

Willow Master Development Plan

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Summary Report

June 2022

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List of Acronyms

ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	best management practices
BT	Bear Tooth
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
GHG	greenhouse gas
IAP	Integrated Activity Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPR-A	National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska
ROD	Record of Decision
TAPS	Trans-Alaska Pipeline System
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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1.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND SCOPING PROCESS

Public involvement is an integral part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is required in the preparation and implementation of agencies' NEPA procedures. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published a Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on February 7, 2022. The supplemental analysis will address deficiencies identified in the August 2021 U.S. District Court of Alaska decision to vacate the earlier Record of Decision and Final EIS and ensure compliance with applicable law.

The scoping period was 30 days and ran from February 7, 2022, to March 9, 2022. The scoping period was announced in the *Federal Register*, a BLM news release, and the BLM Willow Master Development Plan ePlanning website. Public comments were received via email and through the BLM's ePlanning website.

2.0 COMMENT SUMMARY

In total, 125,146 respondents submitted comments during the scoping period. These comments were submitted via the ePlanning website, email, or mailed-in letters. Of the comment letters, the majority (97%) were submitted as form letters (i.e., letters containing identical content), while the remainder were either form letters with slight modifications (3%) (e.g., one or two unique sentences added, but otherwise identical to a form letter) or unique comment letters (>1%) (i.e., original letters that did not have identical or almost identical wording as another letter). The 124,687 form letter submissions all originated from a total of 16 unique form master letters, some of which shared overlapping phrases or bullet points.

Nearly all respondents were individuals (99%), with the exception of those listed below in Table 2.1. Individuals who provided their business title or employer information in their letter but did not state that they were an official representative were counted as individuals as opposed to businesses or organizations.

Table 2.1. Respondent Group Types

Respondent Group Type	Respondent Title
Tribes/Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Corporations	Arctic Slope Regional Corporation Kuukpiik Corporation Native Village of Barrow
Government Agencies	Alaska Congressional Delegation (Senators Murkowski and Sullivan and Congressman Young) Alaska Legislature (Representatives Bart LeBon, Steve Thompson, and Mike Prax) City of Atkasuk City of Wainwright House Natural Resources Committee North Slope Borough State of Alaska U.S. Environmental Protection Agency U.S. House of Representatives (Alan Lowenthal, Raúl Grijalva, Jared Huffman, Katie Porter, Earl Blumenauer, Rashida Tlaib, Betty McCollum, and Jan Schakowsky)

Respondent Group Type	Respondent Title
Businesses and Organizations	350 Humboldt 350 Juneau 350.Org AK District Council of Laborers Alaska AFL-CIO Alaska Chamber Alaska Federation of Natives Alaska Frontier Constructors Alaska Maritime Agencies Alaska Oil and Gas Association Alaska Port Services Alaska Support Industry Alliance Alyeska Pipeline Services Company ANCSA Regional Association Arctic Controls, Inc. Bering Marine Corporation Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives Colville, Inc. ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. Cruz Construction, Inc. Defenders Of Wildlife Delta Constructors Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation Flowline Alaska, Inc. Friends of the Earth General Steamship Agencies, Inc. Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Human Rights Action Movement ICE Services, Inc. International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) 302 The Juggernaut Project Knik Construction Laborers' International Union of North America Local 942 Laborers' Local 341 Lynden Incorporated and Affiliates Michael Baker International Natural Resources Defense Council North Star Equipment Services Northern Energy Services, LLC Our Children's Trust Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 375 Protect the Arctic Public Employees Local 71 Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic STG Incorporated Teamsters Local 959 Voice of the Arctic Inupiat Vote Climate The Welding Shop, Inc. Combined comments from: Alaska Wilderness League, Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Earth, League of Conservation Voters, The Wilderness Society, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Earthjustice, Greenpeace USA, and Northern Alaska Environmental Center Combined comments from: Trustees for Alaska, Alaska Wilderness League, Audubon Alaska, Conservation Lands Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Friends of the Earth, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic, Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society

Notes: ANCSA (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act); IUOE (International Union of Operating Engineers).

Within each comment letter, individual comments (i.e., stand-alone comments that relate to a single issue, idea, or conclusion) were identified and grouped into one or more of the following categories listed in Table 2.2. Comment categories are either defined by individual resources that may be affected by the project, individual elements of the proposed project, or specific phases and aspects of the EIS or NEPA process (Table 2.2). Categories are intended to describe the main topic or resource that is discussed in the comment, regardless of whether the comment is expressing opposition or support for the project as it relates to that topic. Any comments identified within form letters were categorized only once and counted as a single comment no matter how many form letters with that same comment were submitted.

