



CoastalPlain\_EIS, BLM\_AK &lt;blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov&gt;

---

**[EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS - Comment**1 message

---

**Michael Wetzel** <Michael.Wetzel.Hamburg@gmx.de>  
To: blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov

Wed, Apr 25, 2018 at 6:50 AM

To whom it may concern:

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of America's last truly wild places, and the coastal plain is its biological heart -- home to the largest array of wildlife in the circumpolar north. Oil drilling would permanently destroy this place. This request is another massive step towards new oil and gas drilling in Arctic waters full of seals, walrus, and beluga and bowhead whales. When you drill, you spill. We've seen it happen time and again, from the devastating Santa Barbara oil spill in the Pacific to the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Oil spills are deadly, and the damage they cause lasts for generations. Marine wildlife die off in droves, and devastated ecosystems may never recover.

The worst oil spill in American history was just eight years ago, when an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon rig killed 11 people and caused a \$60 billion oil spill that destroyed coastal environments and made thousands of people sick. We've all seen the pictures of animals covered in oil, their fur or feathers or shell covered in the black and tarry substance. It's as bad as it looks for these animals. Dolphins can die of sepsis or suffocation from oil spills. Oil can impede breathing and heart function in sea turtle.

These consequences alone should lead to push for opportunities to leave oil in the ground. And offshore drilling threatens coastal communities and ocean environments with devastating oil spills, they expose residents and workers to toxic chemicals and are devastating for coastal communities.

Protecting the Refuge is also a matter of human rights for Alaska Native tribes like the Gwich'in, who consider the Refuge sacred and rely on the Porcupine Caribou herd for over 80% of their diet. Oil exploration would impact the birth rates and migration patterns of the caribou, which would threaten the tribe's food sources and way of life. Allowing drilling in the Arctic Refuge would also harm communities already bearing the brunt of the changing climate as they are forced to adapt to rising seas, melting ice, and changing migration patterns.

The Arctic Refuge is a symbol of what we want for our future -- the preservation of a way of life and of wild places for future generations. I stand with the Gwich'in Nation in defense of the sacred coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. By rushing to open this land to destructive oil drilling, the Trump administration is blatantly prioritizing profits over people, and disregarding tribal sovereignty for the sake of corporate greed.

I urge you to protect it from drilling at all costs.

Thank you for your considering.