

# Murkowski praises Interior ANWR report

by Sen. Frank Murkowski

Statement on Interior's report  
on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

This report is the culmination of a long and detailed process of analysis and public scrutiny.

With its release, the administration is saying to the American people, let's not wait until the next energy crisis — when we are all once again standing in gas lines and blaming the government — to worry about our energy future.

Keep in mind that our dependence on imported oil has jumped from 27 percent to 40 percent. That is considerably greater than the level in the 1970s, which precipitated the energy crisis. Without question, new sources of oil must be located.

It's significant that Interior Secretary Donald Hodel has recommended full leasing of the entire Coastal Plain. By doing so he is

demonstrating a full understanding that our security depends on government acting wisely and doing so now.

It is essential that we know the size of our domestic reserves. This report shows a grasp of the high potential of finding substantial reserves in ANWR.

I commend Secretary Hodel for addressing issues raised in comments on the draft report, in particular the impact of oil activities on caribou.

Careful review of data and public comments resulted in a finding that there is no permanent core calving area. Instead, the caribou calve in concentrated numbers in a variety of different locations from year to year. This final report recognizes this and projects the impact of exploration activities on caribou will be minimal.

Those who attempt to exploit fear over the well-being of caribou that live in ANWR ignore the Prudhoe Bay experience.

There were about 3,000 caribou in

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Prudhoe Bay in 1972. Today that number has increased five-fold to nearly 14,000. There is no either/or choice. We can have both oil and wildlife protection.

This informative report will be the foundation for the legislative effort to open the Coastal Plain. I look forward to beginning that process soon.

*The Department of Interior recently released its report on ANWR to Congress and recommended that the entire Coastal Plain of the refuge be opened to oil and gas exploration.*



Senator Frank Murkowski