

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

As Ranking Members of the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees, we write to express our deep concern regarding the proposed rule titled “Production Site Development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.”<sup>1</sup>

On May 12, 2026, the Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA) filed a petition for a new rule to expedite oil and gas permitting in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (Western Arctic). Just three days later, the Department of the Interior (Department) initiated the first steps toward implementing the rule. Your remarks,<sup>2</sup> as well as the statement from the Department,<sup>3</sup> indicate that implementing all or most of the AOGA-drafted rule, despite an upcoming public comment period, may be a foregone conclusion.

This proposal, which would rubber-stamp future drilling operations in the Western Arctic, guts key environmental protections and opportunities for tribal consultation in a blatant giveaway of public lands to the oil and gas industry. This would open the door for hundreds of permits to not sufficiently balance wildlife and habitat, subsistence uses, or cultural resources across 23 million acres of public lands.

The short timeline combined with the AOGA’s involvement in this proposal raise serious questions about not only the Department’s lack of environmental review and public input process, but its clear partiality to the oil industry’s interest in managing the largest tract of public land in the country.

This potentially record-setting adoption of an industry-proposed rule by the Department also raises serious conflict of interest concerns. AOGA’s current chief executive officer, Steve Wackowski, served as the Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs at the Department during the first Trump administration. Kara Moriarty, the Department’s current Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs, previously served as President and CEO of AOGA for over a decade, and worked at AOGA up until her time in the administration.

We therefore respectfully request that you provide answers to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> ePlanning, BLM, NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-AK-0000-2026-0012-EIS, Production Site Development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska

<sup>2</sup> Sec. Burgum Statement, [Posted to X](#), May 16, 2026

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, U.S. Department of the Interior, [Interior Begins Process to Streamline Permitting in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska](#), May 15, 2026

1. When did the Department first decide to pursue this rulemaking?
2. What roles did Kara Moriarty and Steve Wackowski play in the decision to pursue the rulemaking, and in any subsequent steps related to its development, review, or implementation?
3. What ethics safeguards were implemented to avoid conflicts of interest between current and former employees of AOGA and the Department?
4. Please provide a list of petitions for rulemakings that have been submitted to the Department of the Interior, or any of its bureaus or offices, since January 20, 2025, and the accompanying agency/departamental response time;
5. Please provide any and all communications between officials at the Department of the Interior and its agencies, bureaus, or offices and the Alaska Oil and Gas Association regarding permitting in the NPR-A dated on or after January 20, 2025;
6. Please provide all entries in Doug Burgum's calendar relating to AOGA or any representative of AOGA between January 20, 2025, and June 15, 2026;
7. Please provide all entries in Kara Moriarty's calendar relating to AOGA or any representative of AOGA between January 20, 2025, and June 15, 2026;
8. Please any and all draft rulemaking documents, briefing papers, or decision documents created before May 12, 2026, related to the proposed rule; and
9. Please provide all ethics documents associated with Kara Moriarty, including all ethics agreements, certificates of divestiture, recusal statements, screening arrangements, OGE Form 278e Public Financial Disclosure Reports, OGE Form 278-T Periodic Transaction Reports, and any waivers issued pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208.

We look forward to your prompt and comprehensive response to these requests.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Natural Resources



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Energy and Natural  
Resources