

Alaska Oil and Gas Association



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Alaska Oil and Gas Association statement on the draft Polar Bear Conservation Management Plan

Anchorage- July 2, 2015- The Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA) applauds the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's draft Polar Bear Conservation Management Plan because of its commitment to science, as well as its recognition of industry's important role. The plan, released today, is intended to address the planning provisions of both the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

AOGA had the privilege of serving as a team member of the Polar Bear Recovery Team and assisting in the construction of this draft conservation management plan, which takes into account efforts that the oil and gas industry in Alaska has traditionally made to protect the polar bear species.

Currently, the global polar bear population is estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000, and the Management Plan ultimately focuses on preserving the health of the polar bear species while recognizing values associated with subsistence, human safety, and economic activity.

The ultimate goal of the plan is to ensure the continued persistence of polar bears in the wild, an endeavor that AOGA and its members strongly support. "Over the years, AOGA members have developed stringent protocols for operations on the North Slope, including substantial monitoring and mitigation efforts designed to minimize any possible adverse effects to the polar bear species," said AOGA President and CEO Kara Moriarty. "We are gratified to see the draft plan take those protocols into account."

AOGA members, in concert with the USFWS, will continue these efforts as well as working with the Polar Bear Recovery Team in garnering additional data and information that will serve to protect the polar bear species moving forward. The oil and gas industry understands that it will play a crucial role in assisting the USFWS as the recovery plan evolves to incorporate new and innovative approaches to fostering resource development and environmental protections.

It is important to note that the threat to the polar bear species is not a product of local activities, and AOGA appreciates the Polar Bear Recovery Team's recognition of the importance of and desire for continued economic development in the U.S. Arctic Region.

"Striving to create and adopt strategies that benefit the viability of the polar bear species while affording the State of Alaska to pursue economic interests in the Arctic benefits a wide variety of stakeholders in addition to polar bears," said Moriarty.

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AOGA is a professional trade association whose mission is to foster the long-term viability of the oil and gas industry in Alaska for the benefit of all Alaskans. Its 14 members represent the majority of oil and gas producers, explorers, refiners, transporters and marketers in Alaska. More information can be found at www.aoga.org.

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