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Federal judge bars sale of government oil leases on Alaskan land reserve

[Holly Manges Jones](#) at 7:45 AM ET



[JURIST] A federal judge Monday [stopped the sale](#) [Earthjustice press release] of oil and gas rights on approximately 1.7 million acres of protected land on Alaska's North Slope, which the US [Bureau of Land Management](#) (BLM) [official website] had planned for Wednesday to recover an estimated 2 billion barrels of oil sitting under the land. The sale of federal leases would have included land in the Alaskan [Teshekpuk Lake](#) [Sierra Club backgrounder] area, but US District Court Judge James Singleton refused to allow the leases to proceed after he issued a [preliminary injunction against the sale](#) [JURIST report] earlier this month. Singleton said the government's environmental studies did not address how oil drilling would impact the land and wildlife in the 600,000-acre section of the Teshekpuk Lake reserve, which environmentalists have argued encompasses some of the most important wetlands in the Arctic. The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) [advocacy website] and the [National Audubon Society](#) [advocacy website], both plaintiffs in the suit, praised the court's decision.

A spokesperson for the government said it will conduct another set of environmental studies and try again for the sale, but the process could take over a year. In the meantime, BLM attorneys are determining if they can proceed with sales in the northwest section of the reserve, since the ruling only explicitly prohibits sales in the northeast section. AP has [more](#).