease-Sale-Bid-Recap.pdf](https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/OilandGas_Alaska_2019_NPR-A_Lease-Sale-Bid-Recap.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> See *National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska: Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (June 2020), [https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/NPR-A\\_Final-IAP-EIS\\_Volume%201\\_ExecSummary\\_Ch1-3\\_References\\_Glossary.pdf](https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/NPR-A_Final-IAP-EIS_Volume%201_ExecSummary_Ch1-3_References_Glossary.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> See *Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska*, 89 Fed. Reg. 38712 (May 7, 2024), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/07/2024-08585/management-and-protection-of-the-national-petroleum-reserve-in-alaska>.

<sup>52</sup> See *Secretary Deb Haaland Ignores North Slope Inupiat on NPR-A IAP*, ARCTIC SLOPE REGIONAL CORPORATION (Jan. 11, 2022), <https://www.asrc.com/press/secretary-deb-haaland-ignores-north-slope-inupiat-on-npr-a-iap/>.

<sup>53</sup> See *Trump Administration Updates Plan for Responsible Energy Development in Alaska’s National Petroleum Reserve*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (Jan. 4, 2021), <https://www.blm.gov/press-release/trump-administration-updates-plan-responsible-energy-development-alaskas-national>.

<sup>54</sup> See *BLM provides update in review of 2020 Integrated Activity Plan for the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (Jan. 10, 2022), <https://www.blm.gov/press-release/blm-provides-update-review-2020-integrated-activity-plan-national-petroleum-reserve>.

<sup>55</sup> See *Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska*, 43 C.F.R. Part 2360 (2023), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-09-08/pdf/2023-18990.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

guidance the agency had issued relating to protection of subsistence resource values in the existing, and any new proposed, special areas in NPR-A published as of January 16, 2025.<sup>58</sup>

### *Offshore Energy*

The outer continental shelf (OCS) Alaska Region is believed to contain a minimum of 24 billion barrels of undiscovered extractable oil.<sup>59</sup> The estimated gas potential stands at 126 trillion cubic feet, with a possibility that it could surpass 230 trillion cubic feet.<sup>60</sup>

As directed by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) held the Cook Inlet OCS Oil & Gas Lease Sale 258 in December 2022. One bid was received on one block. The bid, in the amount of \$63,983, was submitted by Hilcorp Alaska LLC. After a review under 30 CFR 556.516(b) to determine whether the public was receiving fair market value, the lease was awarded on March 24, 2023.<sup>61</sup> In July 2024, however, the lease was suspended by U.S. District Court Judge Sharon Gleason, who found that BOEM failed in its analysis of the impact of ship noise on Cook Inlet beluga whales, which are listed as protected under the Endangered Species Act.<sup>62</sup> The lawsuit was brought by radical preservationist groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Earthjustice.<sup>63</sup>

H.R. 1 directed DOI to establish a long-term schedule for offshore oil and gas sales in the Cook Inlet. The plan includes six lease sales in the Cook Inlet through 2032, ensuring that Alaskans can benefit from new jobs and reducing American dependence on foreign imports.<sup>64</sup>

### *Unleashing Alaska's Mineral Resources*

Since the discovery of gold near the Kuskokwim River in 1832, mining has played an important role in Alaska's settlement, economy, and history.<sup>65</sup> Alaska ranks seventh of all U.S. states in terms of mineral production, with principal nonfuel mineral commodities including gold, lead, sand, gravel, silver, and zinc procured from five operational hardrock mines.<sup>66</sup> Alaska's mining industry contributed 11,800 jobs and \$1.1 billion in total wages for the state in 2023 alone.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>59</sup> See 1995 Assessment Data For Oil And Gas Potential Of Alaska Federal Offshore, BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MGMT., <https://www.boem.gov/about-boem/1995-assessment-data-oil-and-gas-potential-alaska-federal-offshore>.

