



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] ANWR public testimony

TimSilbaugh <timsilbaugh@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 3:49 PM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Dear BLM,

I am a long-standing Alaska resident and I am writing in opposition to the current proposal to open drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Please include this letter as my public testimony.

My work and personal experience have given me a unique, direct perspective on the Alaska Coastal Plain, on the Prudoe Bay drilling industry, and on the wilderness value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

I work as an emergency physician and, in that capacity, provide physician collaborative services to the medical clinics run by BP, Conoco and Fairweather within the Prudoe Bay drilling complex. In this capacity, I have visited the area and have observed that, while the drilling is run under careful environmental regulatory protection, there is a significant and continued direct environmental impact. The drilling area is crossed with multiple roads, there is heavy machinery traffic, there are fumes from drilling off gas, and there are frequent leaks from feeder lines which are visible locally and are reported intermittently in local news. Likewise, the pipeline itself, including the pumping stations and terminus in Valdez, has been subject to episodic oil leaks both small and large over the years. From these observations, it is clear to me and to those in the industry, that oil production is not an entirely environmentally clean prospect and that environmental degradation does inevitably go hand in hand with the drilling process.

In addition, I have extensive personal wilderness travel experience within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. From 2003 to 2008, our family of three made annual trips to float rivers within the refuge. Starting when our son was three, we travelled the Sheenjek River and in subsequent years floated the Canning, the Kongakut, and the Hula Hula rivers, all within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The area is one of the few remaining untouched wilderness areas in the world and is a US and world treasure. There has never been sustained settlement or development within the Refuge. On our journeys we were surrounded by the migration of the Porcupine Caribou herd, witnessed musk ox swimming in the creek in front of our cook tent, passed a wolf feeding on a downed moose midstream in the river as we passed, followed a wolverine up a tiny creek, had Dall Sheep surround us in camp, and watched the passing of Grizzly bears. Regardless of oil interests, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has amazing value as a pristine wilderness of increasing value as wilderness areas fade from our planet.

I am a long term Alaskan and lived in Anchorage during the oil bust of the 1980s. I understand the importance of oil development and oil income to our economy. I do not propose we give up our oil resources to protect all wildernesses from development. However, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge also holds great inherent value to the State of Alaska and likewise I do not support irreversible damage to this region, which would diminish its value. I believe it is the job of the BLM to balance the value of oil development with the value of wilderness preservation. Fortunately, in this case, it is clear that both resource extraction and wilderness preservation are compatible, if the BLM implements the following steps to modify the current proposal:

As such, I would like to see the current proposal for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge modified in the following ways:

1. Allow access to subsurface oil reserves within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal plain through directional/slant drilling only, with all surface support and infrastructure maintained outside of ANWR.
 - a. The technology exists to drill the Coastal Plain oil reserves without making a land imprint on the ANWR Coastal Plain. In fact, Senator Murkowski and others frequently site directional drilling as evidence that ANWR can be drilled with minimal environmental impact.
 - b. The current drilling proposal and existing regulation does not mandate a directional approach and as such the less expensive direct drilling would clearly be the industry default
 - c. As has been seen in Prudoe Bay, direct drilling does negatively impact the environment and would permanently alter the pristine nature and value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain

2. Limit surface exploration of ANWR to non-motorized access only, as needed for geologic testing and exploration, and require that no permanent camps or structures be allowed other than remote, non-manned recording stations.

These modifications to the drilling proposal would allow full access to the Coastal Plain oil resources, and would prevent the inherent and irreversible damage to the environmental value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. While this proposal could drive an increase in initial exploration costs, ultimate oil production costs would not significantly be altered by a directional approach and, as such, this would not have a significant impact on Alaska State oil revenue. If anything, the restrictions would encourage exploration to wait until higher oil prices are present. This would in turn, provide Alaska a higher return on the sale of this non-renewable resource. At the same time, the State of Alaska would maintain the pristine nature of ANWR and with that, the value of this ecological resource would be preserved.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tim Silbaugh MD FACEP MAT

6221 Farpoint Drive

Anchorage, AK 99507

907-903-9261

2 attachments



ANWR public testimony.docx

151K



ATT00001

1K

Dear BLM,

I am a long-standing Alaska resident and I am writing in opposition to the current proposal to open drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Please include this letter as my public testimony.

