



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

1 message

Tristan Glowa <tkglowa@gmail.com>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Mon, Jun 18, 2018 at 1:57 PM

Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

I am writing as an Alaskan as well as in my role as a scholar of energy and climate change policy to voice strong opposition to any leasing for oil and gas on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

First and foremost, the BLM must understand and take seriously the economic and cultural needs of the Gwich'in communities in both the United States and Canada who hold indirect but incredibly significant stake in the outcome of any Coastal Plain development. These communities rely on the health of the Porcupine Caribou Herd as a matter of utmost importance, as caribou represents not only a vital economic resource for Gwich'in, but a cultural and spiritual resource as well. In any other part of the country where treaty negotiations had been formally conducted (as they were neglected by the Federal Government in favor of the unilaterally-imposed Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act), protections of such a vital hunting resource would be solidified under treaty law. The same spirit should extend to the actions of the BLM in managing the Coastal Plain which is the birthing grounds for the Porcupine Herd. This habitat should be managed exclusively for the health of caribou and other animal populations and not leased given the extensive acreage already available to oil and gas producers.

Furthermore, a careful analysis of trends in energy markets and global climate policy negates the argument that opening further acreage for fossil fuel production is needed. With virtually all major global automakers planning on a relatively swift transition to electric vehicles and particularly with demand for such vehicles booming in China and Europe, the steadiness of oil markets into even the coming decade is likely to be highly volatile. The shale boom has already produced a sufficient glut in the contiguous states of the U.S. that oil prices have yet to recover to previous highs. With a global energy transition underway, the notion that oil demand will ever be sufficient to warrant the high capital costs necessary to pay back the substantial infrastructure and development on the Coastal Plain is based on spurious analysis of trends in energy markets. Moreover, facilitating the creation of both private and public sunk costs in new development in the Arctic Refuge opens up Alaska and the nation to further fiscal challenges should the profitability of production be insufficient.

While the Alaska delegation has argued in favor of opening this region, they are arguing for what constitutes short-sited management of Alaska's fiscal and ecological resources. More proper stewardship would recognize the vital importance of maintaining sustainable resources such as the Porcupine Caribou Herd and would instead seek to develop low-carbon industries for Alaska's future. The BLM could assist in such efforts by instead focusing on leasing land for renewable energy projects, such as exploring the possibility for offshore wind development in Cook Inlet. In any case, the BLM should refuse to lease the Coastal Plain for oil and gas development. As an Alaskan, it is clear to me that it is not in the interest of our state, our climate, and the health of our lands. It certainly is not an appropriate move in the fulfillment of the obligations of Non-Native Alaskans to the Gwich'in People.

Sincerely,

Tristan Glowa
Yale University - B.A. Political Science & Energy Studies
[2010 St. Bernard Dr.](#)
[Fairbanks, AK 99709](#)