<sup>60</sup> *Id.*

<sup>61</sup> See Lease Sale 258, BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MGMT., <https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/leasing/lease-sale-258>.

<sup>62</sup> See Becky Bohrer, *US judge suspends Alaska Cook Inlet lease, pending additional environmental review*, AP NEWS (July 17, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/alaska-cook-inlet-basin-lease-beluga-whales-95ce14e773871cdd2a05070303cd7c22>.

<sup>63</sup> See Becky Bohrer, *Suit challenges review underlying Alaska oil lease sale*, AP NEWS (Dec. 21, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/business-alaska-lawsuits-climate-and-environment-fa2377d7a6169594a4a9768b750b0765>.

<sup>64</sup> See Interior Department Sets Offshore Energy Leasing Schedule Under One Big Beautiful Bill Act, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Aug. 19, 2025), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-sets-offshore-energy-leasing-schedule-under-one-big-beautiful>.

<sup>65</sup> See *Minerals Mined in Alaska*, ALASKA MINERS ASS'N (2025), <https://www.alaskaminers.org/minerals-in-alaska>.

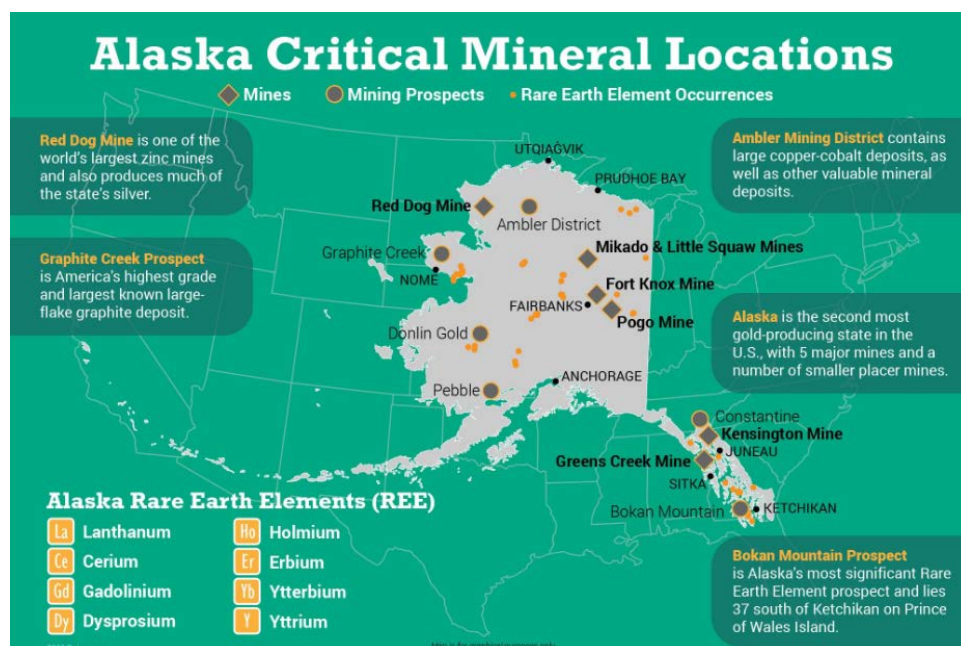
<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> *Alaska's Mining Industry*, ALASKA MINERS ASS'N (Aug. 2024), [https://www.alaskaminers.org/files/ugd/beae26\\_b56d673a5878403e948e6410148c40ce.pdf](https://www.alaskaminers.org/files/ugd/beae26_b56d673a5878403e948e6410148c40ce.pdf).



