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[EXTERNAL] Please abandon any consideration of oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge.1 message

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To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Thu, Apr 26, 2018 at 8:00 PM

Honorable Secretary Zinke,

This is a subject that rears its ugly head from time to time. Every few years, some group with no understanding of how nature works thinks it would be a great idea to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I'm asking you to oppose this idea, Secretary Zinke, now and in the future. I spent two weeks in the Arctic Refuge in 1992, and even though I live in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, a beautiful place in its own right, visiting the Arctic Refuge was one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life. Colorado's mountains are beautiful, but the Arctic Refuge has an abundance of wildlife that is startling. Caribou were everywhere, traveling through camp every day. We saw grizzly bears and wolves numerous times. We were privileged to watch a herd of musk oxen work the riverbank in the moraine foothills north of the Brooks Range. The bird life supported by the wetlands and rivers in the Arctic Refuge is truly remarkable.

More important, however, the Arctic Refuge is the one remaining place, the only place in the United States where massive wildlife migrations continue year in and year out, as they have for eons. You remember the controversy that arose when ranchers north of Yellowstone felt they had to kill bison that migrated outside of the National Park to find forage in deep snow winters. The problem north of Yellowstone is not the bison. It is that the park, large as it is, was not planned on a landscape ecosystem scale, and it does not encompass a large enough territory to support prehistoric wildlife migrations throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This problem does not exist in the Arctic Refuge. Yet. The weather there is usually terrible. It's windy most days, and it rains nearly every day in the summer. After the last freeze, the mosquitoes are terrifying. The marshy ground would require freighters full of gravel for construction of roads and well pads. Not an ideal environment for oil and gas exploration. In fact, when the refuge was created, in ANILCA, it was only conceived as a source for oil drilling in the event of an emergency. As there is currently a glut of fossil fuels, this is not an emergency. Please leave it to the caribou. Don't drill the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Respectfully,
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