

ConocoPhillips' Dirty Willow Oil Project

America's Western Arctic represents one of the most important fronts in the fight against climate change. Also known as the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska, this 23-million-acre expanse of intact public lands is home to wildlife and Indigenous communities who have lived in the region since time immemorial. It's also under dire threat from fossil fuel development as ConocoPhillips seeks final approval from the Biden administration for its disastrous Willow oil project – a proposal that would lock in decades of fossil fuel extraction and desecrate a massive swath of the pristine Western Arctic.

Willow: A Climate Disaster We Cannot Afford

The Willow oil project is immense and damaging – it is the single largest oil project proposed on federal lands and would emit more climate pollution annually than more than 99.7% of all single point sources in the country. It's estimated to add more than 250 million metric tons of CO₂ to the atmosphere—equivalent to the annual emissions from 76 coal fired power plants. Willow also calls for massive infrastructure development in a region that's already facing destabilizing climate impacts as it warms four times faster than the rest of the world. The project would include 250 wells, hundreds of miles of gravel and water-intensive ice roads, airstrips, 389 miles of pipelines, and a new central processing facility. To add insult to injury, since the permafrost is rapidly thawing due to climate change, ConocoPhillips plans to install “chillers” to refreeze the melting tundra to sustain the oil infrastructure needed for the project.

What's even more troubling is that Willow is just the first step in industry's master plan to industrialize the pristine Western Arctic. Marketing Willow as “[the next great Alaska hub](#),” ConocoPhillips executives have told investors that the company has “identified up to 3 billion [barrels of oil equivalent] of nearby prospects and leads with similar characteristics that could [leverage the Willow infrastructure](#).”

Threats to Indigenous Communities

The Willow project would pose devastating and irreparable risks to local communities and regional biodiversity. The Western Arctic is home to wild, dynamic ecosystems that support wildlife like caribou, polar bears, salmon, and bowhead whales that many communities depend on for traditional subsistence harvest and food security. The Willow project would disrupt many of these sensitive areas, including constructing drill pads in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area – one of the most ecologically important wetlands across the Arctic and the birthplace of the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd, a key subsistence resource for regional Alaska Native communities.

President Biden's Climate Legacy is On the Line

The Biden administration faces a critical choice on the dirty Willow oil project. A Center for American Progress [analysis](#) found that Willow's expected emissions would more than eclipse the emissions avoided by reaching President Biden's ambitious goals to ramp up clean energy development on public lands and waters.

President Biden has set ambitious climate goals and a bold vision to protect 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030 and the Western Arctic – at 1% of the U.S. landmass – can make or break that legacy. The choice is clear: President Biden must put people over industry profits and reject Willow.

Learn more at www.StopWillow.org