



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

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**[EXTERNAL] Comments on the Coastal Plain EIS scoping**

1 message

**Chandra McGee** <chandra.mcgee@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 4:44 PM

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

Please see the attached comments (also pasted below).

Please accept the following comments on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Impact Statement scoping period.

I am opposed to any program of leasing, development, production or transport of oil and gas in and from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain. I am a third generation Alaskan and I grew up on a homestead property accessible only by boat, far off the road system. I believe the long term value of an intact and undisturbed landscape in the Arctic far outweighs any short term economic and political gain.

I am concerned that the proposed program will lead to the permanent degradation of the ecology of the coastal plain. In addition, it is a threat to the subsistence resources that the Indigenous Gwich'in population relies on. I am concerned about both the impacts of development and construction of production and support facilities, as well as the increased impacts of climate change.

Please address the following in the EIS:

- Impacts associated with climate change (including the contribution to climate change from emissions on site and potential emissions from the extracted fuel). There is little potential to reverse or even stop the impacts of climate change. How will these impacts be mitigated or avoided when the extraction and use of oil as fuel will only exacerbate the already increasing impacts of climate change in the Arctic?
- Impacts to the fragile ecosystem of the arctic coastal plain. What is the reclamation potential for any on-site activities (including construction of structures, extraction and clean-up of spills, and damage from exploration)? It is unlikely that the system would ever be restored to its current condition, as is evident in the landscape scars, toxic pollution of waterbodies, and contaminated sites already in existence across Alaska. How will the proposed program meet reclamation standards and what is the time frame? How will fish and wildlife resources be maintained and protected?
- Impacts of climate change on the Porcupine caribou herd. Climate change is causing changes in weather, distribution of vegetation, and pests. Although the herd is currently healthy, the long term impacts of these pressures is unknown. The assessment should holistically include considerations of changing food sources, migration patterns, and impacts from other species.
- Impacts of the development of on-site structures and facilities on the Porcupine caribou herd and other wildlife. The proposed area of development is in the coastal plain, which is the birthing ground, nursery and insect relief area for the Porcupine caribou herd. In addition to the caribou, the area supports other wildlife including hundreds of migratory birds. The EIS should consider all impacts including changes in air quality, water quality, noise pollution, ice roads and access, damage to food sources, and timing of the presence of caribou and other species in their life cycle. In addition, how will the footprint of development be limited to protect ecological resources? What are the scenarios for distribution of development of structures across the area?
- Finally, in addition to the impacts on the Porcupine caribou herd, the EIS should address related impacts on food security, subsistence rights and food availability, and resulting sociocultural effects on the Gwich'in people. The proposal is disrespectful at best and the Gwich'in have spoken out vocally in opposition to oil development in the coastal plain. The Gwich'in traditional way of life is protected by federal law. How will any changes to the health of the caribou and other subsistence resources be monitored and avoided? How will the human rights of the Indigenous population be addressed?

It breaks my heart that one of the last remaining areas of wilderness in the United States, which serves as a living link between the past and present for Indigenous Alaskans, is at risk. I stand with the Gwich'in in defense of the Arctic Refuge.

Sincerely,

Chandra McGee

Fairbanks, Alaska



**Coastal Plain EIS McGee comments.docx**

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