



Thanks for Listening, Secretary Salazar!

More Than 258,000 Americans Support a Time-Out on Oil and Gas Development in America's Arctic and Bristol Bay

September 21, 2009 marks the final day of a 180-day public comment period on last-minute Bush-era proposals to open up vast new areas of the Arctic Ocean and Bristol Bay to oil and gas development. Interior Secretary Salazar has wisely called for a careful review of these plans, and has invited Americans to comment.

In response to Secretary Salazar's pledge to conduct a careful review, hundreds of thousands of Americans have called on him to declare a time-out on new drilling in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, and to permanently protect the waters of Bristol Bay.

America's Arctic is a national treasure. Once it's destroyed, it's gone forever. The Bush Administration's aggressive plans for new oil and gas development in the Arctic Ocean and Bristol Bay put the resources of America's Arctic waters at grave risk. We need a time-out from oil and gas development until Secretary Salazar can develop a comprehensive, science-based energy and conservation plan for America's Arctic and Bristol Bay.

The Arctic Ocean...

- Is "the least studied and most poorly understood place in the world," according to the U.S. Arctic Commission. We need a far better scientific understanding of its resources before allowing industrial development in this sensitive environment.
- Is the "garden" on which Alaska's indigenous people have depended for their culture and food for thousands of years.
- Is a fragile marine ecosystem that is home to fish, birds, polar bears, whales, walrus, seals, and other abundant marine life.

Bristol Bay...

- Is home to the world's largest wild run of sockeye salmon. This sustainable fishery needs to be protected!
- Provides more than 40 percent of the total U.S. fish catch.
- Is of global ecological importance for fish, seabirds, waterfowl, and marine mammals.

Oil and Ice Don't Mix!

- The U.S. government says there is a 40 percent chance of a serious oil spill if drilling is allowed in the Chukchi Sea.
- There is no technology to clean up oil from ice-filled waters. The effects of a spill on marine wildlife would be catastrophic.
- As the Exxon Valdez disaster and this month's huge spill off the coast of Australia illustrate, the oil industry is ill-prepared to deal with the inevitable damage of offshore oil spills. In Arctic waters, the damage would be catastrophic, with no hope of cleanup.

For more information, visit www.alaskawild.org or www.worldwildlife.org or www.wilderness.org