Table 2.2. Comment Categories

Resource Topics	Project Element Topics	EIS/NEPA Process Topics
Reclamation	Endanger Species Act Consultation and Analysis	EIS Process/Timeline
Air Quality	Legal Compliance	Stakeholder Engagement
Birds	Integrated Activity Plan	Cumulative Effects
Climate Change	Mitigation or Minimization	Alternatives
Cultural Resources	Project Description	Request for Extended Scoping Period
Environmental Justice		Purpose and Need
General Economics		Tribal Engagement
Marine Mammals		ANILCA 810 Analysis
Public Health and Safety		Request to be Added to Mailing List
Soils or Permafrost		Request for Meeting with BLM
Domestic Oil Production/Trans-Alaska Pipeline System		Request for New Analysis
Teshkepkuk Lake and other Special Areas		Request for New Alternative
Subsistence		Request for More Detail
Spills or Emergency Response		Permitting

Notes: ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act); BLM (Bureau of Land Management); EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).

BLM considered each comment and determined if they were substantive or non-substantive. In performing this analysis, BLM relied on Section 6.9.2, *Comments*, in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1 (2008) to determine what constituted a substantive comment. Comments that are not considered substantive include the following:

- Comments in favor of or against the proposed action or alternatives without reasoning that meet the criteria listed above (such as “we disagree with Alternative Two and believe the BLM should select Alternative Three”)
- Comments that only agree or disagree with BLM policy or resource decisions without justification or supporting data that meet the criteria listed above (such as “more grazing should be permitted”)
- Comments that don’t pertain to the project area or the project (such as “the government should eliminate all dams,” when the project is about a grazing permit)
- Comments that take the form of vague, open-ended questions

In total, 506 individual substantive comments were identified and categorized, as shown in Table 2.3. Half of all comments (50%) fell into the following five categories:

1. Climate Change
2. General Economics
3. EIS Process/Timeline
4. Request for More Detail
5. Domestic Oil Production/Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS)

Additional details concerning the content of comments and their key points are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2.3. Comments Received

Comment Category	No. Comments Received	% Total Comments
Climate Change	74	14.6%
General Economics	59	11.7%
EIS Process/Timeline	47	9.3%
Request for More Detail	31	6.1%
Domestic Oil Production/Trans-Alaska Pipeline System	31	6.1%
Caribou and General Wildlife	31	6.1%
Alternatives	29	5.7%
Mitigation or Minimization	20	4.0%
Stakeholder Engagement	19	3.8%
Cumulative Effects	16	3.2%
Environmental Justice	14	2.8%
Subsistence	14	2.8%
Public Health and Safety	12	2.4%
Purpose and Need	11	2.2%
Spills or Emergency Response	11	2.2%
Permitting	10	2.0%
Request for New Alternative	10	2.0%
Teshkepkuk Lake and Other Special Areas	10	2.0%
Marine Mammals	8	1.6%
Endanger Species Act Consultation and Analysis	6	1.2%
Request for New Analysis	5	1.0%
Integrated Activity Plan	5	1.0%
Project Description	5	1.0%
ANILCA 810 Analysis	4	0.8%
Birds	4	0.8%
Tribal Engagement	4	0.8%
Legal Compliance	3	0.6%
Reclamation	3	0.6%
Nuiqsut Economics	3	0.6%
Air Quality	2	0.4%
Request to be Added to Mailing List and Response to Comments	1	0.2%
Request Meeting with BLM	1	0.2%
Request for Extended Scoping Period	1	0.2%
Cultural Resources	1	0.2%
Soil and Permafrost	1	0.2%
Sum	506	100%

Notes: ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act); BLM (Bureau of Land Management); EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).

Table 2.4. Comment Summary

Comment Category	Summary of Key Points
Climate Change	Commenters stated that the project would have significant GHG emissions and larger consequences on the North Slope and the globe. Commenters requested that the EIS consider long-term and cumulative effects of climate change, and include an analysis of the social cost of carbon. Comments also requested that the MarketSim analysis use different assumptions than in prior iterations of the EIS, such as the use of a baseline scenario that assumes that the U.S. and other countries meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and transition to clean, renewable energy. Many commenters suggested the project would not allow the U.S. to meet renewable energy goals and commitments to the Paris Agreement.
General Economics	Commenters stated that the project is needed to support the economic development of the State of Alaska, the North Slope, and the communities in the vicinity of the project. Additional comments requested that the Supplemental EIS economic analysis be revised to account for other oil and gas activities that are occurring and planned on the North Slope.

