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January 30, 2015

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President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of Wilderness Watch and our members around the country, we want to express our deep gratitude and support for your recent decision to transmit a recommendation to Congress for designation of over 12 million acres of land as Wilderness, including the coastal plain, in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Alternative E in the draft plan). This bold decision will best protect the integrity of the whole Refuge ecosystem. Your recommendation is historic in that it would fulfill the Refuge founders' vision and achieves permanent protection of this natural treasure, our Last Great Wilderness, for future generations of Americans. When Congress enacts this recommendation it will more than double the size of the next largest designated area in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

We appreciate that the Arctic Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan's management objectives and description special values will aid in charting a new and important path for appropriate administration of the Refuge. As we move beyond celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, this revised plan, which embraces wildness as the most essential element of Wilderness, will serve as a model for the entire National Wilderness Preservation System. Your Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and especially the staff of the Arctic Refuge deserve credit for developing this bold plan and guiding it to completion.

As a changing global climate manifests itself, the importance of allowing ecological processes to continue, without human intervention, will prove invaluable in understanding how nature works. The potential for the Arctic Refuge to function as a scientific control was also part of the founder's original justification for establishment. The revised CCP helps to assure this benefit at this crucial time. Wilderness Watch stands ready to assist in fulfillment of the vision that the Refuge will remain as founder, Olaus Murie stated in 1961: ***"a little portion of our planet left alone."***

Congratulations on reaching this important milestone in the history of the Arctic Refuge!

Sincerely,

George Nickas
Executive Director

/s/ Fran Mauer

Fran Mauer
Alaska Board Member
Alaska Chapter Chair

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George Nickas

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