



3201 C Street, Suite 700
Anchorage, AK 99503
Tel: 907.562.8728
Fax: 907.562.8751
www.olgoonik.com

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Media Contact:

Kimberlie Payne
Communications Director
907.375.4771
kpayne@olgoonik.com

Federal Law Authorizes ANC to Purchase Land Near Chukchi Sea

Wainwright, AK - On December 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (NDAA). Importantly for the village of Wainwright, the law authorizes Olgoonik to purchase a 1,518 acre parcel of property near its village of Wainwright, Alaska from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which it was previously prohibited from doing under federal law.

Hugh Patkotak, Sr., CEO of Olgoonik and Iñupiaq shareholder said, "I am so thankful for the incredible support our village received from Senator Murkowski, Senator Begich, Congressman Young, and the BLM throughout this legislative process."

The acquisition of the property – an old DEW Line site – will provide a brownfield location for Olgoonik Corporation to provide support for off-shore oil development projected to occur near its village. "The Corporation's design for the DEW Line site focuses on protecting our environment, steering oil development support away from the village, while protecting subsistence and our community from development," said Patkotak.

Under NDAA, Olgoonik will pay fair market price for the DEW Line site and pay any of BLM's costs for the sale of the property. The sale of the DEW Line site will cost the American taxpayer nothing and save the BLM on long-term management expenditures.

The BLM testified in support of Olgoonik's purchase of the old DEW Line site during a Subcommittee hearing in the House of Representatives in September 2014. The DEW Line site will be incorporated into Olgoonik's existing land use management plan and land use policies. "We look forward to working positively with the BLM to acquire this land in the next six months for the future of our village and shareholders," said Patkotak.

Olgoonik, the Wainwright Traditional Council, and the City of Wainwright passed a joint resolution on November 1, 2013 supporting Olgoonik's acquisition of the DEW Line site and the Tribe and Village Corporation reaffirmed their support of the acquisition during Tribal Consultation with the BLM on June 23, 2014.

The DEW Line site, located 3.5 miles from Wainwright, includes buildings, a runway, and gravel pads, which were constructed during the Cold War. The U.S. Air Force maintained a radar site on the property but the radar site is no longer operational and the Air Force is working jointly with Olgoonik to clean up the old site. The DEW Line site and the village of Wainwright are within the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A). The NPR-A Act of 1976 includes a provision that does not permit the BLM to dispose of the DEW Line; HR 5167 removes this limitation.

Olgoonik Corporation was advised by Pt Public Policy, LLC throughout the effort and will continue to advise Olgoonik through the acquisition of the property.

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Olgoonik Corporation is an Alaska Native Village Corporation formed under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Headquartered in Wainwright, located on the coast of the Chukchi Sea in Arctic Alaska, Olgoonik serves more than 1,300 Iñupiat shareholders. The Iñupiat people have inhabited the region for thousands of years. Wainwright residents generally maintain a traditional Iñupiat lifestyle, focused on seasonal subsistence hunting, fishing and whaling activities.