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[EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, Alaska

1 message

Megan McDonald <mm@schofex.com>

Wed, Jun 6, 2018 at 4:30 PM

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

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to comment on the issues, impacts and potential alternatives to be analyzed in the BLM EIS for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program. As a concerned citizen with vested interest in protecting our public lands, I strongly value a thorough EIS in order to protect the public asset, ANWR.

By definition, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife and plants. First and foremost, the EIS must be conducted from this standpoint- to **CONSERVE AMERICA'S FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS**. Therefore, a comprehensive EIS would evaluate the impacts of hydrocarbon exploration, seismic activity, drilling, transportation, processing, and all other associated activities upon wildlife habitat, animals, plants, rivers, oceans, and lakes for ANY AREA where hydrocarbons will be extracted, transported, or can potentially contaminate. It is imperative that the EIS evaluate the entire process including extraction, transport, processing, and waste disposal.

Ice roads provide vital infrastructure for working and moving around in the Arctic. It is vital that this EIS evaluate scenarios where ANWR temperatures increase and ice roads cannot be established. The EIS shall provide contingencies or parameters for circumstances when ice roads are not able to be established in any given year.

The EIS must include **financial estimates** of the cost to clean up any spills or contamination including removing, disposing, and replacing contaminated soils, re-vegetating disturbed or contaminated areas, the cost to re-establish vulnerable plant and animal populations negatively affected by O&G exploration, and the cost to provide safe drinking water in the event that surface and/or groundwater sources are contaminated. Additionally, the EIS must address the water source, treatment, and disposal of wastewater associated with any proposed lease. If surface water sources are proposed, the effects on streamflows and the aquatic wildlife must be evaluated. If groundwater sources are proposed, the effects on the water table, and the regeneration rate of those aquifers must be thoroughly evaluated for potential impacts.

The EIS must list alternative locations/recommendations on where oil and gas exploration would have the **fewest negative impacts** to wildlife, plants, and fish.

Lastly, the entire ANWR area must be looked at to ensure that impacts in one region will not affect other regions. Many of the keystone species of this area require large, unimpeded travel corridors. Hindering vital migration routes, or decreasing the habitat of plants, birds, and wildlife must be clearly understood before issuing any leases. The EIS must evaluate the impacts to plants, birds and wildlife outside 1002 area as well as inside the 1002 area.

I have confidence that the BLM will conduct a comprehensive EIS outlining the likelihood and associated financial costs of impacts to this area, with the intent to conserve the fish, wildlife and plants in ANWR as prescribed in its designation as a National Wildlife Refuge.

6/11/2018

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Thank you for your time,

~Megan

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