NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

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Washington, DC — Today, the Bureau of Land Management held a lease sale for nearly 700,000 acres of land throughout Coastal Plain of the National Arctic Wildlife Refuge, offering the land to the highest bidder among participating oil and gas companies. This biodiverse, sensitive landscape is held sacred by the Indigenous Gwich'in people and home to abundant wildlife which are dependent on and integral to the health and wellbeing of the land.

The lease sale, despite being touted by the Trump Administration as likely to raise $96 million towards federal deficit reduction, only saw bids for 70,000 acres of land from two companies, with the final bids totaling only $3.7 million. As they have done in the past, all major oil companies stayed away from the Arctic Refuge lease sales, which remain politically unpopular and financially uncertain.

Prior to the lease sale, national faith leaders across various traditions and denominations urged oil and gas companies to not place bids on this sacred public land. Whether their decision was guided by moral understanding, financial prudence, public perception, or a combination therein, we are grateful that a majority of this irreplaceable, awe-inspiring land will remain undisturbed by needless, reckless drilling.

People of faith are called to protect God's creation and respect the dignity of all people. We call on the administration to cancel all future lease sales. As a faith community, we remain committed to standing in solidarity with the Gwich'in people and working to protect the sacred Arctic Refuge from all extractive industries.