



To the political parties at the Norwegian parliament and the Arctic Council

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### **The Arctic must be protected against oil-drilling now.**

In 2010, Norwegian Grandparents Climatecampaign – NGCC – urged the parties of the Norwegian parliament to protect the Arctic against oil-operations, quote: *“Never has the need for effective action been greater, action that points out one path to long-term sustainability. If there is one place on the planet where all further exploring and exploitation of oil and gas should be stopped, it is in the Arctic. Instead of searching for the last drops of oil, humankind need a new vision: that the Arctic and Antarctica – the planets two poles, both vitally important to the planets state of health, shall get the international societies’ moral care and legal protection.”*

In 2020, US president-elect Joe Biden, wish to get all member-countries of the circumpolar cooperative body, Arctic Council, behind a moratorium against offshore oil-drilling in the Arctic.

This is a constructive proposition of historic importance. However, the answer from the Norwegian government is that Norway’s oil-activities in the Barents Sea will continue as usual. Sadly, this answer is entirely in line with the government’s consistent disregarding consequences for the climate in their oil-policy. Since 2013, when announcing new application-rounds for licences and oil-blocks, the government has ignored all objections – including 100 % of objections against oil-activity in vulnerable areas expressed by the Norwegian Environment Agency.

Simultaneously, climate change has gone from bad to worse, especially in the Arctic. Here the temperature rises more than twice as fast as on the rest of the planet, and much faster on the archipelago Svalbard. The Arctic, that we in white societies have treated as a merciless ice-wasteland yet a tempting target for conquest and control – has finally been defeated. The enormous forces of nature are about to surrender to manmade global warming. Arctic oceans will almost be completely free of ice, most likely already in 30-40 years time. This may lead to opening new ocean areas for oil and gas exploitation.

This is a vicious circle that must be broken. Since the 1990s, Norway has been one of the strongest driving forces for ambitious climate agreements. Yet at home we have never followed a climate policy anywhere near our international engagement, nor have we

demonstrated a sincere will to sacrifice short-term economic oil-interests, for the benefit of the greater collective interests of humankind. One humiliating example is that of Statoil's (now Equinor's) exploitation of Canadian tarsand, when irresolute Norwegian politicians stood by and let Statoil carry on business as usual, so destructive to the climate, nature and the first peoples of Canada, until economical conditions enforced a solution.

Leaving large parts of the fossil fuels in the ground, and protect the Arctic against further deterioration of environments, is incompatible with an oil-policy where the authorities systematically apply measures in order to drive up the pace of search and expansion. Winding up our fossil fuel industry will no doubt be a demanding change-over readjustment, but it also provides Norway, a wealthy country with considerable freedom of action, with an opportunity to be in front and to show that it is possible to terminate our world's fossil fuel dependency.

Today's adults will be gone when the climate- and environment problems have become unsolvable. Thus, the world must act now. This is the time when we need politicians that earnestly will work for solidarity between generations. This demands that they immediately take hold of the most pressing collective challenge of our times; to close the enormous gap between actions that are imperative and the ones actually implemented.

Norway has considerable influence regarding public administration of parts of the Arctic, also through the cooperation within the Arctic Council, that is the only circumpolar cooperative body on government level. The Council's mandate is to contribute to sustainable development and protection of the Arctic environment, immensely important work that is in Norway's greatest interest to strengthen.

We expect that Norwegian politicians listen, both to climate- and environment science – and to the new signals from president-elect Biden and his administration. The world needs a New Green Deal.

Sincerely,

Steinar Winther Christensen  
*Leader Grandparents Climate Campaign*