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Sen. Murkowski Responds to Misguided Calls to Halt Alaska Energy Production

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today issued the following statement in response to a letter that 18 Senate Democrats sent to Interior Secretary Jewell, calling on the Obama administration to stop energy production in the Arctic. This comes after the administration approved plans for Shell to drill in Alaska’s Chukchi Sea this summer.

“Today’s attempt to block energy production in Alaska ignores the facts. For more than 30 years, Alaska has demonstrated its safe record of responsible oil and natural gas development in the Arctic. Even the Obama administration agrees this project can move along safely,” Murkowski said. “Right now, the United States can either choose to responsibly develop its resources under its superior standards or let countries like Russia lead the way. We can either choose to produce our own resources or return to the costly days of buying them from abroad. When it comes to realizing the benefits of energy production, I’ll always put Alaska and our nation first.”

The Democrats’ letter opposes increased energy production in the Arctic and is in contrast to the Obama administration, which approved Shell’s plans to drill in the Arctic this summer. This week, U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Director Abigail Ross Hopper [told](#) Platts that new Arctic energy development could be carried out safely.

Hopper echoed President Obama’s recent [comments](#) that Alaska energy production is good for our nation. He said, “I would rather us – with all the safeguards and standards that we have – be producing our oil and gas, rather than importing it, which is bad for our people, but is also potentially purchased from places that have much lower environmental standards than we do.”

Alaska has a long history of safe and responsible oil and natural gas production in the Arctic. Some 35 wells have been drilled in Alaska’s Arctic waters since the 1980s. The Northstar field in the Beaufort Sea has produced 150 million barrels of oil since 2001.

Studies show that increased leasing and development in Alaska’s Beaufort and Chukchi seas and in Cook Inlet could, by 2035, create nearly 840,000 jobs and raise more than \$200 billion in revenue for the government.

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