



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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STATEMENT BY INTERIOR SECRETARY DON HODEL  
ON UPCOMING TOUR OF ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Next week three congressional committees will be visiting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and neighboring Prudhoe Bay, as will a host of news reporters. I will accompany various members of Congress on visits to the "1002" area -- the 1.5 million acres of Arctic coastal plain rich in potential oil resources and in wildlife habitat. I welcome this opportunity to discuss the issues person-to-person with them while we are in this remote but special area of our mutual concern.

Here is what I will be telling members of Congress about the 1002 area:

o We do not have to choose between developing the potential energy resources of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and protecting wildlife resources -- we can, and with Congressional approval we will do both.

o The coastal plain is America's best prospect for finding large quantities of oil essential to offsetting the decline in domestic oil production.

o Domestic oil production is an essential component of economic and national security.

o Since an environmentally sound program requires a decade or more to issue leases and permits, explore and begin production, America cannot wait until the next energy crisis to begin the process. We must start now.

(more)

o The 26 major geologic structures that have been mapped in seismic studies, and the 19 percent chance of finding economically-recoverable quantities of oil make this a far better prospect than neighboring Prudhoe Bay was once thought to be.

o Prudhoe Bay, America's largest-ever oil field now supplying more than 20 percent of the Nation's domestic production, has hit its peak and will be declining dramatically by the turn of the century.

o Construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline which opened up Prudhoe Bay was almost blocked in the early 1970s by those who argued that the Central Arctic caribou herd would be "devastated" because, we were told, the animals would not cross haul roads or pipelines and would not calve in an area of oil development. The same arguments are being made today against oil leasing in the ANWR coastal plain. The Central Arctic caribou herd today has better than tripled in number over what it was before the pipeline and Prudhoe Bay development. There is no reason to believe ANWR's Porcupine caribou are less adaptable or resilient.

o Interior Department studies mandated by Congress indicate the only significant impacts will be to caribou and musk oxen, and in both cases we believe that will be displacement rather than reduction in numbers. Prudhoe Bay has demonstrated that Arctic wildlife and oil development are compatible if appropriate measures are taken. Our commitment is to benefit from the experience of Prudhoe Bay in order to have an even more environmentally-compatible program on the refuge.

o Oil development will have direct impacts on less than 13,000 acres of the 1.5 million acre ANWR coastal plain -- less than 1 per cent of that area. Porcupine caribou calve over an 8.9 million acre area in the U.S. and Canada.

o A new executive agreement with Canada will enable us to work with that country to assure conservation of the Porcupine herd while proceeding with exploration and development on the ANWR coastal plain.

o Lengthy and publicized negotiations have produced a potential land exchange for eventual Congressional consideration. This arrangement with Alaska Native groups would enhance the federal refuge system by nearly 900,000 acres without expending unavailable federal tax dollars and would give Native groups the potential of substantial income and jobs over a long period of time. It is a win-win proposition for both sides, but we have made it plain from day one that we will not proceed with any exchange unless and until it is blessed by Congress. Natives have been among the leading advocates of oil leasing.

o The decision on ANWR is the most crucial test of the decade of America's will to provide for its own energy needs. Blindfolding America by refusing to proceed with leasing would be like putting a sign on America which says "Take advantage of us because we lack the will to provide for ourselves."