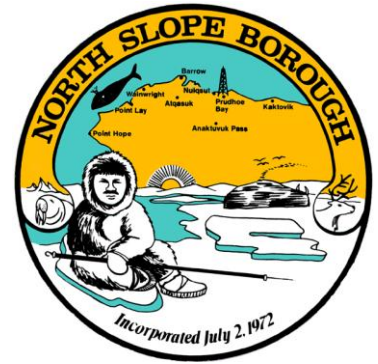


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Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

PRESS RELEASE

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Mayor Brower Applauds Senator Murkowski HR 527 Providing Legacy Well Remediation

Mayor Charlotte Brower welcomed news today that the U.S. Senate has passed federal legislation, the “Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act”, that provides \$50 million in new federal funding for the cleanup of oil and gas “legacy” wells within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A).

Between 1944 and 1982, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Geological Survey drilled 136 wells in Northern Alaska. The wells were abandoned. Only a handful of these 136 legacy wells have been plugged and remediated in compliance with State standards.

Earlier this week, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a plan to remediate 16 of the highest priority legacy wells. “I welcome BLM’s plan,” Mayor Brower said. “But for many years, BLM has lacked the resources necessary to clean up and remediate high priority wells in a timely manner. In fact, earlier this year, the Administration proposed a federal budget for FY 2014 that would have diverted Alaska’s share of revenue derived from oil and natural gas activity in the NPR-A to pay for the cleanup of legacy wells drilled by the federal government. This is unacceptable, and in a meeting with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell this summer, I expressed my dismay that the Administration would take funding away from our communities to pay to clean up a federal mess.”

The Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act, H.R. 527, authored by Senators Lisa Murkowski and Ron Wyden (D-OR), would close the Federal Helium Reserve in Texas, generating \$500 million in federal revenue over the next decade. The legislation directs \$50 million of that funding for the cleanup of legacy wells, spread across three fiscal years: \$10 million in FY 2014, \$36 million in FY 2015 and \$4 million in FY 2019.

More than a year ago, Mayor Brower testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources regarding the impact of abandoned wells on the health and welfare of Borough residents. This May, Mayor Brower testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, and again called upon the Federal Government to fulfill its obligations to Alaska and to the residents of the North Slope Borough by committing federal funds to the cleanup of federal legacy wells.

Mayor Brower also acknowledged Senator Murkowski's persistence on fighting for funding to clean up the legacy wells: "Senator Murkowski has pressed the Obama Administration and Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell to take responsibility for the NPR-A legacy wells, and to provide the funding necessary to clean up and remediate high priority wells. When the Administration failed to come up with the funding, Senator Murkowski found a way.

"My administration has called upon stakeholders to work together, on this issue and on other issues," the Mayor said. "We appreciate the work of all of Alaska's congressional delegation, our friends at BLM, and our own State Legislature—particularly the work of Representative Charisse Millett, who has worked tirelessly on this issue—to achieve a real win today for Alaska and for the residents of the North Slope Borough."

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