



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Do not hold oil lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge1 message

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The BLM should not hold oil and gas lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This "Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Lease EIS" process is a fast-tracked farce designed to overrun American, Alaskan, and indigenous voices. BLM must slow down on this process and ensure good management decisions, rather than yield to the uninformed politics of the Tax Act.

As an Alaskan, I am extremely disappointed to see our government take a 180 on its Arctic Refuge policy. In the past few years I and many more Alaskans participated in the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), which rightly designated more areas of wilderness and recommended a wilderness designation for the coastal plain, the so-called 1002 area. Departing from this plan is a gross violation of the public process.

The Trump administration's attempt to overturn public decision-making through tacking language to a budget is appalling and I am sorry to have a state senator complicit in the action (Tax Act). The BLM should reject any plans to open the refuge for seismic or oil drilling now and forever. Instead, the BLM and FWS should take steps to protect the refuge from these and future plans, including those through backdoor budget dealings.

The BLM must not hold oil and gas lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Tax Act is an affront on the public trust given to the government, which just engaged hundreds of thousands of Americans, including tribal governments, in the CCP process and landed on a decision in direct opposition to the Tax Act. The BLM must not allow seismic testing, exploration, development, or transport of oil and gas as the activities will have lasting impacts on the land, the wildlife, and the indigenous peoples of the region. All of these destructive activities cannot be mitigated in the vulnerable arctic environment.

Though the BLM has allowed drilling in its arctic lands has failed to mitigate the impacts on the land, wildlife, and communities—especially Nuiqsut which has drill rigs within a few miles of the village. Air quality, water contamination, and diverting wildlife are just a few of the environmental impacts. Disempowerment, trampled sovereignty, and divisive community relations are just a few of the social impacts. The Arctic Refuge devastation will be no different.

Both Inupiaq and Gwich'in people have complicated and valid relationships within the region and with land management decisions in the region. The sovereignty of the tribal governments must be extensively consulted in this process. Alaskans and American citizens overall also have voice in issues impacting our public lands, not only in Alaska but the ripple effects this decision will have on wildlife refuges and other protected lands across the nation.

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