That same year, miners in Alaska earned an average annual wage of \$122,568,<sup>68</sup> which was nearly twice the state's private-sector average of \$62,897.<sup>69</sup>

Alaska is home to a plethora of untapped mineral resources, including a variety of rare earth elements (REEs).<sup>70</sup> In August 2025, USGS released an updated draft list of critical minerals. The draft list selected 84 mineral commodities that are classified as having a high, elevated, or moderate risk impact by calculating the impact of trade disruption on the U.S. economy through an economic effects assessment, weighed in tandem with the likelihood and impact of a disruption occurring.<sup>71</sup>



A map of Alaska's mines, mining prospects, and rare earth element occurrences using USGS data.<sup>72</sup>

Alaska has been proven to possess REE deposits of three high-risk minerals (Gadolinium, Dysprosium, and Yttrium), two elevated-risk minerals (Lanthanum and Erbium), and three moderate-risk minerals (Cerium, Holmium, and Ytterbium).<sup>73</sup> Yet this reflects only the limited areas of the state in which mineral exploration has occurred, as mineral exploration is a complex, multi-step process involving desktop research, geological mapping, geochemical surveys, geophysical measurements, and core drilling to identify and characterize mineral deposits.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> See *Benefits of Mining in Alaska*, ALASKA METAL MINES (2025), <https://www.akmetalmine.com/benefits>.

<sup>69</sup> See *State and Metro Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings*, U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STATS. (2024), <https://www.bls.gov/sae/tables/annual-average/table-4-average-hours-and-earnings-of-all-employees-on-private-nonfarm-payrolls-by-state.htm>.

<sup>70</sup> See *BLM Alaska Mining and Minerals*, U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (2025), <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/mining-and-minerals/about/alaska>.

<sup>71</sup> See Mineral Resources Program, *About the 2025 Draft List of Critical Minerals*, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURV. (Aug. 25, 2025), <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/mineral-resources-program/science/about-2025-draft-list-critical-minerals>.

<sup>72</sup> *BLM Alaska Mining and Minerals*, BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (2025), <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/mining-and-minerals/about/alaska>.

<sup>73</sup> See *id.*

<sup>74</sup> See Brian Goss, *Basics of Mineral Exploration*, RANGEFRONT MINING SERVICES (June 1, 2024), <https://rangefront.com/blog/basics-of-mineral-exploration/>.

Although Alaska has enormous potential for further mineral development, the state currently has a variety of productive mines in operation. Red Dog Mine in northern Alaska, for example, is one of the world's largest zinc mines.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the Greens Creek silver mine in southeast Alaska is one of the world's largest and most profitable of its kind.<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately, federal policies have hampered the state's ability to further develop its mineral resources. Under the Biden administration, the BLM recommended the "no action" alternative in the Final Supplemental EIS for the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road (Ambler Road) in Alaska.<sup>77</sup> This decision denied a right-of-way permit for the proposed 211-mile Ambler Road that crosses a small section of federal land. The proposed road would provide access to an estimated \$7.5 billion in copper and other minerals, such as zinc, cobalt, silver, gold, and germanium.<sup>78</sup> If the proposed project were to proceed, an estimated 65,000 jobs, \$5 billion in wages, and \$1.3 billion in local and state revenues would be generated.<sup>79</sup> Notably, Section 201(4) of ANILCA guarantees access to and from the Ambler Mining District for resource development.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Unleashing Alaska's National Forest Resources: Timber and Recreation***

The Tongass National Forest is the country's largest national forest, covering nearly 17 million acres and containing over 5.7 million acres of designated wilderness.<sup>81</sup> To the west, the Chugach National Forest covers 5.4 million acres and includes the Copper River Delta, a critical habitat for millions of birds.<sup>82</sup> Together, these forests cover 7.2 million acres of wetlands, 57,000 miles of streams, 400,000 acres of lakes, 1,200 miles of trails, and dozens of mines.<sup>83</sup>

The National Forest System (NFS) includes inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) that are managed through roadless rules implemented by the USFS that limit timber harvesting, road construction, and road reconstruction.<sup>84</sup> IRAs in the Tongass have garnered significant attention as they have significantly limited opportunities for the local forest products industry.<sup>85</sup> The Tongass also supports commercial fishing and tourism.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> See *BLM Alaska Mining and Minerals*, U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MGMT. (2025), <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/mining-and-minerals/about/alaska>.

