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**[EXTERNAL] Submission on DOI scoping consultation for Arctic Refuge**

1 message

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Tue, Apr 24, 2018 at 8:16 PM

To: blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov

Cc: catherine.mckenna@parl.gc.ca, justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca, eactivist@cpawsyukon.org

I am writing as an Inuk woman from two northern territories that have depended on caribou since time immemorial, both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Across the circumpolar world, from the Inuit, to the Dene and Gwich'in and also the Sami, Arctic Indigenous peoples have lived in close connection to the caribou and been sustained by them, and in exchange we have always prioritized their sustainability too. Like every part of the natural world, porcupine caribou transcend man made borders and sustain the balance of life as key members of a vast and vital ecosystem. Caribou are indeed extremely sensitive to changes in the environment however, especially industrial operations and effects of climate change, which are both drastic in the high arctic. In my young lifetime, I have watched the decline of the Bathurst Caribou herd fall from nearly 400,000 in 1996 to 13,000 last year, due mostly to the disruption of their calving and migration grounds by open pit diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. So, speaking from the experience of an Indigenous woman who has witnessed the unimaginable and heartbreaking decline of our key source of sustenance and a vital relation to our entire way of life, including cultural practices, identity, and spiritual connection, I write this letter in strong support of the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and especially the protection of Porcupine Caribou herd.

The urgency and importance of this matter must not be underestimated or overlooked - especially in light of Indigenous peoples' right to Free Prior and Informed Consent upheld by the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples, which both Canada and the United States of America have formally endorsed. The Gwich'in people have adamantly opposed oil and gas development in their territory and worked hard to both establish and protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and approving the sale of leases to this territory would be a direct violation of their Indigenous Rights. So, in writing I stand with the Gwich'in Nation and urge that you use everything in your power to support the protection of this vital area, which sustains both people and entire ecosystems - the loss of which, would be devastating and irreparable.

In terms of economics as well as climate change, this illuminates a great opportunity to explore green energy sources, which both Canada and the United States have the potential to be leading providers of. It would certainly aid in our efforts to reduce carbon emissions, as opposed to investing further in oil and gas development. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples throughout the world are highly amenable to exploring the economic potential of green energy development as well, so in effect, it would present a win-win situation.

Respectfully,  
Siku Allooloo  
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cc: Hon. Catherine McKenna  
House of Commons

cc: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

cc: Minister Chrystia Freeland

cc: Ms. Nadine Sander-Green