

What happened to the Willow Project?

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Many people will recall the viral and controversial Willow Project. The massive oil drilling project in Alaska sparked protests and petitions in March of 2023, due to the detrimental effects it would have on the environment. However, despite the public outrage and virality of the project, it's unclear what has happened since, and startlingly few people seem to discuss it today. It seems as if people have forgotten about it.

For anyone who doesn't know, The Willow Project is a massive oil drilling venture run by ConocoPhillips, a Houston based oil company. The project itself is being constructed in a national petroleum reserve in the north of Alaska. This project became the target of an intense backlash in March, when it was discovered that not only does it directly violate the Biden Administration's promise to reduce the United State's use of fossil fuels, but it would also do global, irreparable damage to the environment. The Willow Project would result in the destruction of 532 acres of wetlands, the loss of 619 acres of polar bear habitats, and over 17,000 acres of bird habitats. What's more, the Willow Project will result in 9.2 million metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, a total of 239 million metric tons of CO2 released into the atmosphere over the project's planned 30-year lifespan. These figures are overwhelming and outrageous, prompting over 5 million signatures on online petitions to stop the project.

So, what happened? Throughout February and March, thousands of people protested, and millions signed petitions and sent letters to U.S government bodies. However, on March 13th, the Biden Administration approved the Willow Project, despite acknowledging the risk the project poses for the environment. In the following weeks, people seemed to stop discussing it. Is this really the world we live in? It seems that governments care more about money and profits than the environment, and the people and animals that will be hurt by this project. Today, we live in an era where there are flowers blooming in Antarctica due to climate change. We as a people need to come together and find a new way to stop this and protect the environment before the damage becomes irreparable. This must end, it's time to act.