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[EXTERNAL] Scoping comment-coastal plain: Haste makes waste

1 message

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The bill legalizing drilling in the Refuge was slyly passed by Congress without heeding the voices of the Gwich'in Nation and other Alaska Natives—those who will be most affected—nor the will of most Americans. Adding insult to injury, the BLM is rushing the implementation of P.L. 115-97.

This law, already written aggressively, *requires* the BLM to hold at least two lease sales within ten years, the first before 2022. The Bureau intends to move even faster than that. The Bureau intends to hold the first lease sale in 2019.

How can the Bureau possibly fulfill their duties to listen responsively to concerns raised—in writing and in person—by Alaska Natives, other Alaskans, and people all across the country in such a short time? How can the Bureau possibly study and address the many concerns collected throughout this scoping period in a mere matter of months? How can a thorough scientific review be made of all the likely and complex causes and consequences of proposed drilling activities take place within a year or less?

Listening takes time. Study takes time. Deliberation takes time. Not taking due time for due process is democratically erosive, culturally exclusive, and environmentally reckless.

Moving at quick speed also belies the deceit in Senator Murkowski's promise to "do it right." What could "doing it right" possibly mean under the imposition of the law and now such impatience to implement it? This is not right. In real terms, such haste means danger to the coastal plain, the Porcupine Caribou Herd and Gwich'in lifeways, to climate habitability, and to values a large majority of Americans hold dear.