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Groups seek preliminary injunction to stop ConocoPhillips' harmful construction of the Willow oil and gas project

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Sovereign Iñupiat for a Living Arctic and five allied groups [filed a motion](#) in U.S. District Court today requesting a preliminary injunction to stop ConocoPhillips' from conducting aggressive on-the-ground road building and gravel mining in furtherance of its challenged Willow project. Trustees for Alaska filed the motion as part of a [lawsuit](#) charging the Biden administration with illegally approving the project.

ConocoPhillips began building an ice road to a proposed gravel mine site on March 13, the same day the Interior Department approved the project, with plans to start blasting at the mine site immediately. The motion comes just days after the groups filed their [lawsuit](#) charging the Interior Department, multiple agencies, and agency officials with violating an array of laws when authorizing ConocoPhillips' Willow oil and gas project in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

“The U.S. Bureau of Land Management handed over permits as soon as the Biden administration approved the project and ConocoPhillips started ice road construction the same day, so clearly the company knew it would get what it needed to hit the ground,” **said Bridget Psarianos, lead staff attorney with Trustees for Alaska.** “The U.S. District Court found in our prior 2020 lawsuit, and the Ninth Circuit Court agreed, that winter road construction and gravel mining would do immediate and permanent harm to land and the community of Nuiqsut. This time is no different. Our motion asks for a stop to this building and blasting work while the lawsuit makes its way through court.”

No single oil and gas project has more potential to set back the Biden administration's climate and public lands protection goals than Willow — the largest new oil and gas project proposed on federal lands. The people of Nuiqsut, the community located just a few miles away, would endure increased air pollution, repeated blasting for gravel mining, and continued rapid industrialization that would lead to significant physical and mental health harms.

“We are deeply disappointed in the Biden administration's approval of the Willow oil and gas extraction project in Alaska's Arctic, and brought this challenge because project impacts weren't thoroughly considered before approval,” **said Kristen Miller, executive director of Alaska Wilderness League.** “Today, ConocoPhillips is racing to start construction, and there are just

days left before bulldozers start moving gravel and construction begins. This is not the path forward to address climate change, nor is it the right track to protect biodiversity in America's Arctic.”

The Willow project would significantly expand ConocoPhillips' extensive oil and gas extraction operation in the Arctic and become a hub for future industrialization for decades, spewing out toxic emissions and greenhouse gas pollution that undermines the President's climate promises. Authorization of the Willow project still violates many of the same laws that the 2020 Trump-era approval did. The U.S. District Court [voided those permits](#) in 2021. The current lawsuit charges the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior with violating their respective duties under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

Today's motion charges the bureau with violating NEPA, ANILCA and the NPRPA by failing to consider alternatives that would further reduce impacts to subsistence users, preclude drilling in sensitive ecosystems, or otherwise minimize Willow's impacts to the western Arctic.

The public interest non-profit law firm Trustees for Alaska filed the suit in Anchorage, Alaska, on behalf of Sovereign Iñupiat for a Living Arctic, Alaska Wilderness League, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Environment America, Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society.

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