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## Chairman Murkowski Welcomes DOI Approval of Shell Exploration Plan

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today welcomed the Interior Department’s conditional approval of Shell’s Arctic exploration plan for this summer with the following statement:

“Approval of Shell’s exploration plan for Alaska’s Chukchi Sea marks another important step toward the United States assuming a leadership role in the Arctic. With an estimated 25 percent of the world’s undiscovered conventional oil and gas resources and active exploration by countries like Russia, it’s critical that we move forward as a nation and set the standard for responsible development in the Arctic.

“Interior’s approval of the exploration permit is a key step, but more needs to be done in the coming weeks to ensure that Shell’s exploration program proceeds this summer. There is a total of seven permits that Shell must receive before it can resume drilling. Continued collaboration by the responsible federal agencies to ensure those outstanding permits are not saddled with unworkable conditions will be critical. With this latest milestone, I am cautiously optimistic and stand ready to continue working with the agencies to ensure exploration is conducted safely for the maximum benefit of Alaskans and our nation.”

Murkowski is Alaska’s senior senator and chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

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