



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Area 1002 development comment

1 message

Eben Sargent <ebensargent@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 8:29 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

I believe the area 1002 oil and gas development proposals included in recent tax legislation represent a gross violation of public process. The budgetary vehicle used to move this proposal forward without full senate approval is a clear indication that this policy does not represent the interests of the majority of Americans as supported by decades of public opinion polls. Rather, this degradation of publicly held resources only benefits a minority group of stakeholders, namely those Alaskans who may benefit from the construction of extraction infrastructure and the Alaska Native corporations holding mineral leases which is why it is exclusively championed by the Alaska Congressional delegation representing these parties. The value of these lands for recreational uses as well as to the Wildlife that inhabit them have value to the American public at large that far outweigh any economic value that may be extracted in the form of oil and gas. Parties pushing for exploration and possible development of these resources need not care about the ultimate economic return of these areas as the exploration and infrastructure development alone yield sufficient economic benefit to their tiny economies to turn a blind eye to the environmental costs.

As the current support for this proposal is based on shamelessly biased information sources it is essential to perform a comprehensive review of impacts to the environment, recreational opportunities and non-extractive economies such as tourism that depend on these resources. I would like to see a new EIS performed as the last available EIS does not reflect current conditions due to changes in climactic conditions, recreational use patterns and the large amount of research occurring in the intermediate years. I would like this EIS to explore a no action alternative, a no oil and gas leasing and drilling alternative and an alternative in which areas of higher recreational value or value to existing animal species are set aside. I would like the EIS to include impacts from infrastructure development, seismic activity and drilling, not just the leasing. I would like to see an evaluation of the feasibility of protecting the viewsheds of all navigable waterways under the wild and scenic rivers act. I would like to see an economic analysis of the potential damage to tourism activities both present and foreseeable.

Personally I have traveled through the arctic national wildlife refuge on 1 hunting trip and 2 ski trips. These trips occurred when I was not a resident of Alaska. While a resident of Alaska at other times I often encountered the common sentiment that federally held public lands should be managed for the benefit of those who happen to live nearby, for whatever duration. This is simply not true, these resources do not belong to Alaska or their congressional delegation. The gross imbalance of federal tax subsidy to the state of Alaska is only one of many reasons why all Americans have a stake in these decisions.

Eben Sargent

Missoula MT