<sup>76</sup> See *Greens Creek*, HECLA MINING COMPANY, <https://www.hecla.com/operations/greens-creek-alaska>.

<sup>77</sup> See *Biden-Harris Administration Takes Critical Action to Protect Alaska Native Subsistence, Lands and Wildlife*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (Apr. 19, 2024), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-takes-critical-action-protect-alaska-native-subsistence>.

<sup>78</sup> See Lisa Friedman, *Interior Said to Reject Industrial Road Through Alaskan Wilderness*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 18, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/climate/ambler-road-alaska-interior.html>.

<sup>79</sup> See *Trump Administration Supports Alaskan Infrastructure Development to Mine Critical Minerals*, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR (July 23, 2020), <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/trump-administration-supports-alaskan-infrastructure-development-mine-critical>.

<sup>80</sup> *ANILCA Sec 201 (4)*, NAT'L PARK SERV., <https://www.nps.gov/gaar/learn/management/anilca-sec-201-4.htm>.

<sup>81</sup> *About the Area*, U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, ALASKA REGION, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r10/about-area>.

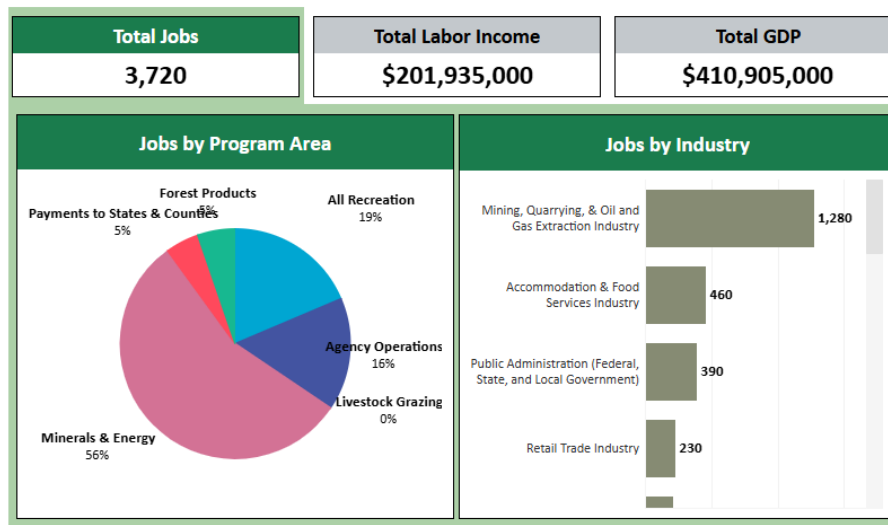
<sup>82</sup> *Id.*

<sup>83</sup> *Id.*

<sup>84</sup> See ANNE A. RIDDLE, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R46505, *THE ALASKA ROADLESS RULE: ELIMINATING INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS (IRAS) IN THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST* (Feb. 3, 2021), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R46505/R46505.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*



Forest Level Economic Contributions Dashboard for the Tongass National Forest sourced from the U.S. Forest Service.<sup>87</sup>

In 2018, the State of Alaska requested that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) consider exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001 Rule), which the USFS implemented in 2020, removing all 9.3 million acres in the Tongass from roadless designation, nullifying restrictions on timber harvesting and road construction.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to the challenges created by IRAs, unique legal and management factors, including long transportation distances and high costs, complicate and thwart timber operations in the Tongass.<sup>89</sup> Alaska's forests contain marketable tree species such as Sitka spruce, western hemlock, western red cedar, Alaska cedar, white spruce, paper birch, black cottonwood, and quaking aspen.<sup>90</sup> According to the Alaska Forest Association, wood from the Tongass is used to create high-end musical instruments, sailboat masts, panels, totems, and custom finished carpentry products.<sup>91</sup>

