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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement from Olgoonik Corporation President and CEO Hugh Patkotak, Sr. in response to President Obama's Arctic Offshore Drilling Ban**

"As CEO of Olgoonik Corporation, the Alaska Native Village Corporation for Wainwright, Alaska located on the coast of the Chukchi Sea, I am extremely disheartened by the recent announcement by the Obama administration to invoke Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to ban responsible offshore oil and gas exploration and development in the Chukchi Sea and most of the Beaufort Sea. This ban is not only a blow to the fragile economies of the North Slope of Alaska, it is also an extremely disappointing decision sure to take many years of effort and significant resources to be undone.

Last month, it was dismaying to learn Secretary Jewell chose not to include the Chukchi and Beaufort seas in the five-year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program. This month, it is insult to injury that the President, with the simple stroke of a pen, unilaterally decided to enact a ban on all future new development in the OCS. In addition, this decision was made without consulting residents of the region who live and subsist on the shores of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. As the impacts of this ban continue to sink in, it is clear the President's concern was for his own legacy, and not for North Slope residents who are entitled to the American Dream of building and determining their own future in this resource rich area, or for the majority of Alaskans who support responsible OCS development.

For the economy of Wainwright, population 550 people, this decision is devastating given our very limited economic opportunities. One of the most immediate issues small villages such as Wainwright face is incentivizing the younger generation to remain in the community to continue ancestral traditions. When President Obama decided to ban new offshore OCS development, he eliminated key means for the village to attract outside business investment that will bring jobs for residents. With no new job prospects on the horizon, we cannot expect to keep young families in villages or to attract our educated and skilled workers to return. For Wainwright, responsible offshore development in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas means a healthier community with economic and job opportunities for residents. It is my hope president-elect Trump will act swiftly to determine how best to overturn President Obama's flawed decision."

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