



CoastalPlain\_EIS, BLM\_AK &lt;blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov&gt;

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**[EXTERNAL] Re: Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**1 message

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**Barbara Johnson** <sbejohn1@mac.com>  
To: blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov

Wed, Jun 13, 2018 at 10:14 AM

June 12, 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

I want to state my strong and emphatic opposition to any drilling in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. As designated by Congress, this area was set aside as a wildlife refuge to protect for all time, an important segment of the unique part of the world. This area is large, wild, and largely devoid of human development. It is extremely important calving area for the Porcupine Caribou Herd. It is also important to many other species of birds and mammals and should be left undeveloped. There are fewer and fewer areas in our world that are left untouched and their value, as such, continues to increase.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is invaluable as a remote arctic wilderness that can be studied and researched without the impacts of development. It is a place that can be used to compare and monitor changes in other developed parts of the arctic - a standard for what was. Because the arctic is so harsh and extreme, vast areas are necessary for animals to survive. These calving grounds are critical to the long-term health of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and the people who depend on them. By developing this area, we are destroying, forever, the pristine wilderness that currently exists. Some places should be left as they are in perpetuity. The Arctic Coastal Plain is one of these places.

With more and more concerns regarding climate change, there are already many significant changes affecting the arctic. We are in a grand experiment and the last thing we need to do is add more to an already stressed ecosystem. In addition, we need to be weaning ourselves off fossil fuels and focusing more money and research and development on alternative energy sources. It is foolish and irresponsible for us to be continuing to develop new fields in such a special protected area when there is already a lot of available land in the National Petroleum Reserve for lease and development. Recent discoveries outside the refuge prove that there are many untapped reserves still available and much closer to infrastructure that is currently in place. This makes those areas better options to develop from a financial standpoint as well as to ensure protection of the valuable living resources that currently exist in the Arctic Refuge.

In addition, as I understand it, the entire coastline offshore has already been made available for oil and gas leasing. I don't think that is a good idea either and I am concerned about the possibility of a major disaster in arctic waters and the ramifications on the environment. I am also worried about the local people who depend on the marine wildlife for survival and cultural purposes. Since this offshore leasing decision has already been made, I feel even stronger that the small part of the coastal plain within the Arctic Refuge should remain closed to any exploration and development for oil and gas.

Thank you for considering my comments. I will be anxious to find out the final decision regarding protecting this area of international significance.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Johnson