Comment Category	Summary of Key Points
EIS Process/Timeline	Comments in this category were split, with some comments encouraging BLM to complete the EIS analysis in a timely and efficient manner and focus on the issues identified as needing additional review by the court, and some comments encouraging BLM to take their time and expand on analyses completed in the Final EIS. Some commenters requested that BLM provide public scoping meetings, and one commenter requested that BLM and USACE have complete permit applications from ConocoPhillips before initiating the NEPA process.
Request for More Detail	Commenters requested more detail be provided on information presented in the Final EIS, such as site-specific information about the Colville River crossing, the impacts of vehicle traffic, the impacts of temporary ice infrastructure, the impacts from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and other well stimulation techniques, wildlife movement, traffic associated with using the K Pad mud plant, and the rationale for eliminating the Constructed Freshwater Reservoir from one alternative.
Domestic Oil Production/TAPS	Commenters requested that the Supplemental EIS include an analysis of potential increases in domestic oil production and associated benefits to national energy and economic security, and the long-term viability and integrity of the TAPS.
Caribou and General Wildlife	Commenters stated the project would have substantial impacts on caribou migration and movement, and access to preferred habitat. Commenters also voiced concern about loss of wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Specifically, some respondents asked that the EIS evaluate potential impacts to: special areas protected under the IAP, which have been set aside for their importance to caribou, including Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and Colville River Special Area; caribou migration patterns or avoidance effects; and shorebirds and waterfowl from habitat loss and disturbance.
Alternatives	Commenters suggested BLM expand on alternative elements evaluated in the Final EIS, such as: using the existing central processing facility and other infrastructure at Alpine instead of building new infrastructure; alternative drill site locations; a year-round roadless alternative (aircraft only) and a seasonal roadless alternative (provides for seasonal drilling); eliminating or minimizing the number of roads or other proposed facilities within Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and Colville River Special Areas (specifically, eliminating the approximately 7-mile north-south drill site access road through Teshekpuk Lake Special Area or eliminating drill sites BT2 and BT4 and the roads to them); or any other alternative design that reduces the footprint of the project and reduces the amount of new infrastructure being proposed.
Cumulative Effects	Commenters requested that the cumulative effects analysis include more details about future drill sites such as Greater Willow 1 and 2 and consider the cumulative impacts of Willow as a hub for future oil and gas activities (i.e., westward development spurred by Willow), which commenters felt would impact Special Areas and local communities. One commenter mentioned specific future actions that should be included in the analysis, such as the Peregrine Project, and other commenters requested a more robust cumulative analysis of climate change.
Mitigation and Minimization	Comments suggested BLM consider project-specific mitigation to protect resources and habitat, and not rely on general measures included in the IAP, particularly if BLM moves forward before a final decision is made on the IAP. Comments also requested that more rationale be provided for deviations from IAP measures and why those deviations are appropriate, and requested BLM explain how the objectives of those BMPs would be met through other means. Some comments suggested specific minimization measures such as use of drones in place of aircraft for pipeline monitoring, use of electric vehicles, use of insulation in roads and pads, higher vertical support members and horizontal support members, seasonal operation restrictions, etc.
Stakeholder Engagement	Commenters requested BLM hold public hearings or public meetings for scoping, especially in Nuiqsut. Commenters suggested BLM should listen to the communities regarding potential effects to them.
Request for New Alternative	Commenters suggested BLM include new alternative elements that were not evaluated in the Final EIS, such as: constructing a diesel pipeline (several variations on this were suggested), relocating BT2 to the west, using alternative transportation to roadless drill sites, eliminating the barging of modules, and including Greater Willow 1 and 2 as drill sites.
Environmental Justice	Commenters expressed concern that the project would adversely impact Native communities by affecting subsistence resources and by releasing potential contamination and pollution that would affect the health of these communities. Two commenters noted that existing mitigation mechanisms, such as the NPR-A Impact Grant Program, would at least in part offset potential disproportionate impacts to Native communities.

