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[EXTERNAL] Submission on DOI scoping consultation for Arctic Refuge1 message

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Sat, Apr 21, 2018 at 9:42 AM

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

Please, I beg the U.S. government to not open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. Oil and gas development has no place in the heart of the Porcupine caribou's calving grounds. Disturbing this fragile ecosystem could have disastrous effects on the health of the Porcupine caribou herd and the Gwich'in communities that rely on them for their livelihood.

Porcupine caribou are borderless. Every year, the herd migrates between Alaska and Canada. Their calving grounds are on American soil but the caribou and the Gwich'in have been here since before our international boundaries were drawn. Although the Arctic Refuge is in Alaska, this is an issue that will affect Canada.

Every year these caribou undergo the longest migration of any land mammal on earth, between their wintering grounds in Yukon and Northwest Territories and their calving grounds in Alaska. Losing this critical part of their range to development, on top of the impacts they already face from climate change, would create enormous uncertainty for these caribou, one of the last healthy barren-ground herds in North America.

Caribou are incredibly sensitive to light and sound. Oil and gas development could lead them to abandon their calving grounds altogether. Gwich'in communities have placed themselves strategically along the Porcupine caribou's migration routes in order to sustain themselves from the seasonal cycles of this international herd. The health of these caribou directly impacts their livelihood and well-being.

The calving grounds are a phenomenal source of biological and cultural wealth. Their loss would be a global tragedy.

Kind regards,
Judith Golub
T6E 1E5

cc: Hon. Catherine McKenna
House of Commons

cc: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

cc: Minister Chrystia Freeland

cc: Ms. Nadine Sander-Green