



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

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To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

I appreciate this opportunity to participate in the scoping process for the proposed Coastal Plain Oil & Gas Leasing Program.

I was born in Alaska while it was still a territory. I am disturbed that such a grand, rich state (if cut in two, Alaska would make Texas the third largest state) still feels it desperately needs a handout of federal oil & gas. Alaskans have shown they cannot thoughtfully invest their oil dividends. Some of past and current oil dividends they have used as straight payouts to their citizens. Alaska pays for many state projects with oil proceeds rather than with taxes, as other states must do. Little has been invested in preserving the state's future renewable resources. Their desire to rape the Refuge and other federal lands is to satisfy more momentary good feelings of lower taxes.

With the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act of 1980, Alaska received hundreds of thousands of acres of land they can use for Alaskan projects. Alaskan non-federal lands are greater than the entire land base of many states. It is time for Alaskans to contemplate their future and develop plans for investing in and protecting their renewable resources for their people's future. It is time for Alaskans to stand proud, not run to Congress with tin cups. Federal resources and taxes should be used on federal lands for the benefit of all Americans.

Alaska was purchased in 1867 by the American taxpayers for the benefit of all the United States. The Refuge, like all federal land, belongs to all Americans, not just Alaskans. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has more value to all American citizens as a refuge. The Coastal Plain is where most of the Refuge and the Arctic ocean meet and interact. The Refuge is the American Serengeti for thousands of caribou. It is the hatching ground for 200 species of birds. Many are migrating birds that fly to all 50 states and 6 of the 7 continents of the world. It sustains polar bears, walrus, musk oxen, and thousands of other wildlife. The coastal plain is the vital brain of the Refuge.

As Thoreau said in the middle 1800's "in wildness is the preservation of the world." We are now only beginning to recognize the truth in his words. Daily our health depends on clean air, water, and an earth capable of producing the resources we need to continue to live comfortably on this earth. The need for clean air and water know no boundaries.

As E. O. Wilson has said, "...we humans often act as if we are totally independent of our environment, as if our driving thousands of other species to extinction, and disrupting the life-giving services they provide, will have no effect on us whatsoever.

"The fundamental truth is that biodiversity matters profoundly to human health in almost every conceivable way. The roles that individual species, and the ecosystems they make up, play in providing food, fuel and unique medicinal compounds; air, water and soil purification services; and natural regulation of infectious disease, to name a few, are critical to our health and survival..." [E.O. Wilson, Professor Emeritus and Honorary Curator in Entomology, Harvard University]

In the unique biology of complete ecosystems, we have found most of our medicines and plant species that help solve agricultural problems. Most of our pharmaceuticals are derived from nature. Only by maintaining these ecosystems will we have the resources for future medicines.

Thus, misuse of the Refuge will affect the rest of the United States and the world.

The continual hunt for oil in the Arctic entails exaggerated costs necessitated by the Arctic weather and the distance from market. This make sense only when subsidized by federal resources – this is such a subsidized project that we will pay for forever. It also makes no sense when cleaner, cheaper energy sources are readily available.

This is the scoping process of the project's EIS. I would like answers to the following:

1. What is the benefit of this project to American taxpayers who are not Alaskans?
2. What are the disadvantages of this project to American citizens who are not Alaskans?
3. How will this activity affect the migrating birds that nest in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?
4. How will this activity affect the other wildlife species that live in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?
5. Who will be responsible for monitoring and regulating this project? How will monitoring be done? What resources will be needed and what will be the costs? Will those costs be covered by the leasing permits?
6. Will scoping meetings be held in other cities outside Alaska?
7. What are all the relevant documents to this project?
8. Will notices of any resulting activities be placed on the Internet?

Sincerely,

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