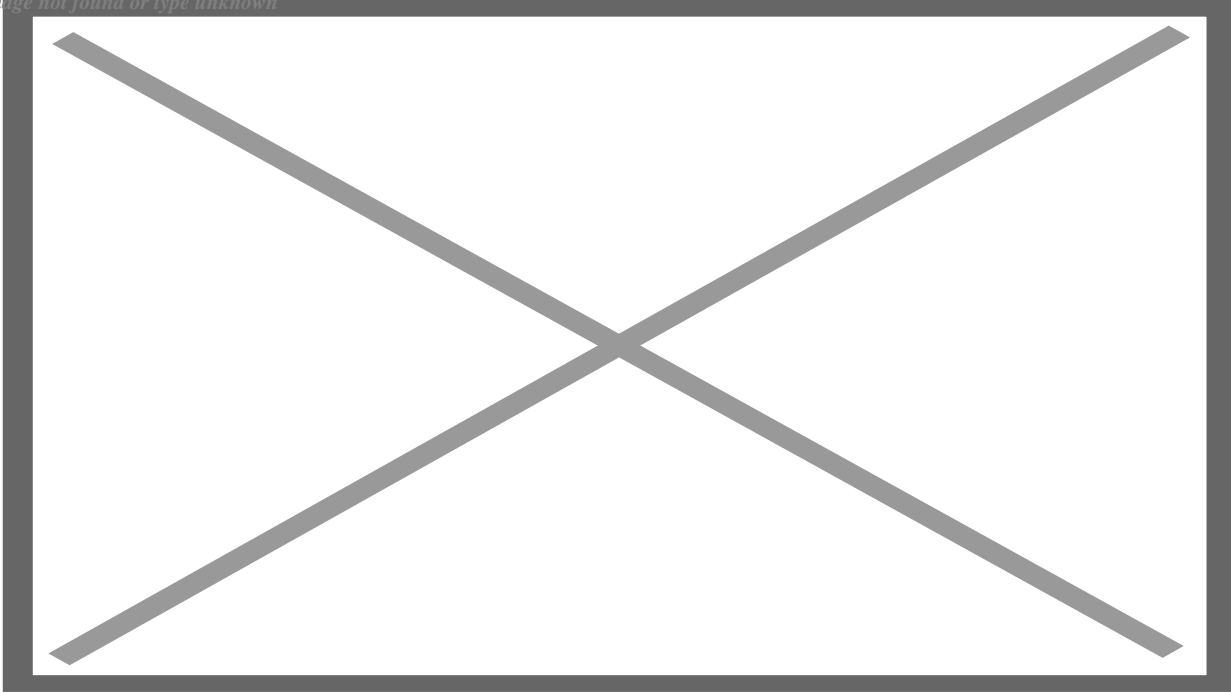


Alaska in danger

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Stop project-Willow. Image:BBC

By María Josefina Arce

Controversy has erupted after U.S. President Joe Biden gave the green light to the criticized Willow Project, one of the largest oil and gas development plans in the wildlife-rich state of Alaska.

Another electoral promise of the current White House tenant, who had assured that his government would not allow new oil and gas drilling on federal lands, has been left behind.

Critics say it is too late in the climate crisis to approve projects like this that directly undermine the new clean economy that the Biden administration pledged to deliver.

The battle to implement this plan has been going on for years. It was initially approved in October 2020 by the administration of now former President Donald Trump, but in 2021 it was halted by a judge for further review by authorities in the face of numerous challenges.

Those who support Biden's decision claim that it will create thousands of jobs and contribute to the energy independence of the United States, but many wonder at what great cost to the people and animals present in this area?

But the truth is that the battle continues against the project, which will be developed on the north slope of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, on public government lands and about 200 miles north of the Arctic, one of the least explored places in the United States.

So far, some four million signatures have been collected online in opposition to Willow, which has been described as a carbon bomb, while one million letters have been sent to federal authorities.

Environmental groups have also filed a lawsuit to stop oil drilling in the area, which will endanger communities and wildlife already threatened by climate change.

Environmental activists estimate that more than 260 million metric tons of greenhouse gases will be produced, or the equivalent of 56 million vehicles running for a year.

Alaska is home to polar bears, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds, caribou and musk oxen, which are a vital subsistence resource for native communities in the U.S. state.

In an attempt to counter the strong opposition to the approval of the Willow project, the Biden administration has banned oil and gas development in the U.S. Arctic Ocean, a measure described as insufficient by environmental advocates who believe that Alaska is the big loser, as this plan will have devastating consequences.

Once again, the planet loses out to political and economic interests. The climate crisis is a reality that cannot be ignored, and oil and gas exploration will only aggravate the great problem facing all of humanity.

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