



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] COMMENT on Coastal Plain ANWR

1 message

Karen Johnson <karenjj@uoregon.edu>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov

Thu, Jun 14, 2018 at 11:47 AM

Greetings Nicole Hayes and members of BLM,

I live in Oregon, an area rich with natural resources and years of experience of human impacts on natural systems. We still have a lot to learn about human and natural interaction and our success rates have been mixed. I have valued the pristine wilderness of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for years and feel it is a national treasure worthy of our care and protection. My daughter has conducted fisheries research lead by NOAA in Juneau as part of research teams in both the Beaufort, Bering, and Arctic oceans. The impacts of melting sea ice, temperature changes, and human impacts are having impacts on the oceans. More data can be located through those offices in Juneau and I urge you to capture a broad view of environmental issues in the Arctic from multiple sources. A decision like this is part of a network of natural systems and should be well considered.

I am writing to comment on the leasing review currently underway. Please consider the impact of your decisions on those of us in the lower 48 as well and residents of Alaska. I have written to my US Senators (Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkely) about my opinion that this wilderness should be allowed to exist as it is and left untouched by industrialization. They have responded that they agree with protection is needed and question the need for this area to be opened up at this time.

Given what I've learned on the web, through media review, and your website, it prompts some questions that I hope you will review deeply and let science and quantifiable data inform your decision.

1. Have current gas and oil leasing elsewhere in the Arctic and Beaufort Sea areas been maximized? Is there adequate evidence that the environmental impacts of those operations have met guidelines set in the original lease? Or have there been issues or damages that could inform the likelihood of ongoing compliance by these companies? Do these companies truly operate with best practices for environmental protection or do they cut corners and reduce attention to those issues over the years?
2. Do we need increased production of oil and gas supplies? There has not been sufficient evidence distributed to the public to give a rational reason why this additional permit would be given. It appears that this is politically motivated and there is no evidence for the need for this permit. The current information says that we are not facing shortages or have concerns about supply and meeting demands.
3. What impacts will be evident on migration of animals and birds and is there sufficient evidence than any attempt by oil companies to mitigate damages would be adequate and successful? Do we really trust the companies to have best practices in place to assure those of us who care about protection of this wilderness that they will be able to keep it safe?

4. What impacts would the industrialization have on Native peoples and their way of life? How would influx of other humans from the oil industry have on the community structures of these villages and people? These questions would be best reviewed in social science studies about communities in the area conducted by cultural anthropologists and others skilled in understanding these groups. I encourage such investigation as well as pure environmental science studies.

Thank you for a careful review of all the science that is available in order to make a wise decision on this lease. I think it would be dangerous to move too quickly and not make an informed and wise decision on this last vestige of pure wilderness we have in America.

Sincerely

Karen Johnson

Eugene Oregon

karenjj@uoregon.edu