



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas EIS

1 message

Karen MacDonald <desertsky57@gmail.com>

Wed, May 30, 2018 at 10:35 AM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Please read the attached for my comments on the ANWR Coastal Plain EIS. Thank you for your attention.

Peace,
Rev. Karen MacDonald



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These are strong reasons we should not open the Alaskan coastal plain to oil and gas extraction, the provision in the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 notwithstanding.

The Alaskan congressional delegation mistakenly claims that extracting fossil fuels will enable the state to move to renewable energy. The clear mistake is that producing and using oil and gas will exacerbate the already worsening climate warming, requiring even more drastic measures to mitigate the climate effects by the time the transition is made to enough renewable energy sources.

The technology and economic drivers for renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, are already available to be used to “ensure the energy and economic security of our nation,” to use words of the Alaskan congressional delegation. In reality, pursuing the use of fossil fuel energy will, sooner than we may think, put our country in dire economic and ecological risk, as a climate disrupted by our greenhouse emissions disrupts our entire economic system. Even before that crisis, as we cling to limited fossil fuel sources, we will be outpaced economically by other countries who tap the power of renewable energy sources.

These economic reasons are bolstered by compelling moral reasons. For one, to develop, produce, and transport oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain area will negatively impact the people who have lived there for many generations. The Gwich'in Nation is united in opposing drilling in the Coastal Plain. The Gwich'in call the Coastal Plain “the place where life begins” because of its importance to the Porcupine Caribou herd's health. In turn, the Gwich'in Nation's health and identity is intertwined with the caribou and the Coastal Plain. Once again, politics and profit take aim at people considered to be expendable. This is a moral travesty, and it scars our collective spirit.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in general, and the Coastal Plain in particular, is one of the last truly wild places in this beautiful country. The land and beings, human and otherwise, who live on it are precious in their own right. They also nurture all of us with their sheer beauty and their recreational opportunities. To destroy this land will scar our collective spirit.

In addition, to stubbornly pursue the extraction and use of fossil fuels, when we know the negative impacts it has to our human health, not to mention the health of the climate and water and Earth we depend on for life, is simply foolish. People will continue to breathe dirty air, to drink contaminated water or have natural water sources depleted, and to live on poisoned land. We can, and must, do so much better. It will lift our collective spirit.

To offset large tax cuts that put our federal budget on shaky ground, the current Administration and Congress wrote this ANWR drilling into the tax act to raise \$1 billion over the next 10 years. This cynical move puts beautiful land and animals and people at risk for the sake of money. A more just way to fund an equitable national budget would be to close the many and deep federal loopholes that oil, gas, and coal companies enjoy. Another way would be to tax fossil fuel companies for the carbon they put into our air, enabling them to bear the realistic cost of their business.

In closing, I urge you to severely limit the extent of oil and gas extraction in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, if not to rescind the leasing process. Recognize that, no matter how stringent development guidelines may be, they will not eliminate the adverse effects of production and

transportation of oil and gas on the caribou, the Gwich'in Nation, the land on which they all live, and the air and water we all need.

I call on you, in your mission of sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of our public lands, to safeguard the gift of life.

Peace be with you—
Rev. Karen MacDonald
Tucson, AZ

Emailed to BLM: