



PRESS RELEASE

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Dunleavy Administration Makes Mockery of Alaska Constitution, Climate Science

HOMER, AK—On February 4, 2019, the Dunleavy Administration rejected Cook Inletkeeper's request to consider climate change impacts in the [state's 3.7 million acre oil and gas leasing program](#) in the Cook Inlet watershed. The state's decision will pave the way for oil and gas leasing in Cook Inlet for the next ten years.

"It's not just disingenuous - it's illegal," said Inletkeeper's Bob Shavelson. "The Constitution and Alaska Statutes require the state to consider and protect the public interest when making decisions affecting our public lands and waters."

The Alaska Constitution (Art. VIII, Sec. 1) requires government officials to development state resources "consistent with the public interest;" state law requires oil and gas lease sales to consider "reasonably foreseeable effects" of oil and gas activities, and to ensure the lease sale is in the "best interest" of all Alaskans.

The Alaska DNR decision, however, chose to hide behind meaningless references to climate change and greenhouse emissions which have no bearing on the climate impacts that will flow from more oil and gas development in Cook Inlet. The fact remains, the state never addresses climate change in a serious way further along in the oil and gas development process (e.g., at leasing or the plan of operations phases).

"Climate change is turning our Gulf of Alaska fisheries upside down," said Tom Evans, a respected subsistence fishermen in the Native Village of Nanwalek in Lower Cook Inlet. "Climate change threatens every aspect of our life in the village, and the state's inaction is an insult to our people, who see and feel climate impacts all around us."

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The state's decision comes after the Dunleavy Administration removed information about the Climate Action Leadership Team (CALT) from the state's web site shortly after taking office. Last week, members of the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action [presented a petition to the Governor's office](#) calling on him to make climate science available again to Alaskans on the state web site.

"Alaskans know our climate is changing, and with strong leadership, we can rise to the challenge by creating new jobs, attracting new investment and lowering energy costs." Shavelson added. "But not if our Governor ignores basic science."

Inletkeeper is a nonprofit public interest group formed by concerned Alaskans in 1995. Inletkeeper's comments on the Cook Inlet Oil & Gas Lease Sale Best Interest Finding can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

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