



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Comments re: COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM EIS

1 message

K Wms <arcticgarden@gmail.com>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 4:34 PM

Attn: Nicole Hayes, Project Coordinator:

Please accept the attached comments regarding the Coastal Plain Leasing EIS and submit them to the record.

Sincerely,
Kristi Williams**BLM - Coastal Plain comments.pdf**
68K

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kristi Williams and I offer these written comments on behalf of my family. My son and I are both tribal members of the Gwichyaa Gwich'in Tribal Government of Ft. Yukon. I am the first in my Tribe to become a licensed attorney. I am proud to say that I was born and raised in Fairbanks and I am Alaskan.

The President and the Interior Secretary have repeatedly stressed a commitment to making America energy dominant. It has been reported that almost 40% of employers in the oil and gas industry plan to increase their workforce by at least 5% in the coming years to expand production. So let's assume that along with the goal of energy dominance, the Administration also hopes to create jobs. What kind of future jobs are we looking to create with ANWR development?

The petroleum industry supports 1/3 of all jobs in Alaska, but it's no secret that extracting oil is dangerous work; whether it's done onshore or offshore the dangers are real. An accident on a drill rig can quickly escalate into a fatality. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fatality rate for oil and gas extractive industries is seven times higher than other fields. In fact, in 2016, twenty workers per *month* were hospitalized or lost a body part on the job.

Near the peak of Alaska's oil production, a 24-year-old man was checking mud pump hours on a tiger tank when he was asphyxiated by nitrogen and fell into the tank. He was found drowned in a pool of waste oil at the bottom of the tank. He died on Doyon Drilling Rig #15 on Endicott Island, a man-made gravel island in Prudhoe Bay. There were no safety bars on the tank. He left behind a three-year-old daughter. Troy Williams was an Alaskan, a Gwich'in tribal member, and my brother. Details can easily be found in the OSHA report online.

Reading the OSHA reports you will also discover that Troy was not the only Gwich'in to die on Doyon Rig 15 in Prudhoe. Fifty-six-year-old David James, died April 2012, killed at midnight on the man-made Spy Island. Davey died due to the crushing injuries he received that were caused by a pipe elevator. The OSHA report listed the penalty for that death at a mere \$6,300. These are just examples of two deaths that exemplify the dangers of Alaska oilfield work. There are many others.

It would be easy to be opposed to all oil and gas exploration and development, but in fact, I support balanced and responsible resource development. I understand that our society, our communities and families rely significantly on petroleum products. However, cutting corners and fast tracking the NEPA and EIS process is not reasonable or responsible. Not properly consulting with all of the impacted tribal communities in Alaska on such a major

development is unconscionable. The Administration and the DOI should focus its attention and resources on the NPRA and the recent big discoveries on lands that already have existing resource infrastructure. Most work related fatalities happen on rigs that are being assembled or disassembled.

It has been reported that Prudhoe Bay wells are still averaging 400 to 500 barrels per day, and on a good day a few still produce 3,000 to 4,000 barrels. In the past year or so a number of developers have discovered volumes of recoverable oil on Alaska's North Slope, some estimate as much as five billion barrels or more, which would mean a 14% increase in U.S. proven reserves. The NPRA already has substantial resource extraction infrastructure. The focus should be centered on those NPRA discoveries instead of cracking open a new piece of pristine land with no current infrastructure in place on land that is home to critical and sacred subsistence resources. How does developing this new area make any quantifiable economic sense? How will Alaskans really benefit?

A recent report commissioned by the Alaska Native Health Board revealed that the Alaska Tribal Health System creates as many if not more jobs in Alaska than the oil and gas industry, and the majority of those jobs are going to Alaskans and to rural Alaska.

In my opinion, rushing development of the Coastal Plain is reckless and does not in any way represent a balanced or responsible approach to development. Our children deserve better options in the future jobs we create for them and we should focus our attention and investments on creating jobs in safer, sustainable industries. I recommend the DOI and the Administration put the brakes on the ANWR project and focus on the NPRA as a more appropriate and viable economic investment.

Sincerely,
Kristi Williams

