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## Groups Challenge EPA Approval of Shell Oil Pollution in the Arctic Ocean

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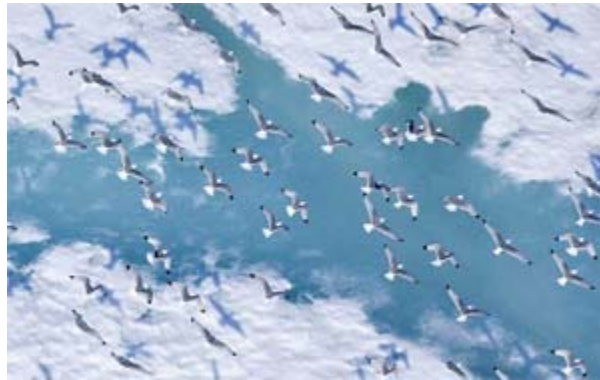
*Decision moves Shell one step closer to unsafe, destructive offshore oil drilling*

**October 24, 2011**

**Juneau, AK** — On October 21, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued an air pollution permit for the Kulluk drill ship that Shell Offshore Inc. plans to use in offshore oil drilling efforts that could begin as early as next summer. Today, on behalf of the Native Village of Point Hope, Resisting Environmental Destruction of Indigenous Lands (“REDOIL”), Alaska Wilderness League, Center for Biological Diversity, Natural Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”), Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Ocean Conservancy, Oceana, Pacific Environment, Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society, Earthjustice filed an appeal with the EPA’s Environmental Appeals Board challenging a similar EPA permit for the Discoverer drill ship that the agency approved last month.

The following statement is from Earthjustice attorney Colin O’Brien:

“The EPA essentially is green-lighting dangerous Arctic Ocean oil drilling by approving the air permit for the Kulluk drill ship. Shell Oil has proposed a massive drilling operation in one of the most remote places on the planet. Each year, this fleet of ships could emit 30 tons of particulate matter, 240 tons of nitrogen oxides and 80,000 tons of carbon dioxide. Not only is oil drilling risky, these ships would double the amount of global warming pollution produced by roughly all of the North Slope Borough households.



Kittiwakes. Chukchi Sea, Alaska. © Florian Schulz / visionsofthewild.com

“This permit for the Kulluk marks the beginning of a wave of potential offshore industrial activity in the Arctic. Unfortunately, on the eve of a potentially massive influx of oil company development, the EPA has turned a blind eye to the cumulative impacts that would be harmful to the health of Alaska Natives and the environment for years to come.

“The EPA unfortunately has already approved another drill ship permit, for the Discoverer. That permit ignored the impacts these drill ships will have on air quality in the region and we filed an appeal today with the EPA’s Environmental Appeals Board challenging the Discoverer permit.

“Arctic Ocean oil drilling is simply a bad idea. In an area with 20-foot sea swells, walls of ice 6 feet thick, and complete darkness two months out of every year, the thought of cleaning up an oil spill is

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ludicrous. The EPA's decisions on these air permits moves us closer to the inevitable disaster that would be a large oil spill in the Arctic Ocean."

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Founded as the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in 1971