

PUBLICATION

Obama Administration's Unwelcoming News to Alaskan Leaders

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The Obama administration announced on Sunday its plan to make a recommendation to Congress to designate 12.28 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a wilderness area, a designation that offers the highest level of protection available to public lands.

Some argue that the wilderness designation will effectively put the land off-limits for oil drilling, which does not sit too well with leaders of a petroleum-dependent Alaska, as the state faces a \$3.5 billion budget deficiency due in large part to tanking oil prices. The good news for those concerned with the administration's announcement is that only Congress has the authority to designate wilderness areas, and, with Republicans controlling both houses, this designation will have little chance of passing without significant concessions to allow drilling on these lands.

Stay tuned as we continue to monitor this development.