



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program1 message

Amy Purevsuren <apurevsuren@ucsd.net>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov

Wed, Jun 20, 2018 at 9:59 AM

Dear Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program:

I am writing as a life-long Alaskan who was raised in Anchorage and has lived in rural Alaska for eleven years. I strongly oppose opening ANWR to oil development, a position that I have held since I was a teenager and had the rare opportunity to visit the Refuge. Truly, there are few undisturbed ecosystems remaining in the world, and the Refuge is one of them. The coastal plain is one of the most vibrantly alive places I have ever visited, with grizzlies, caribou, waterfowl, foxes, wolves, lemmings—abundant and diverse creatures large and small—birthing, raising their young, and feeding. It is the coastal plain's richness and isolation from human disturbance that gives the newborns their first chance at life.

The rhetoric of Congressmen and women who refer to the coastal plain as a cold barren wasteland is spoken disingenuously. To claim otherwise is pure economically motivated, political dishonesty.

I understand the economic needs of Alaska, and I also understand the needs of our ecosystems which sustain life. Without a doubt, many decisions which involve resource development must take into consideration the needs of both the economy and the environment. Unfortunately, the United States, including Alaska, is showing a devastating preference for considering only short-term economic gain while ignoring the needs of the ecosystems upon which all life—humans included—rely. In the case of the Refuge, the potential economic gains are not only unknown, but also in the distant future, while the hazards that petroleum drilling brings to a fragile ecosystem are well documented. One would think that, as a nation which has systemically exterminated species of all kinds by decimating so much of the natural habitat, we would be cognizant of the need to diversify our economies, move towards alternative energy, and protect the last remaining wild places on Earth.

All of arguments about supporting and respecting the livelihood of the Gwitchin Athabaskans, who rely on the Porcupine Caribou herd, and the intrinsic value of wilderness, are well founded and cannot be said enough. However, I believe that the additional moral question is, how can we as a nation move forward with integrity? Are we going to sacrifice the ecosystem's integrity—which has value for all to come—for a finite economic boost which benefits so few? It is truly a moral reckoning. The answer is easy: do the right thing and continue to protect ANWR from development.

Thank you for your consideration.

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