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[EXTERNAL] Oil and Gas Development in the Coastal Plain section of America's Arctic Refuge

1 message

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To: "blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov" <blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov>

No oil and gas development activities should be allowed on the Coastal Plain and/or the Refuge!

The Arctic Refuge is no place for oil and gas. Oil and gas activities should not be allowed on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge. Why?

It would negatively harm the climate, biotic and abiotic environment, wildlife and food web interactions, as well as indigenous cultural significance and values. This area is a public resource and needs to be managed carefully and sustainably as such. Also, the leasing process is rushed! This oil and gas plan is the single most destructive attack on the wilderness, wildlife, and subsistence resources of an American national wildlife refuge in modern history.

The Coastal Plain is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge and provides important habitat for polar bears, caribou, muskoxen, and hundreds of species of migratory birds that travel from all 50 states and from 6 continents. Thus, if something happens to a migratory bird covered in the Migratory Bird Act then there are consequences. Oil and gas would harm the most important onshore denning habitat for threatened polar bears in the United States, further placing this imperiled species at risk. Oil and gas activities would also further exacerbate climate change, which is already causing temperatures in the Arctic to rise at twice the rate of the rest of the country of the United States of America. Oil and gas activities are completely at odds with the protection of the wildlife and other values in the Refuge, and with the urgent need to address climate change.

The Plain is also the calving and post-calving ground for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, an important subsistence resource for the Gwich'in Nation. The Gwich'in people have relied on the caribou for millennia and consider the Coastal Plain to be "the sacred place where life begins." Protecting the caribou and its habitats is a matter of basic human rights for the Gwich'in. Protection of the herd and its habitats along its migration route is one of the original reasons why the Arctic Refuge was set aside, and there is a treaty between the U.S. and Canada to protect the herd. Interior needs to gather the best possible scientific information and err on the side of caution to ensure that the herd is fully protected from direct and indirect oil and gas activities.

Interior needs to consider the impacts from all stages of oil and gas, including seismic activities, leasing, exploration drilling, and development, as well as any related infrastructure or other activities. The environmental impacts from oil and gas will extend well beyond the footprint of any actual developments and will harm the wildlife, water, subsistence, and other values the Arctic Refuge was set aside to protect.

Furthermore, Administration is putting politics above protection of one of America's most treasured public lands. Rushing into leasing is not what the Refuge deserves or what the law requires. The administration needs to comply with all the important legal protections that are in place to protect caribou, water, subsistence, and other sensitive resources of the Coastal Plain and the wildlife that cross boundaries and borders, and the international obligations to indigenous peoples in the Arctic.

Please fully and thoughtfully consider and weigh the full long-term and short-term impacts, positive and negative, on Americans AND everyone on earth. Also, you can support a sustainable, sometimes more environmentally and culturally friendly industry named tourism to increase your revenue. Also, you and Americans can make and use truly green reusable and recyclable energy resources (such as litter, garbage, sewage, used cooking oils, etc) that are more environmentally and culturally friendly, and home-made ("Made In America").

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Naomi K.