



Gwich'in Steering Committee

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"In no case may a people be deprived of their own means of subsistence."
International Covenants on Human Rights

Dear Bank of America, U.S. Bank, Truist Bank, PNC Bank, Capital One, BNY Mellon, Charles Schwab,

We, the Gwich'in Steering Committee, and the undersigned organizations, oppose any efforts to develop oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeast Alaska. As one of the largest U.S. banks, we ask you to join your peers and stand with the Gwich'in Nation by adopting a formal policy to prohibit financing for the exploration, production and transportation of oil and gas in the Arctic Refuge and across the Arctic region.

This is an unprecedented time in our history. Time when we are all seeking refuge. Refuge in family, safety, our health and nature. As we have been reminded so vividly over the past few months, our interconnectedness is inescapable. What happens across the world impacts us at home, and what happens at home impacts others across the world.

The roots of the Gwich'in peoples, our "Sacred Place Where Life Begins" and our ancestral homeland that has sustained us for thousands of years, is under direct attack. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, which is harming our health and economy, the Trump administration continues to barrel forward with destroying sacred places like the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. This misguided rush disrespects long-held, popular and bipartisan protections for the Refuge; suppresses concerns from scientists; and is yet another example of contempt for Indigenous rights in the push to sell our public lands to big oil companies.

It is more important than ever that financial institutions and investors demonstrate their commitment to keeping our heritage intact. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge is short-sighted, risky and unnecessary -- it will exacerbate global warming in an area that is already ground-zero for climate impacts and will cause irreversible destruction to a sacred landscape. You have a responsibility to limit investor risk and drilling in the Arctic Refuge is nothing if not risky and expensive.

The case for protecting this sacred land is so clear that we have already seen other major U.S. financial institutions like Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo, in addition to more than a dozen global banks, announce they will not fund any new oil and gas development in the Arctic Refuge and across the Arctic region. These banks recognize the risks and the reputational consequences should they support the violation of such an important landscape and our human rights. The vast majority of the American people continue to oppose drilling in the Arctic Refuge. According to recent polling, 70% of voters oppose drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Now, in solidarity with the Gwich'in Nation, the organizations below are calling on you to join other financial institutions who have taken a stand by agreeing not to finance fossil fuel development in the Arctic. We are calling on you to not violate the human rights of Alaska Indigenous communities, harm iconic wildlife like polar bears and the Porcupine caribou, and exacerbate the devastating climate impacts we are facing by investing in Arctic drilling. Current and future generations depend on your forward-thinking commitments to human rights and the health of our planet.

The public is watching you more closely than ever before, and if you facilitate the destruction of our sacred homelands, you will have to answer to the Gwich'in Nation and the millions of Americans who stand with us. We will continue to hold any bank, oil company or politician accountable that seeks to benefit from the destruction of the Arctic Refuge. Do not fund drilling in the Sacred Place Where Life Begins.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Demientieff

Gwich'in Steering Committee, Alaska

- 350 Colorado
- 350 Eastside
- 350NYC
- 350 Silicon Valley
- Adrian Dominican Sisters, Portfolio Advisory Board
- Advocates for the Environment
- AIDA (Inter-American Association for Environmental Defense)
- Alaska Wilderness League
- Alternatives North
- American Packrafting Association
- Arctic Audubon Society
- Arctic Treks
- Arctic Wild
- BankTrack
- Basin and Range Watch
- Braided River
- Breadcrumbs Theatre Troupe
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Chapter
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition
- Climate Hawks Vote
- Congregation of St. Joseph
- Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Earth Action, Inc.
- Earthworks
- Ecology North
- Endangered Species Coalition
- Eyak Preservation Council
- Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
- First Peoples Worldwide
- Franciscan Action Network
- Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
- Friends of the Earth U.S.
- Fund Our Future
- Glasswaters Foundation
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Green America
- Green Latinos
- Greenpeace USA
- Harrington Investments, Inc.
- Hip Hop Caucus
- Hrrrl Scouts
- Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
- Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

- Land is Life
- Last Real Indians
- LPESM Riau
- Market Forces
- Mazaska Talks
- Mercy Investment Services, Inc.
- Movement Rights
- National Audubon Society
- National Wildlife Federation
- National Wildlife Refuge Association
- Native Movement
- New Progressive Alliance
- Northern Alaska Environmental Center
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- Nuclear Information and Resource Service
- O.U.R.S
- Oil Change International
- Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
- Progressive Democrats of America
- Rachel Carson Council
- Rainforest Action Network
- Rise and Resist
- Rocky Mountain Wild
- San Juan Citizens Alliance
- San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
- Save Our Illinois Land
- Sheep Mountain Alliance
- Sierra Club
- Sustaining Way
- The Wilderness Society
- Trustees for Alaska
- Turtle Island Restoration Network
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- Utah Diné Bikéyah
- Western Watersheds Project
- WildEarth Guardians
- Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)