

Gwich'in Niintsyaa

Resolution to Prohibit Development in the Calving and Post-Calving Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd

WHEREAS:

For thousands of years our ancestors, the Gwich'in Athabascan Indians of northeast Alaska and northwest Canada, have relied on caribou for subsistence, and continue today to subsist on the Porcupine Caribou Herd which is essential to meet the nutritional, cultural and spiritual needs of our people; and

WHEREAS:

The Gwich'in have the inherent right to continue our own way of life; and that this right is recognized and affirmed by civilized nations in the international covenants on human rights. Article I of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights read in part:

"...In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence."; and

WHEREAS:

The health and productivity of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, and their availability to Gwich'in communities, and the very future of our people are endangered by proposed oil and gas exploration and development in the calving and post-calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge - Coastal Plain; and

WHEREAS:

The entire Gwich'in Nation was called together by our chiefs in Arctic Village June 5-10 to carefully address this issue and to seek the advice of our elders; and

WHEREAS:

The Gwich'in people of every community from Arctic Village, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Stevens Village, Circle, and Eagle Village in Alaska; from Old Crow, Fort McPherson, Arctic Red River, Aklavik and Inuvik in Canada have reached consensus in our traditional way, and now speak with a single voice.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the United States Congress and President recognize the rights of our Gwich'in people to continue to live our way of life by prohibiting development in the calving and post-calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the 1002 area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge be made Wilderness to achieve this end.

Passed this 10th day of June, 1988, in Arctic Village, Alaska.