



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

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**[EXTERNAL] My comment on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS**

1 message

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**Carolyn Kremers** <ckremers@mosquitonet.com>

Wed, Jun 6, 2018 at 11:08 PM

To: blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov

Dear BLM,

Attached is my comment on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS.

FYI, I attended the public scoping meeting in Fairbanks on May 29, but only 50 speakers were heard and my number was 74. Therefore I did not get to speak and I am submitting my comment to you now. Please add it to the Fairbanks comments if possible, or else add it to your other comments.

Thank you very much.

Carolyn Kremers

Fairbanks, AK

**BLM\_Fairbanks scoping meeting about ANWR\_comment\_Kremers\_5-29-18\_557 words.pdf**

70K

Date: May 29, 2018  
Name: Carolyn Kremers  
Email address: ckremers@mosquitonet.com  
City/State/Zip: Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

557 words

Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Carolyn Kremers, and I live in Fairbanks. I've been a resident of Alaska for 31 years. For two of those years – in 2008-09 and 2015-16 – I served as a Fulbright Scholar at Buryat State University in Russia. For my testimony tonight at the Fairbanks public scoping meeting, I'd like to share these observations:

Eight time zones beyond Alaska, in southern Siberia, shimmers Lake Baikal. In his book *Sacred Sea: A Journey to Lake Baikal*, Peter Thomson calls this place the *biggestdeepestoldestclearestpurest* lake in the world.

I have been fortunate to explore various parts of Lake Baikal, and each time I've been struck by the similarities between this jewel of Siberia and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in my home state. Both places are vast, intact ecosystems, unique on the planet and beloved by the people of their countries and by people of the world. Both sites are rich in natural resources and therefore continually at risk of human mistreatment and misguided development. And both Lake Baikal and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are internationally recognized as spiritually renewing and irreplaceable.

Some Americans have heard of Lake Baikal but, as with the Arctic Refuge, few have visited it. Baikal contains about 20 percent of the world's unfrozen fresh water, and in most parts of the lake that water is crystal clear. The lake also supports about 2,600 species of plants, animals, and microorganisms, two-thirds of which are endemic, meaning they're found nowhere else on Earth.

In 1996, Lake Baikal was designated by the United Nations – for Russians and for all people of the world – as a UNESCO World Heritage site: an area of exceptional environmental value

and concern to the planet. The journey toward true protection for Baikal has been long and arduous, and *citizen efforts* have been key.

I am proud that the United States is a democracy known for its ability (or at least its desire) to do what is right and just – something Russia has done with its treasured Lake Baikal. Therefore I must ask: How is it that the Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain is about to be opened for fossil-fuel development, under the guise of a federal *tax* bill?

Two individuals – Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski and President Donald Trump – are overriding 40 years of local, national, and international effort to protect the Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain. They're pushing for the quick creation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the driving force behind this push is *money*: short-term profit and shortsighted economic gain.

Alaskans who have spent time in the Arctic Refuge and its Coastal Plain – as I have: backpacking, river kayaking, travelling by snow-machine and cross-country skis – we have witnessed the power and pricelessness of this place. And we are absolutely opposed to oil lease sales there. In fact, according to two polls conducted in October and December 2017, a majority of American voters oppose drilling in the Refuge.<sup>1</sup>

The need for the United States to shift to alternative, sustainable sources of energy grows daily. The Arctic Refuge is not the federal government's or Alaska's to sell. It does not belong to the politicians in Washington, DC, or to corporations. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge belongs – as Lake Baikal belongs – to the people of the world and the future of the planet.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/americans-oppose-drilling-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge>; [http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/politics/general\\_politics/december\\_2017/most\\_oppose\\_anwr\\_drilling](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/december_2017/most_oppose_anwr_drilling).