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[EXTERNAL] Scoping comments re Arctic Coastal Plain

1 message

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COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM EIS

To Department of the Interior
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Subject: Scoping comments regards Arctic National Wildlife Refuge oil leasing

First and foremost, I object to the fact that DOI/BLM is holding public scoping meetings only in the state of Alaska as if the Arctic refuge were their personal property which it is not. As a US taxpayer and co-owner of the refuge and the wilderness lands therein, I demand a greater voice in determining the fate of this critical ecosystem. Scoping hearings should be held from the West coast to the East coast in order to fairly represents probable dissenting opinion that differs from the biased population that derives direct benefit from the despoiling of the Arctic Refuge.

The government must consider alternatives to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge because of the negative environmental impacts that will accrue. The government must give serious consideration to the very real and practical alternative of replacing the expected oil derived from Refuge exploitation. That most reasonable alternative is accelerating the switch to alternative fuels including electric and hydrogen. These technologies are rapidly being developed and are ready to be employed as both hybrid electric and all electric vehicles are already in the marketplace. Taking this route also will not produce nearly so much greenhouse gas as carbon based combustion technology. Moreover this alternative scenario will generate more jobs longer into the future than any petroleum based industry.

Exploiting the refuge simply to advance more oil into the world market is a poorly conceived idea that is contrary to national security.

In spite of what a broken Congress has legislated under the table, this project is contrary to the wishes of the vast majority of United States citizens and cannot move forward.

I list below some more specific comments for scoping content.

An environmental impact statement must consider the following at minimum.

What will be the relative short term and long term impacts of development on all wildlife populations including marine, freshwater, and terrestrial species?

In particular what will be the cumulative short and long-term impacts of development on the Porcupine Pine caribou herd and how will such changes affect the subsistence, lifestyle and culture of the Gwich'in people in Alaska and in Canada.

What specifically will be the effects of development on endangered and threatened species that are listed or to be listed in the future according to the United States Endangered Species Act as well as the Marine Mammal Protection Act. How will appropriate coordination and monitoring be effected between Department of the Interior and Department of Commerce? At the same time, the species listed as endangered, threatened, near threatened under the criteria of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature must be taken into account.

How will the construction and placement of infrastructure, roads, pipelines and the resulting destruction, modification, and fragmentation of habitat affect wildlife species?

Sense the input of cheap filthy petroleum will enter the energy market and will displace the efforts to build a US energy system based on renewable fuels, what will be the economic impact of such disruption and what will be the impact so far as contribution to pollution as well as carbon input to the environment and the resultant effects on global warming/climate change?

How will the combined input of carbon from the Arctic development affect climate change? How will the delayed implementation of clean fuel technologies further exacerbate climate change?

Increased carbon dioxide release to the atmosphere not only leads to increased capture of heat by the atmosphere and resulting Global warming, but the carbon dioxide is also absorbed by the oceans causing them to warm as well as to become more acidic. Warming leads to a rise in ocean levels. How will such increases affect coastal environments both in the United States and in other countries?

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - [EXTERNAL] Scoping comments re Arctic Coastal Plain

Increased carbon dioxide absorbed by the oceans leads to an increase in not only ocean temperature but also in the acidity of the ocean and this in turn affects irreplaceable oceanic ecosystems such as coral reefs and deep water corals. What effect will the increased carbon pollution have on such oceanic ecosystems, how will it affect oceans productivity not only as a food source but also as a source marine drugs for human illness?

What will be the effect of the resultant carbon pollution from refuge development on global glacial systems including the Greenland ice sheet and the Arctic ice masses? In addition what will be the effect of increased ocean temperature on critical climate determining oceanic currents such as those that occur in the southern oceans? What will be the cost to future generations of the loss, essentially irreversible, of a vital piece of wildlife and wildlife habitat?

What will the effect of oil development on the character of the adjacent millions of acres of wilderness? For instance, what will be the effects on the viewshed from other parts of the refuge including the Brooks Range?

What technology exists to control and cleanup oil spills in a sensitive and frigid winter environment or in a wetland environment that exists in the summer?

What will be the cost to the US taxpayer on development of the refuge? This should include the hours spent by Interior Department employees in justifying this attack on America's last wild place?

Final comment : The amount of time DOI/BLM is allowing for this EIS generation is much too short to gather the requisite information required to generate a reasonable and legal NEPA document.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I expect to hear back from you about my comments above.

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