Comment Category	Summary of Key Points
Subsistence	Commenters stated that the project would significantly impact the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd, an important subsistence resource for communities on the North Slope. Comments expressed concern about food security and potential toxics and pollutants in subsistence food sources, and stated that the project would disrupt caribou migration. One comment described the potential benefits of new roads for increasing subsistence access and lowering the cost of goods and services in Nuiqsut.
Public Health and Safety	Commenters requested that the EIS consider potential impacts of the project on human health as a result of air pollution, water pollution, stress, or changes in traditional way of life and diet. Specific concerns expressed by respondents include asthma and other respiratory diseases, cancer, toxins in animals and food, general exposure to toxins in air and drinking water. Commenters noted the project's close proximity to Nuiqsut would result in impacts to public health.
Purpose and Need	Commenters requested that the Purpose and Need of the EIS be re-evaluated, and that it should account for and be consistent with current national climate change policy goals. One commenter suggested that BLM's claim in the Final EIS that the project would help offset declines in production from the North Slope oil fields should be viewed with climate commitments in mind, and that therefore declining emissions from the oil and gas sector is the goal to be accomplished, not a problem that needs fixing. That commenter also suggested that BLM should reassess the need for the project in terms of projected oil supply and demand, and that U.S. oil demand is expected to decline with the use of electric vehicles.
Permitting	A commenter suggested that the project would not protect the public interest and that USACE and BLM should assess whether there is a less environmentally damaging practicable alternative that was not fully considered in the prior permitting process.
Marine Mammals	Commenters requested that the EIS include a quantitative analysis of potential impacts to denning bears and cubs, and a more robust analysis of impacts of increased human-bear encounters. Commenters stated that the project would result in habitat loss for polar bears.
Teshekpuk Lake and Other Special Areas	Commenters requested that the EIS evaluate potential impacts to wildlife and bird species and habitats within the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and the Colville River Special Area. Respondents stated that the EIS should also describe protections for the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area and how the project complies with applicable use or development restrictions. One commenter expressed concern about the project's impacts on the Pik Dunes area and its unique qualities.
Spills or Emergency Response	Commenters expressed concern about potential spills from the project, potential seismic risks, and the duration of recovery if a spill were to occur.
Request for New Analysis	Commenters requested additional baseline studies and analysis be completed regarding methane release and new requirements from the North Slope Borough's rezone ordinance for the project (passed in January 2021). One commenter suggested BLM complete a Health Impact Assessment for the local communities.
IAP	Commenters requested that the project should conform to BLM's 2013 IAP, since the 2020 IAP will be withdrawn. Some requests stated that any reconsideration of Willow should occur after BLM completes its evaluation of the 2020 IAP and determines whether to issue a ROD selecting a different alternative, so it is clear what measures apply to the Willow decision.
Project Description	Commenters requested that the Supplemental EIS describe how the project complies with all laws and policies, include a discussion of the approvals and authorizations from federal, state, and local agencies. Further requests related to requests that ConocoPhillips provide site-specific information including (but not limited to) location, power generation, vehicle and aircraft traffic patterns, processing activities, and infrastructure needs.
ANILCA 810 Analysis	Commenters requested that BLM describe how Willow would comply with ANILCA and stated that BLM should take reasonable steps to minimize and address impacts to subsistence, and if significant impacts are unavoidable to consider if approval of the project complies with ANILCA.
ESA Consultation and Analysis	Commenters requested that the Supplemental EIS analyze the effects of the GHG pollution resulting from the Willow Project in isolation, and in combination with other oil and gas activities in the Arctic on the survival and recovery of polar bears. Commenters also requested that BLM utilize the Wilson and Durner model to quantify the impacts to denning polar bears and make the results of this model available for public review.

Comment Category	Summary of Key Points
Birds	<p>Commenters requested that the Supplemental EIS should consider any obligations and priorities that result from the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership. Additional requests include that the Supplemental EIS explore the distribution and ecology of <i>arcticola</i> dunlin in relation to possible development in the Willow Project area, including the cumulative impacts to the species.</p> <p>Commenters also requested that BLM review the existing annual reports to understand and disclose potential impacts to yellow-billed loon from the project.</p>
Tribal Engagement	Commenters reiterated the importance of and requirements for working with the Alaska Native Corporations and expressed appreciation for how BLM has done that to date.
Legal Compliance	Commenters stated that BLM's previous EIS and ROD wrongly assumed that the agency lacked authority to limit ConocoPhillips' activities. Commenters further stated that BLM has clear, statutory obligations to condition or restrict oil and gas activity as it determines necessary to protect other resources and to mitigate adverse environmental effects, along with the authority to deny a project altogether if its impacts are too severe.
Reclamation	Commenters expressed concern that reclamation was not fully addressed in the Final EIS, that recovery could take time, and questioned who would clean up after the project was completed.
Nuiqsut Economics	Some commenters stated that the jobs would not benefit local communities, while others stated that Nuiqsut would benefit from mandated contributions to the NPR-A Impact Grant program.
Request to be Added to Mailing List and Requests for Response	One commenter requested to get further notifications on the project and requested that BLM send them a response to their comments.
Request Meeting with BLM	One commenter stated they would like to meet with BLM to discuss the constitutional use of the Department of Interior's statutory authority to redress the climate issue.
Request for Extended Scoping Period	One commenter requested an extension of the scoping period.
Air Quality	Commenters stated concerns that the project would significantly impact the air quality and result in subsequent health issues.
Cultural Resources	Commenters expressed concern that historic artifacts that could not be moved would be lost.
Soil and Permafrost	Commenters stated that the permafrost is rapidly thawing due to climate change and stated that the proponent has said that it will need to artificially chill the tundra to sustain infrastructure.

Notes: ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act); BLM (Bureau of Land Management); BMP (best management practices); BT (Bear Tooth); EIS (environmental impact statement); GHG (greenhouse gas); IAP (Integrated Activity Plan); NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act); NPR-A (National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska); ROD (Record of Decision); TAPS (Trans-Alaska Pipeline System); USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

3.0 REFERENCES

BLM. 2008. *National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1*. Washington, D.C.