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[EXTERNAL] Submission on DOI scoping consultation for Arctic Refuge

1 message

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Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 11:16 AM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Cc: catherine.mckenna@parl.gc.ca, justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca, eactivist@cpawsyukon.org

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

Few places left on earth are as wild and intact as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The coastal plains of the Arctic Refuge are the calving grounds of the threatened Porcupine Caribou herd: critical to the culture and subsistence ways of life of Indigenous peoples across northern Canada and Alaska.

The importance of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge transcends borders. It's critical that Canadian interests be included within the scope of this Environmental Impact Assessment. Even more critical is the inclusion and equitable consideration of Indigenous interests, particularly of the Gwich'in Nation and communities like the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation. Given that the Environmental Impact Statement and Assessment processes are subject to provisions set out within Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management must consider and sufficiently address, mitigate, prevent, and avoid the disproportionate and inequitable burdens which will be placed on these environmental justice communities.

There are alternatives to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which are feasible, of national benefit, and will not result in grave environmental and human rights violations. First and foremost, sustainable renewable energy options could be investigated and invested in within Alaska. Second, the discovery of oil reserves outside of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, for instance Nanushuk in the Pikka Unit, in more accessible areas which will not negatively impact the Porcupine Caribou Herd, remain a strong alternative which could continue oil production, create jobs, be more environmentally friendly, and encourage investment from major oil companies as there will be no negative connotations to discourage shareholders and diminish companies' public images.

I urge you to ensure your environmental review process be rigorous, and address all impacts using both Western and Traditional Knowledge, with particular attention to disproportionate burdens of impacts on environmental justice communities. I strongly believe that oil and gas extraction has no place in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and anticipate that a sound and evidence-based process will come to the same conclusion.

Sincerely,

Ashley Bach

cc: Hon. Catherine McKenna
House of Commons

cc: M. Justin Trudeau

cc: Minister Chrystia Freeland

cc: Ms. Nadine Sander-Green