In January 2023, the Biden administration repealed the 2020 Tongass roadless rule exemption, which returned the area to the 2001 Rule.<sup>92</sup> President Trump's EO 14153 on Alaska's resource potential began the process of undoing his predecessor's action.<sup>93</sup> The proposed rule for this exemption was published on August 29, 2025, initiating an EIS and providing for public comment through September 19, 2025.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *Forest Level Economic Contributions Dashboard – 2019: Tongass National Forest*, U.S. FOREST SERV., <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/policy/analysis/economic-contributions-dashboard>.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.*

<sup>89</sup> *Id.*

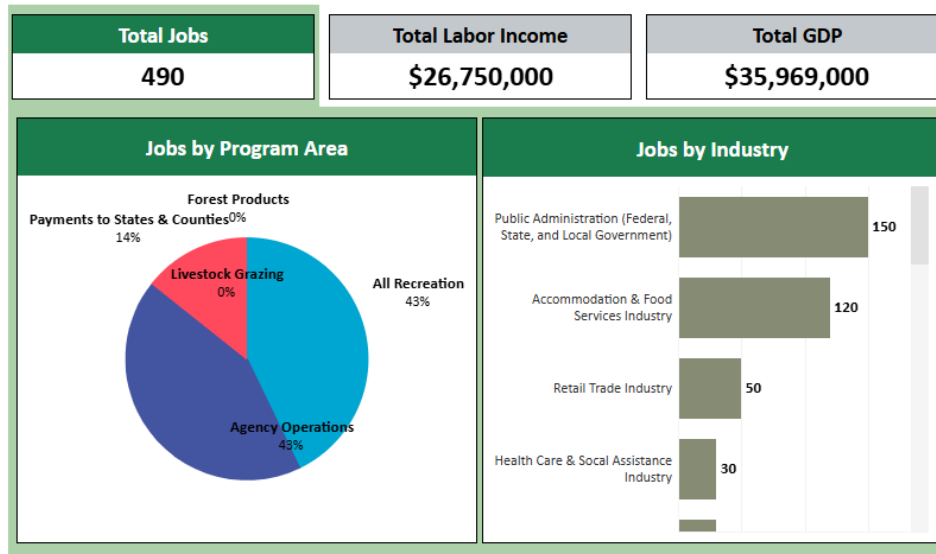
<sup>90</sup> See *Forest Products*, ALASKA DEPT. OF COM., CMTY., AND ECON. DEV., <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/ForestProducts/CommercialTimberSpecies>.

<sup>91</sup> See Nancy Erickson, *Niche Products Put Alaska Timber to Creative Uses*, ALASKA BUS. (Nov. 28, 2022), <https://www.akbizmag.com/magazine/niche-products/>.

<sup>92</sup> See *Alaska Roadless*, U.S. FOREST SERV., <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FS-2021-0007>.

<sup>93</sup> See Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>94</sup> See *Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; National Forest System Lands*, 90 Fed. Reg. 42179 (Aug. 29, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/29/2025-16581/special-areas-roadless-area-conservation-national-forest-system-lands>.



Forest Level Economic Contributions Dashboard for the Chugach National Forest sourced from the U.S. Forest Service.<sup>95</sup>

The Chugach Forest is much less developed, with 99 percent of its acres designated as IRA.<sup>96</sup> Included in its boundaries are over 500 miles of trails and even more of coastline, allowing visitors to explore the forest in diverse ways.<sup>97</sup> Over one million tourists visit the Chugach each year to see the Copper River Delta, Eastern Kenai Peninsula, and Prince William Sound, landscapes that include wetlands and bird habitats.<sup>98</sup> The Tongass receives nearly two million visitors annually, due to its spruce, hemlock, and cedar trees and endless wildlife species, including black and brown bears, Pacific and Chinook salmon, bald eagles, humpback whales, and orcas.<sup>99</sup>

### ***Key Policy Changes Spearheaded by President Trump and Congressional Republicans***

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued EO 14153, “Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential.”<sup>100</sup> This EO includes several key policy changes, including requirements for agencies to rescind and amend regulations that impede the nation’s ability to use Alaska’s resources to their fullest extent, expedite permitting and leasing, and prioritize development of Alaska’s liquified natural gas (LNG) potential.<sup>101</sup>

The EO withdraws the 2021 Comprehensive Analysis and Temporary Halt on All Activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Relating to the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program

<sup>95</sup> *Forest Level Economic Contributions Dashboard – 2019: Chugach National Forest*, U.S. FOREST SERV., <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/policy/analysis/economic-contributions-dashboard>.

