



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Open Letter from National Chief Bellegarde and Regional Chief Adamek

1 message

communications@afnyukon.ca <communications@afnyukon.ca>

Mon, Jun 18, 2018 at 5:39 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Cc: Tonio Sadik <TSadik@afn.ca>, Regina Toulouse <RToulouse@afn.ca>, jjohns@afn.ca

Good evening,

Please find attached an open letter from Assembly of First Nations National Chief Bellegarde and Regional Chief Adamek on protecting the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

This is in response to the decision to review oil and gas lease sales in the 1002 area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you,

Arturo

**Arturo Calvo**

A/ Communications & Policy Analyst

Assembly of First Nations, Yukon Region

p: 867.393.9200 ext. 9227 | c: 867.334.3314 | afnyukon.ca

2 attachments**image001.png**
64K**18-06-18 National Chief Bellegarde and Regional Chief Adamek Open Letter on Protecting the Porcupine Caribou Herd.pdf**

106K

Assembly of First Nations

55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5
Telephone: 613-241-6789 Fax: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca



Assemblée des Premières Nations

55, rue Metcalfe, Suite 1600
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6L5
Téléphone: 613-241-6789 Télécopieur: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca

June 18, 2018

Open letter to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management Regarding Oil and Gas Development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

To Whom It May Concern:

The Gwich'in share an intimate connection to the lands and waters that make up the very substance of their spiritual and cultural identity, and livelihood. The Porcupine Caribou Herd holds very strong social, spiritual, and cultural importance to the Gwich'in people – simply put, it is their life blood. The herd's calving grounds are located in the 1002 area of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The Refuge has been recognized as one of the largest intact ecosystems in the world and sustains one of the greatest land animal migrations left on the planet, that of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Time-and-time again the Gwich'in, researchers, and other experts have shown that resource development on these lands would devastate the Porcupine Caribou Herd, and other species.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly have demonstrated overwhelming and continuous support for the Gwich'in people and the Porcupine Caribou Herd, calling for immediate steps to be taken to ensure the preservation and protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas development. Given the recent decisions of the U.S. Government to begin the process for selling oil and gas leases in the 1002 area, we continue to stand in solidarity with the Gwich'in and call for full protection of these precious lands and waters to ensure this region and the Porcupine Caribou are cared for future generations to come.

This is a matter that goes beyond environmental protection. It is about ensuring the human rights of the Gwich'in are upheld. Under international and domestic law, the Gwich'in have rights in connection to the Caribou. Specifically, resource development in ANWR violates terms set out in the *Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd (1987)*. This agreement states the two nations "should avoid or minimize activities that would significantly disrupt migration or other important behavior patterns of the Porcupine Caribou Herd."

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Head Office/Siège Social

Unit 5 —167 Akwesasne International Rd., Akwesasne, ON K6H 5R7 Telephone: 613-932-0410 Fax: 613-932-0415
Suite no 5 —167, chemin Akwesasne International, Akwesasne (ON) K6H 5R7 Téléphone: 613-932-0410 Télécopieur: 613-932-0415

We add our voices in stating that development in this region cannot be done responsibly, threatens the rights of the Gwich'in, and would be an infringement of international law. Simply put, oil and gas leases cannot be sold in ANWR.

Sincerely,



Perry Bellegarde
National Chief



Kluane Adamek
Interim Yukon Regional Chief

c.c.: The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.





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