



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Please abandon any consideration of oil and gas drilling in the Artic Refuge.

1 message

Heather Pratt and Nathaniel Hough <heatherthenutritionist@gmail.com>

Wed, May 9, 2018 at 5:53 AM

Reply-To: heatherthenutritionist@gmail.com

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I am writing to you today to urge you to NOT begin selling leases for oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). There are places that deserve protection and preservation above politics and money and ANWR is one of those places.

Twenty years ago I was heavily involved in efforts to protect this area and it is heartbreaking to me that this Administration is putting politics above protection of this special place. Rushing into leasing is not what the Refuge deserves nor what the law requires. The Administration is required to comply with all the important legal protections that are in place to protect caribou, water, subsistence, and other sensitive resources of the Coastal Plain. The Arctic Refuge is no place for oil and gas drilling and oil and gas activities should not be allowed on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge. If they were to be allowed, it would be the single most destructive attack on the wilderness, wildlife, and subsistence resources of a national wildlife refuge in modern history.

The Coastal Plain is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge and provides important habitat for polar bears, caribou, muskoxen, and hundreds of species of migratory birds that travel from all 50 states and 6 continents. Oil and gas would harm the most important onshore denning habitat for threatened polar bears in the United States, further placing this imperiled species at risk. Oil and gas activities would also further exacerbate climate change, which is already causing temperatures in the Arctic to rise at twice the rate of the rest of the country. Oil and gas activities are completely at odds with the protection of the wildlife and other values in the Refuge and with the urgent need to address climate change.

Further, the Coastal Plain is the calving and post-calving ground for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, an important subsistence resource for the Gwich'in Nation. The Gwich'in people have relied on the caribou for millennia and consider the Coastal Plain to be "the sacred place where life begins." Protecting the caribou and its habitats is a matter of basic human rights for the Gwich'in. Protection of the herd and its habitats along its migration route is one of the original reasons why the Arctic Refuge was set aside.

DOI needs to consider the impacts from all stages of oil and gas, including seismic activities, leasing, exploration drilling, and development, as well as any related infrastructure or other activities. The environmental impacts from oil and gas will extend well beyond the footprint of any actual development sites and will harm the wildlife, water, subsistence, and other values the Arctic Refuge was set aside to protect.

I urge you today to reverse course and abandon any consideration of oil and gas drilling in the Artic Refuge.

Sincerely,
Heather Pratt
Carbondale, Colorado

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