<sup>96</sup> See ANNE A. RIDDLE, CONG. RSCH. SERV., R46505, THE ALASKA ROADLESS RULE: ELIMINATING INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS (IRAS) IN THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST (Feb. 3, 2021), <https://www.crs.gov/reports/pdf/R46505/R46505.pdf>.

<sup>97</sup> See *Welcome to the Chugach National Forest*, U.S. FOREST SERV., <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r10/chugach>.

<sup>98</sup> See *Chugach National Forest*, ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE, <https://alaskawild.org/chugach-national-forest/>.

<sup>99</sup> See Jacob Resneck, et al., *The Roadless Rule is supposed to protect wild places. What went wrong in the Tongass National Forest?*, GRIST (Mar. 28, 2022), <https://grist.org/project/accountability/tongass-national-forest-roadless-rule-loophole/>.

<sup>100</sup> See Exec. Order No. 14153, 90 Fed. Reg. 8347 (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-01955/unleashing-alaskas-extraordinary-resource-potential>.

<sup>101</sup> *Id.*

and rescinds any canceled leases within ANWR.<sup>102</sup> The EO also rescinds the 2024 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Supplemental EIS.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, the EO reinstates the 2019 Coastal Plain Final EIS, nullifies BLM rules and notices that blocked activity in NPR-A, and restores decisions from 2017 and 2020, opening up areas of NPR-A.<sup>104</sup> These actions, combined with directives for agencies to expedite and adjust permitting and review processes, enable critical activity in areas of ANWR and NPR-A that will bolster development and American energy independence.

President Trump also reinstated the 2020 Alaska Roadless Rule, which rescinds the 2001 Roadless Rule and effectively reopens the opportunity for road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting.<sup>105</sup> While Alaska's timber industry still faces challenges with road infrastructure and long travel distances, removing unnecessary prohibitions on construction and harvesting activity will encourage greater use of its plentiful forest resources.

On September 3, 2025, the House passed a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution to reverse Resource Management Plans (RMPs) finalized by the Biden administration that locked up millions of acres of land and minerals in Alaska. H.J. Res. 106, sponsored by Rep. Begich (R-AK), repeals the Biden-era Central Yukon RMP, which blocked activity on more than 13.3 million acres in Alaska.<sup>106</sup> Nullifying this RMP restores multiple-use principles to these lands, advancing the Alaska LNG project and Ambler area mining.<sup>107</sup> Repeal of the Central Yukon RMP was also included in President Trump's EO.

By harnessing Alaska's vast natural resources potential, Alaska's representatives in Congress, the Trump administration, and Congressional Republicans are working together to secure Alaska's and America's energy future, create new jobs locally and nationwide, and position the state as a leader across multiple industries for decades to come.

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<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> See Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; National Forest System Lands, 90 Fed. Reg. 42179 (Aug. 29, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/29/2025-16581/special-areas-roadless-area-conservation-national-forest-system-lands>.

<sup>106</sup> See Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan," H. J. Res. 106 (2025), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-joint-resolution/106/text?s=2&r=1>.

<sup>107</sup> See Liz Ruskin, *U.S. House Votes to Repeal Central Yukon Land Plan*, ALASKA PUBLIC MEDIA (Sept. 4, 2025), <https://alaskapublic.org/news/politics/washington-d-c/2025-09-04/u-s-house-votes-to-repeal-central-yukon-land-plan>.