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[EXTERNAL] Comment on coastal plain EIS

1 message

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To: BLM_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

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Comment re ANWR:

Frank Keim,

May 29, 2018

For 34 of my 57 years in Alaska I've testified in defense of the integrity of the Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain. With its original populations of birds, fish, insects, plants and large animals, it is one of the few places on Earth that I regard as true wilderness, and therefore worthy of fighting for against the fraudulent wishes of the Trump administration.

I've hiked and floated in the Refuge, including the Coastal Plain, more than 20 times, so I know the area is a special place and should be left untouched by the clutches of the oil industry and their political minions and sycophants.

The Coastal Plain is home for part of the year to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which is now 218,000 strong, and needs the nutritious cotton grass there to nourish their newborn calves, so they have a healthy start in their lives in the harsh Arctic climate they must survive in. Oil drilling will compromise this ancient balance and lead to the ultimate decimation and destruction of the Herd.

Another major reason not to drill in the Coastal Plain is to prevent further intensification of Climate Change, which I believe to be, along with overpopulation, the gravest environmental threat facing us today. Leaving the oil in the ground is the moral thing to do, if we wish to stop contributing to the devastation of biodiversity on this unique planet we call home, and to preserve what remains, so future generations of living things have a healthy environment to survive and flourish in.

The Arctic Refuge has not only been a source of solitude and spiritual growth for me and many of my friends and family, it's also given me the opportunity to learn more about the untarnished rhythms of Nature, and about the area's historic significance for Native people. I now understand much better why so many Gwich'in and Inupiat Natives also regard the Refuge as a spiritual place that connects them to their roots as human beings.

I say to those who wish to plunder and pillage and lay waste to this wilderness for a few drops of oil and a few extra dollars of instant wealth: **Come up and camp on the Coast Plain for four days and feel what you have missed all of your lives!**

To finish, I include a paraphrased quote by my mentor Wallace Stegner: *Something will have gone out of us as Americans if we ever let our remaining wilderness (including the Coastal Plain) be destroyed.... We need that wild country, as much of it as we still have left. We need it when we're young because of the sanity it can bring to our insane lives. And we need it when we're old simply because it is there.*

Note: Based on what I have witnessed and have been hearing, I suggest strongly that the BLM extend comment for two months beyond June 19 on this issue, and include more Gwich'in villages as hearing venues.

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Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed...We simply need that wild country, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in.

Wallace Stegner