



**YUKON
REGION**

May 8, 2018

STATEMENT

REGIONAL CHIEF ADAMEK STANDS WITH THE VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION IN CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANWR

Whitehorse, Yukon – On April 20, 2018, the U.S. government announced it would begin a 60-day public review on the sale of oil and gas leases in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Interim Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek issued the following statement on the matter:

“The U.S. government’s decision to begin the process leading to oil and gas drilling in this territory is devastating. I stand in solidarity with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Gwich’in in fiercely opposing threats to these lands.

“This area is home to the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. The caribou is a lifeline for the Gwich’in. It is their food source, it is their culture, it is who they are.

“Every time I visit Old Crow, I am deeply moved by the deep and powerful relationship the Gwich’in have with the Porcupine caribou. For decades, they have been tremendous advocates for the protection of the caribou’s sacred habitat. Their Elders, their leaders, and citizens have worked tirelessly to protect their rights, these pristine lands, their calving grounds, and the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

“This is about more than just environmental protection. It is about our rights and responsibilities as First Nations people to care for our traditional territories and live off the land.

“In 2008, the U.S. Department of Energy reported there is little proof that oil and gas exploration in this region would have a significant impact on global oil prices. Time-and-time again the Gwich’in, researchers and other experts have shown that resource development on these lands would devastate the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Under domestic and international treaties, the Gwich’in have rights in connections to the Porcupine caribou.

“And yet today, we find ourselves at a place where greed is trumping reason and, even more disturbing, the inherent rights of the Gwich’in, which are protected by law.

“I join the Vuntut Gwitchin Government in encouraging the public to voice that development in ANWR cannot be done responsibly, threatens the rights of the Gwich’in, and would be an infringement of international law. Comments from the public can be submitted to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management by email to blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov until June 19, 2018.”

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