



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Please protect the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

Lester Miller (lesmiller3@aol.com) Sent You a Personal Message

Fri, Apr 20, 2018 at 12:42 PM

<automail@knowwho.com>

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov

Dear BLM Alaska,

We stand with the Gwich'in Nation in defense of the sacred coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. By rushing to open this land to destructive oil drilling, the Trump administration is blatantly prioritizing profits over people, wildlife, and our climate, as well as disregarding tribal sovereignty for the sake of corporate greed.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of America's last truly wild places, and the coastal plain is its biological heart -- home to the largest array of wildlife in the circumpolar north. The 1.5-million-acre coastal plain is a haven for brown bears, caribou, arctic foxes, muskox, wolves and birds that migrate from all 50 states and six continents. Known as "America's Serengeti," the coastal plain is the principal calving ground of one of North America's last great caribou herds and it is our most important onshore denning habitat for polar bears. The National Audubon Society says that one half of the world's bird species are in danger of extinction. Oil drilling would permanently destroy this sacred place and will jeopardize the existence of many species of birds and animals and will lower bird counts worldwide.

Protecting the Refuge is also a matter of human rights for Alaska Native tribes like the Gwich'in, who consider the Refuge sacred and rely on the Porcupine Caribou herd for over 80% of their diet. Oil exploration would impact the birth rates and migration patterns of the caribou, which would threaten the tribe's food sources and way of life.

Allowing drilling in the Arctic Refuge would also worsen climate pollution, harming communities already bearing the brunt of the changing climate as they are forced to adapt to rising seas, melting ice, and changing migration patterns. Oil drilling would forever destroy this wild habitat, creating in its place a vast industrial complex replete with oil spills, leaks and pollution. This pristine environment would also be disrupted 24/7 by noise, light, and stench pollution. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge contains the last 5% of the coastal plain that has not been exploited and must be saved. The oil and gas industry has already polluted the other 95% of the coastal plain (the North Slope and the National Petroleum Reserve). Further, we need to transition rapidly to clean energy rather than developing more fossil fuels and accelerating climate change and its resulting damage.

The Arctic Refuge is a symbol of what we want for our future -- the preservation of a way of life, climate justice and wild places for future generations. I urge you to protect it from drilling at all costs. This would be one of the worst attacks on the planet by mankind and the Trump Administration will be held accountable. Only 10 percent of our federal public lands are protected for conservation, recreation, and wildlife, and it is totally unacceptable to extract dirty fossil fuels from our most pristine lands and waters. This is our crown jewel national wildlife refuge. If wildlife are not safe here, they are not safe anywhere. Further, the Trump administration is recklessly trying to destroy our national monuments, parks, forests, preserves, wildlife refuges, and BLM lands with its misguided and ill-advised "energy dominance" policy. Energy dominance with clean energy would make sense, but it is outdated and dangerous via fossil fuels extraction. Interior Secretary Zinke should resign, be fired, or impeached as there is no end to the devastation he is causing on our federal public lands.

Sincerely,

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