



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 3, 2023

Democrats Rage at Biden Admin for Approving Major Oil-drilling Project

The Biden administration is taking heat from its usual crowd of supporters in light of its approval Wednesday of a major oil-drilling project in Alaska that was first green-lighted during the presidency of Donald Trump.

Biden's Bureau of Land Management announced that it will be moving forward with approving the Willow Project, which will be carried out by oil company ConocoPhillips.

As [Fox News](#) reports, the project comprises 250 wells, several pipelines, a central processing plant, a gravel mine and an airport. The project is also expected to create 2,500 construction jobs and 300 long-term jobs for the community in the area.



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Conoco first submitted its permitting paperwork in 2018. Although the Trump administration approved the project, it was stalled when a federal judge in Alaska overturned that decision, citing an allegedly insufficient assessment of environmental considerations and greenhouse emissions.

As a result, environmental activists and Democrats have leapt in outrage at the Biden White House's support for the project.

Notably, Representative Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), the top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, strongly censured the administration for the approval on Wednesday.

"Giving ConocoPhillips the green light on the Willow project is not just a disaster in its own right — it paves the way for even more oil and gas drilling in the area in the future," Grijalva declared in a statement.

He added, "Today's decision sends the dangerous message that the fight against climate change, Alaska Natives' and local residents' lives, and wildlife are not good enough reasons to keep Big Oil from getting their way. This is the exact opposite of what the Biden administration stands for and the opposite of what Alaskans and this country need."

According to Land Management's final supplemental impact statement for the Willow Project, three of the five drilling sites desired by ConocoPhillips were approved. One of the sites was denied outright, while the decision on another was deferred.

Conoco anticipates that the project will produce 80,000 barrels of petroleum per day and bring in \$8-17 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue.

"We believe Willow will benefit local communities and enhance American energy security while producing oil in an environmentally and socially responsible manner," said ConocoPhillips Alaska president Erec Isaacson, adding that the company is "ready to begin construction immediately."



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In general, Republicans have been supportive of the project. That includes the entire Alaska congressional delegation. Republican Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan have encouraged the White House to give the Willow Project its approval, arguing that it would greatly benefit the entire country by increasing American oil production.

“The Willow project is enormously important, not only for the economic security of Alaska, but also for the energy security of the nation and all hardworking Americans who have suffered from record energy prices for too long,” Sullivan said in a statement to Fox.

But the Left has been just as vocal and energetic in its opposition to the Willow Project.

Jeremy Lieb, an attorney for Earthjustice who has been working on litigation to stop the project, is concerned that it will generate 280 million metric tons of carbon over the next 30 years.

Back in January, a coalition of environmental groups that included the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and the Defenders of Wildlife [held a protest](#) outside the White House.

Another critic of the Willow Project is Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, who opposed the project as a congresswoman. In 2020, while in Congress, she sent a letter to the Department of the Interior arguing that the agency should delay the project in order to protect the environment.

Under Haaland, the Department of the Interior released a statement on Wednesday expressing worry about the Willow Project but assuring it would seek an environmental-friendly way of implementing it.

The statement read:

The Department has substantial concerns about the Willow project and the preferred alternative as presented in the final SEIS, including direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to wildlife and Alaska Native subsistence. Consistent with the law, a decision will be finalized by the Department no sooner than 30 days after publication of the final SEIS. That decision may select a different alternative, including no action, or the deferral of additional drill pads beyond the single deferral described under the preferred alternative.

As *The New American* [previously reported](#), Nada Wolff Culver, a prominent official within Biden’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM), likely violated federal law by owning \$15,000 in bonds with energy giant ConocoPhillips at the time that she suspended three Trump-era oil drilling leases while serving as the bureau’s acting director.

The suspension of the drilling leases benefited ConocoPhillips by getting its competitors out of the region. Notably, Culver’s bond experienced a 1.5 percent market-rate increase due to her decision. At the time, Culver was Land Management’s acting director; she now serves as the agency’s deputy director of policy and programs.

Yet even while the Biden White House is allowing for drilling in the case of the Willow Project, it continues ramming through “green” policies on the taxpayer dime.

For example, The Energy Department last week announced the awarding of [\\$1.6 million](#) to the Chinese-backed green energy company LanzaTech — which notably also has ties to top Democratic politicians.

LanzaTech signed a partnership in 2021 with Sinopec Capital, which is the clean energy-focused



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subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned oil conglomerate.

In addition to the Sinopec connection, LanzaTech has raised millions of dollars from CITIC Capital, a subsidiary of the biggest state-run conglomerate in China.



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