



VUNTUT GWITCHIN GOVERNMENT

Government of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

Media Release

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Responds to House of Representatives Vote in Support of Restoring Protections for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

(Old Crow, Yukon, Canada – September 12, 2019) Today the U.S. House of Representatives passed the **Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act** (H.R. 1146), a bipartisan bill which was introduced to halt oil and gas leasing, development and production in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou.

Introduced by Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), H.R. 1146 would stop development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by repealing the language in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which mandates oil and gas lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's Coastal Plain.

Since 2017, the Trump Administration has been rushing towards development of the Coastal Plain, with the aim of holding the first lease sale in 2019. This Spring, representatives of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation worked tirelessly alongside the Gwich'in Steering Committee and other allies to advocate in support of H.R. 1146. While there is more work to be done before this bill becomes law, today's vote is an important step towards restoring protections for "Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit" (The Sacred Place Where Life Begins).

Vuntut Gwitchin Government would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who worked in support of advancing this legislation as well as all the Members of the House of Representatives who voted in support of our human rights by voting to protect our sacred lands through H.R. 1146.

Quote:

"The land of the Gwich'in is the land of the Porcupine Caribou herd. The provision in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which mandated oil and gas development in the sacred calving and post calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou is a threat to the health of the herd and thus a threat to our physical, cultural and spiritual survival. Today's vote in support of H.R. 1146 Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act is a step in the right direction towards restoring the protections of our sacred lands and in ensuring our people's survival. We will continue to call upon and encourage all our allies to stand with us, the entire Gwich'in Nation, and the Porcupine caribou herd and respect, honour and value the lives of us all by advancing this bill." **Councilor Cheryl J. Charlie, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation**

"It was an honour to be present in the House of Representatives today to witness this historic vote on H.R. 1146 Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act. This bill directly addresses Gwich'in human rights. Each Representative who voted in support of H.R. 1146 voted in support of our human rights and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation will continue to do everything we can to ensure that our human rights are recognized and that Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit is protected." – **Melissa Frost, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation**

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