



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] ANWR Coastal Plain EIS Comment

1 message

Avery Wolfe <avery.m.wolfe@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 20, 2018 at 9:33 AM

To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov



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To whom it may concern,

As a lifelong Alaskan, I am one of many who are opposed to any oil and gas activity in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Although this kind of development *may* be allowable in refuges, the name itself implies that this land is and ought to always prioritize the wild and natural character of which there is little left in the U.S. From my understanding, it is hard to believe that an EIS in this area would reasonably result in the allowance of oil and gas activity. It is my understanding that it will be against the law to establish an oil and gas leasing program that leads to oil and gas development that:

- (i) Diminishes the natural diversity of wildlife species in the refuge, including birds, mammals, and fish as listed in ANILCA 303(2)(b).
- (ii) Violates treaty obligations regarding the Porcupine Caribou Herd, migratory birds, and other fish and wildlife, as listed in ANILCA 303(2)(b).
- (iii) Diminishes the opportunity for subsistence uses by local residents, as listed in ANILCA 303(2)(b).
- (iv) Diminishes water quality and water quantity in the coastal plain, as listed in ANILCA 303(2)(b).

Even if all the appropriate planning and substantial lease stipulations are made now, it could take 75 years or more for the land to be restored to its wild condition. As a recent graduate with a degree in environmental studies, I understand that even if the land may eventually revitalize its wild and natural state there *will* be lasting effects that we may or may not be able to see - to the local and broader ecosystems, the plants, the animals, and the people who depend upon and value that land as it is today. I do not believe there is any alternative that can be proven to be as environmentally and justly sound as *not* allowing oil and gas activity.

In preparing this letter I was frustrated by the fact that I felt as if I did not have the adequate knowledge to make the necessary arguments and recommendations. My father spent the better part of his morning (not at work) researching and drafting a lengthy and well-written letter (from which I have drawn some of my information). This frustrates me because, while I value public input, I do not think that it should be the *responsibility* of local citizens to make sure that the proper assessments and protocols are being respected and followed. This is time consuming work that may or may not cover all the loopholes that professionals who support oil and gas development may find. Thus, I urge and request that the professionals who *do* have the time and the resources check those loopholes and do everything in their power to uphold the value of wilderness and environmental protection and respect for native communities that are so vital to Alaskan communities.

Sincerely,
Avery Wolfe