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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **More than 1 million people tell President Obama: Protect America's Arctic Ocean now**

### **Statement from Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“Speaking for more than 1 million people who have written letters, signed petitions and taken pictures in polar bear masks in the past few months alone, we are standing here today in President Obama’s backyard to send him a message that he can’t ignore: Protect America’s Arctic now.

As we stand here, thousands more across the country are calling the White House to be sure the president gets our message loud and clear.

Shell’s drill ships are on their way to our Arctic Ocean right now to launch the most aggressive course of Arctic drilling in history, with no proven plan to clean up an oil spill in the Arctic’s extreme conditions. If President Obama does nothing to stop them, he could have the next Deepwater Horizon disaster on his hands.

With no plan to clean up a spill and inadequate scientific information, we should not be risking our one and only Arctic with aggressive, risky drilling. The risks are huge – at this point, drilling in the Arctic Ocean is tantamount to ‘Mission Impossible.’

The Arctic Ocean is prone to hurricane-force storms, 20-foot swells, sea ice up to 25 feet thick, sub-zero temperatures and months-long darkness. There is no proven way to clean up an oil spill in these extreme conditions. What’s more, the Arctic has extremely limited infrastructure (there are no roads or deep water ports and only a handful of small airports) and the nearest Coast Guard station is 1,000 miles away.

America’s Arctic coast and waters are home to Alaska’s Inupiat people, polar bears, ice seals, beluga whales, walrus and millions of birds. The Arctic also functions as our planet’s air conditioner. The Arctic is a region of extremes – extreme beauty, risks and resilience.

President Obama the future of America’s Arctic is in your hands. Together with more than 1 million people I ask you to tell Shell to turn those ships around.”

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[www.AlaskaWild.org](http://www.AlaskaWild.org)

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