



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] DO NOT OPEN THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO DRILLING1 message

William Penniman <wpenniman@everyactioncustom.com>

Wed, Apr 25, 2018 at 4:30 PM

Reply-To: wpenniman@aol.com

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I strongly oppose efforts to develop an oil and gas program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The facts are that (1) the U.S. has already leased and/or developed more oil and gas reserves than the country and world can afford to burn over the next 50 years; (2) the climate crisis is getting rapidly worse as a result of human emissions from fossil fuels; (3) the changing climate is doing especially great damage to Alaska and Arctic regions and their species; (4) the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and its flora and fauna constitute a unique, irreplaceable asset that belongs to all the people of the United States; and (5) the Refuge contains threatened and endangered species. Oil and gas can be produced in many places, so many that a recent offer of offshore leases produced paltry bids. It is contrary to the public interest to compound climate change and to harm this unique natural resource in order to open drilling and development to oil investors who have many other options and should not be developing new reserves in the face of climate change. Opening the Refuge to drilling would irreversibly harm our country, our natural heritage and our descendants, and it would do so for no good reason. It would put greed over country. Any proposal to open the Refuge to development should be rejected.

Beyond that, the Department of the Interior is obligated to examine the science and fully evaluate the impacts at every stage of energy development on the Refuge's wildlife, water, subsistence, and other values for which it was created. The Trump administration has indicated an intent to expedite the review process and hold lease sales by next year. This rushed timeline will not allow for the full analysis required under the law and which is necessary to meet the Department's obligations to responsibly steward one of the crown jewels of the nation's National Wildlife Refuge System.

Energy development raises a suite of environmental issues that forecasts permanent harm to the Arctic Refuge's fragile environment. Scars on the tundra from heavy seismic equipment will remain visible decades later. Nesting birds will be vulnerable to numerous, inevitable industrial oil spills and increased predation. The Porcupine Caribou Herd will face potential population-level impacts from roads and pipelines displacing the herd from calving grounds on the narrow coastal plain. The long-term conservation of a holistic Arctic ecosystem in the U.S. will be significantly jeopardized by embarking on this oil and gas program in the Refuge.

These and other impacts must be evaluated for their effects that will extend far beyond the footprint of any physical development. The Refuge should remain a place in America's Arctic for birds and wildlife seeking refuge from the pressures of climate change and development. The Department must carefully collect the science and consider these issues, which clearly indicate why an oil and gas program does not belong in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,
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