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[EXTERNAL] Comment opposing opening ANWR to oil and gas exploration1 message

Sara <slenoe@juno.com>

Mon, Jun 18, 2018 at 12:02 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

I'm writing as a concerned American citizen to express my unwavering opposition to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas exploration. I'm a former assistant wildlife biologist who has served a stint for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Alaska. I have seen the unspoiled beauty there, and believe we, as Americans, have the obligation to preserve this last unspoiled place, ANWR, both for our descendants and the wildlife who depend upon it. No other area in the circumpolar north has the diversity and abundance of wildlife, including 200 species of birds.

It would be short-sighted to harvest any oil reserves found. It is long past time to move away from the use of fossil fuels. Air temperatures on the Arctic Refuge have already increased by several degrees and are projected to warm 6° F by 2040. Sea ice in the Arctic grew to its annual maximum extent in March of 2018, and joined 2015, 2016 and 2017 as the four lowest maximum extents on record, according to scientists at the NASA-supported National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) and NASA. Climate change is happening, threatening Polar Bears and many other species. I've read too much of the research to believe those who claim that there is not enough evidence yet that human activity, including CO2 emissions, are the main driver to the current changes. We should be devoting all available resources to the development of renewable energy sources.

The Arctic Refuge is the homeland for the Gwich'in people who have depended on the caribou for their subsistence for thousands of years. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge will impact their way of life and threatened their very existence. The Arctic Refuge's coastal plain is actually so sacred to the Gwich'in that they will not travel there. The coastal plain is the calving grounds for hundreds of thousands of porcupine caribou and the Gwich'in refer to it as "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins."

Please reverse course on this!! Thank you for considering my comment.