



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge1 message

Ariel West <ariel.n.west@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 25, 2018 at 3:01 PM

Reply-To: Ariel West <ariel.n.west@gmail.com>

To: Ryan Zinke <blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov>

Ryan Zinke,

I am writing regarding the scoping notice for an oil and gas lease sale on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the wildest place left in the United States. The coastal plain provides vital denning habitat for endangered polar bears and is the calving ground of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. It is also home to Alaska's indigenous Gwich'in people who have lived there for generations. Drilling in this fragile ecosystem puts critical wildlife habitat at risk, endangers untouched wilderness, and threatens the Gwich'in way of life.

In addition, the aggressive timeline to begin the lease project is cause for concern that the environmental processes surrounding the project will be rushed or incorrectly completed. Oil and gas drilling would have devastating impacts on this pristine and fragile ecosystem, caused by the massive infrastructure needed to extract and transport oil, and lead to unnecessary risk of oil spills.

I urge the Department of Interior to ensure that any drilling project in this fragile ecosystem: does not impact critical habitat for wildlife; is completed with all environmental processes thoroughly concluded; respects the indigenous people's values and way of life; does not exacerbate existing climate change issues.

Ariel West

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