



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

# **BLM ALASKA RELEASES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM**

**A Draft EIS is the next step in responsible path forward to fulfilling obligations under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-97)**

**ANCHORAGE** – In furthering the Trump Administration’s goals of responsibly developing our natural resources, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program for public review and comment.

Congress specifically identified the Coastal Plain for its potential for oil and natural gas resources in Section 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA). Oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation’s energy demands and creating employment opportunities for Alaska’s North Slope residents.

"An energy-dominant America starts with an energy-dominant Alaska, and among the scores of accomplishments we have had at Interior under President Donald J. Trump, taking these steps toward opening the 1002 section of Alaska’s North Slope stands out among the most impactful toward bolstering America’s economic strength and security," **said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke**. "For decades, Alaskans on both sides of the aisle have overwhelmingly supported opening the 1002 to energy exploration and development. I commend the President for giving Alaskans a voice again in how their public lands are used and for his commitment to responsible development of the Coastal Plain."

"This draft reflects thousands of hours of work that demonstrate a commitment to the development of these documents and the range of alternatives," **said Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt**. "We look forward to a very robust public comment period to better inform our final decision."

"A 1987 Interior report to Congress fulfilling our requirements under ANILCA recommended the Coastal Plain for oil and gas development. Since completion of that report, numerous oil fields have been discovered near the Coastal Plain and oil field technologies have changed significantly," **said Assistant Secretary of the**

**Interior for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash.** "The depth of expertise in arctic resources and issues from tribal members, state, local and federal agency staff was integral in developing a comprehensive Draft Environmental Impact Statement."

The publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on Dec. 28, 2018, will officially begin the 45-day public comment period. The release of the Draft EIS is the next step in implementing the provisions in the Tax Act for establishing and administering 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.

"Alaskans have anticipated the release of the draft environmental statement for decades," **said Alaska Gov. Michael J. Dunleavy.** "My administration and Alaskans overwhelmingly support ANWR development, and we are eager to inform and educate our fellow Americans that it will be done utilizing the highest environmental standards and safeguards to protect its land, waters and wildlife."

"Continuing engagement with the communities most affected by this process is key in developing a comprehensive analysis," **said acting State Director Ted Murphy.** "We received substantial input in the development of this draft from cooperating agencies and stakeholders throughout Alaska, our nation and Canada, and I look forward to continuing that engagement in this comment period."

The first lease sale will be held after the Final EIS and Record of Decision is issued and will offer not fewer than 400,000 acres area-wide of high-potential lands for bid.

The BLM is seeking feedback on the alternatives to the proposed action within the parameters outlined in the Tax Act, which will inform the Final EIS and the Record of Decision. Substantive comments should be as specific as possible and can be submitted by a variety of methods. The BLM will hold public meetings in: Anchorage, Arctic Village, Fairbanks, Kaktovik, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Utqiagvik and Washington, D.C., at times and locations to be announced in local media, newspapers, and on the BLM website.

Comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted through Feb. 11 and can be sent by any of the following methods:

- **Website:** [www.blm.gov/alaska/Coastal-Plain-EIS](http://www.blm.gov/alaska/Coastal-Plain-EIS)
- **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.

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 \$96 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2017. These activities supported more than 468,000 jobs.

## RELEASE DATE

Thursday, December 20, 2018

## ORGANIZATION

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