



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

News Release

BLM, Alaska State Office, Office of Communications
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Contact: James Hart, 907-271-3130, jehart@blm.gov

BLM Alaska to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program

ANCHORAGE – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced a 60-day public scoping period to assist in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The publication tomorrow of a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* begins the implementation of provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (Tax Act) requiring the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the BLM, to establish and administer a competitive oil and gas program for the leasing, development, production, and transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain area within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

“Developing our resources on the Coastal Plain is an important facet for meeting our nation’s energy demands and achieving energy dominance,” **said Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash.** “This scoping process begins the first step in developing a responsible path forward. I look forward to personally visiting the communities most affected by this process and hearing their concerns.”

The members of Alaska’s congressional delegation -- **Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan, and Congressman Don Young** -- issued a joint statement of support for the action. “We welcome this scoping announcement and the Department’s continued work to implement our legislation opening the Coastal Plain to responsible energy development,” the delegation said. “We appreciate the Department following the law, planning multiple public meetings with Alaskans, and moving forward on this important program to help ensure the energy and economic security of our nation.”

The Coastal Plain was specifically identified by Congress, pursuant to Section 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, for its potential for oil and natural gas resources. Oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation’s energy demands and achieving energy dominance.

The first lease sale will be held after completion of an environmental analysis and will offer not fewer than 400,000 acres area-wide of high-potential lands for bid.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to assist BLM in identifying relevant issues that will influence the scope of the EIS and guide its development, including the formation of alternatives to the proposed action within the parameters outlined in the Tax Act. The BLM invites the public to provide comments on scoping issues. The BLM will hold public scoping meetings in: Anchorage, Arctic Village, Fairbanks, Kaktovik, and Utqiagvik at times and locations to be announced in local media, newspapers, and on the BLM website. The BLM may hold additional public scoping meetings in other communities if there is strong community interest.

Comments on scoping issues for the proposed Leasing EIS will be accepted through June 19, 2018, and can be sent by any of the following methods:

- website: www.blm.gov/alaska/coastal-plain-eis
- email: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov
- mail: Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM Alaska State Office, BLM Alaska Public Information Center, 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99513.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated \$75 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2016—more than any other agency in the Department of the Interior. These activities supported more than 372,000 jobs.