



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS1 message

Alice Phass <alicephass@gmail.com>

Sat, May 19, 2018 at 4:24 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Dear Ms Hayes,

The outrageous proposal to allow oil leases along the coastal region of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is astounding. Assurances for the protection of the environment and the resident species for other areas have been given numerous times in the past. One example is the Exxon Valdez spill which continues to contaminate the environment twenty years later.

The Department of the Interior estimates a 75% chance of a major oil spill in the Chukchi Sea from a single oil lease. In addition, drilling would take place in remote areas. Clean up would be challenging due to adverse weather conditions of extreme cold, heavy ice and limited to only four or five months a year. Furthermore, oil trapped under sea ice during the winter would only be accessible during warm weather when the oil would migrate to the surface and could be burned. This necessitates burning the oil within only one week after which it will mix with sea water.

The coastline of the ANWR (area 1002) is critical to the survival of numerous species. The Porcupine Caribou herd migrates annually in summer to their nutrient rich calving grounds. Scientific studies have designated this as a concentrated calving zone. This precise area has been determined to be a major resource for oil and gas. This presents an unresolvable conflict. In the event leases are sold and drilling goes forward, it is obvious the caribou will lose.

Then consider the polar bear. There have been suggestion to limit entering the ANWR to winter months to reduce the impact on a majority of species. This is exactly the time of year when polar bears move into their on shore coastal dens where they remain until spring when mothers and cubs emerge. Female polar bears are highly sensitive to even slight human disturbances and have been known to abandon their dens and cubs. Consider the horrendous impact of seismic activity upon these birthing mothers.

Muskoxen are dependent on riparian zones for foraging and desirable snow conditions. This ancient species survive the harshest weather by shutting down their metabolism to conserve energy. The invasion of the riparian zone by human activity would force the muskoxen to flee and expend the vital energy needed for survival. It has been estimated that these animals would lose nearly 2,700 acres of habitat as a result of the proposed drilling.

The Arctic Refuge is one of the most important bird nurseries worldwide. Birds from all of the United States and six continents have been recorded here, with 135 species nesting in the 1002 area.

Refuge: a condition of being safe and sheltered from danger, trouble or pursuit.
The antithesis of refuge for the inhabitants of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is Big Oil.

Is it possible that for once, the desire to protect one of the few remaining pristine areas in our country could supersede corporate greed and its attendant destruction? Don't let the ANWR become a refuge in name only.

Sincerely,

Alice Phass