



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Opposition to the Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS1 message

Janis Hruby <Janskis2@comcast.net>

Wed, May 16, 2018 at 4:54 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Alaska BLM,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Coastal Plain Oil & Gas Leasing Program EIS. Area 1002 includes approximately 1.6 million acres. This area is one of our last unspoiled wild places and drilling here would threaten one of our planet's most diverse, fragile and remote ecosystems.

Experts say an oil spill is inevitable. Off shore drilling threatens our oceans, marine wildlife and terrestrial wildlife with the risk of catastrophic spills. Still after the Exxon disaster, 26,000 gallons of oil remain in shoreline soil. Sadly oil spills take place on a constant basis. Many happen within the U.S. every year. Please see the Wikipedia list of oil spills. To consider opening up this pristine area would be disastrous to all wildlife inhabiting Area 1002.

My comment is not just about oil spills, but about the future of millions of birds and wildlife that would be subjected to seismic blasts, drilling exploration, development and transportation of oil and gas from the Coastal Plain. Numerous challenges are present from the cleaning of oil in ice to protecting the wildlife. This is a remote area where it is difficult to get to especially in a marine environment. Clean up would be restricted to 4-5 months of darkness, heavy ice and extreme cold. These severe conditions would make it impossible to attempt clean up for half the time during the operating season and 100% of the time during winter. Despite monitoring systems to prevent spills, leaks have and could occur undetected for several days.

Exploration or seismic surveys are conducted to estimate the size of the off shore oil reserve. In order to conduct these surveys ships use "air gun arrays" to emit high decibel explosive impulses to map sea floor. This noise can kill or damage marine life. Without the ability to hear, fish and marine mammals struggle to communicate, navigate, avoid predators and locate prey. Seismic surveys have been implicated in whale beaching and stranding incidents. These seismic blasts along with drilling and other disturbances would also impact various species in many detrimental ways. Also, contaminants from oil drilling accumulate on the sea floor and smother organisms, cause malformations and genetic damage.

Many animals such as Porcupine Caribou, musk oxen, polar bears and thousands of migratory birds will be forced to be displaced due to drilling and human disturbances. These disturbances will forever alter living conditions. Grazing, denning, insect harassment, habitat loss, decreased access to prey, contaminants will all have a potential impact on their living conditions and survival.

I am asking that this attempt to exploit our last great wilderness be cancelled. Exploitation should not trump our moral duty to protect wildlife and wilderness. Once destroyed, it can never be as it once was.

Thank you,

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - [EXTERNAL] Opposition to the Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

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