My work and personal experience have given me a unique, direct perspective on the Alaska Coastal Plain, on the Prudoe Bay drilling industry, and on the wilderness value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

I work as an emergency physician and, in that capacity, provide physician collaborative services to the medical clinics run by BP, Conoco and Fairweather within the Prudoe Bay drilling complex. In this capacity, I have visited the area and have observed that, while the drilling is run under careful environmental regulatory protection, there is a significant and continued direct environmental impact. The drilling area is crossed with multiple roads, there is heavy machinery traffic, there are fumes from drilling off gas, and there are frequent leaks from feeder lines which are visible locally and are reported intermittently in local news. Likewise, the pipeline itself, including the pumping stations and terminus in Valdez, has been subject to episodic oil leaks both small and large over the years. From these observations, it is clear to me and to those in the industry, that oil production is not an entirely environmentally clean prospect and that environmental degradation does inevitably go hand in hand with the drilling process.

In addition, I have extensive personal wilderness travel experience within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. From 2003 to 2008, our family of three made annual trips to float rivers within the refuge. Starting when our son was three, we travelled the Sheenjek River and in subsequent years floated the Canning, the Kongakut, and the Hula Hula rivers, all within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The area is one of the few remaining untouched wilderness areas in the world and is a US and world treasure. There has never been sustained settlement or development within the Refuge. On our journeys we were surrounded by the migration of the Porcupine Caribou herd, witnessed musk ox swimming in the creek in front of our cook tent, passed a wolf feeding on a downed moose midstream in the river as we passed, followed a wolverine up a tiny creek, had Dall Sheep surround us in camp, and watched the passing of Grizzly bears. Regardless of oil interests, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has amazing value as a pristine wilderness of increasing value as wilderness areas fade from our planet.

I am a long term Alaskan and lived in Anchorage during the oil bust of the 1980s. I understand the importance of oil development and oil income to our economy. I do not propose we give up our oil resources to protect all wildernesses from development. However, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge also holds great inherent value to the State of Alaska and likewise I do not support irreversible damage to this region, which would diminish its value. I believe it is the job of the BLM to balance the value of oil development with the value of wilderness

preservation. Fortunately, in this case, it is clear that both resource extraction and wilderness preservation are compatible, if the BLM implements the following steps to modify the current proposal:

As such, I would like to see the current proposal for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge modified in the following ways:

1. Allow access to subsurface oil reserves within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal plain through directional/slant drilling only, with all surface support and infrastructure maintained outside of ANWR.
 - a. The technology exists to drill the Coastal Plain oil reserves without making a land imprint on the ANWR Coastal Plain. In fact, Senator Murkowski and others frequently cite directional drilling as evidence that ANWR can be drilled with minimal environmental impact.
 - b. The current drilling proposal and existing regulation does not mandate a directional approach and as such the less expensive direct drilling would clearly be the industry default
 - c. As has been seen in Prudoe Bay, direct drilling does negatively impact the environment and would permanently alter the pristine nature and value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain.
2. Limit surface exploration of ANWR to non-motorized access only, as needed for geologic testing and exploration, and require that no permanent camps or structures be allowed other than remote, non-manned recording stations

These modifications to the drilling proposal would allow full access to the Coastal Plain oil resources, and would prevent the inherent and irreversible damage to the environmental value of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. While this proposal could drive an increase in initial exploration costs, ultimate oil production costs would not significantly be altered by a directional approach and, as such, this would not have a significant impact on Alaska State oil revenue. If anything, the restrictions would encourage exploration to wait until higher oil prices are present. This would in turn, provide Alaska a higher return on the sale of this non-renewable resource. At the same time, the State of Alaska would preserve the pristine nature of ANWR and with that, the value of this ecological resource would be preserved.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tim Silbaugh MD FACEP MAT
6221 Farpoint Drive
Anchorage, AK 99507
907-903-9261