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[EXTERNAL] Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

Huw Oliver <huwoliver1@gmail.com>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

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To whom it may concern,

I wanted to add my voice to the growing concern over plans to allow exploitation of fossil fuel resources inside the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:

- As one of the very few remaining areas to be free from visible human development, the introduction of oil and gas drilling can only have a harmful impact on what, for the time being, remains a functioning and relatively undamaged Arctic ecosystem. The fossil fuel industry has a damning track record in mitigating environmental damage to fragile polar regions, and on a global scale we cannot afford to continue inflicting the same damage over and over again to these fragile regions.

- As well as the inevitable damage to wildlife, the region has an enormous (if not financially tangible) value to outdoor recreation and human wellbeing, both for those who visit, and for the outdoor industry that those people support. To lose such an important area to outdoor recreation would damage businesses across the United States.

Wherever humans interact with the Arctic, we have time and time again placed short term financial gain before the inherent value of wild land and the enormous benefits to be found there in outdoor recreation. Time and time again, we have set up protected areas only to put that protection aside as soon as we smell a quick profit. Time and time again, we have left behind a wasteland that may never fully recover.

Why should this time be different? Why, if we exploit one area of the Refuge, should we believe that the same fate doesn't await any other area of 'protected' land? Why, as one of the world's most advanced nations, can't the United States show the foresight to continue to protect the land that it has already recognised as being environmentally important?

You can choose to either continue the tradition of exploitation in order to benefit the few, or you can set a precedent to play a longer game which benefits the many. It takes a single moment of greed to lose these places forever, and we cannot afford to make the list of environmental failures any longer. This time needs to be the one where our priorities changed.

Yours sincerely,
Huw Oliver

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