



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Oil and gas leasing in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge1 message

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To: "blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov" <blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov>

I am writing to strongly oppose the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In your press releases, you stated

"We realize the importance of this to not only Alaskans, but the nation in its quest to responsibly develop our natural resources and achieve energy dominance". I am not an Alaskan, but I value the CONSERVATION of one of our country's last truly wild places. This place was designated a REFUGE, not a resource for development. Even if I were to agree with your premise that we need to develop our resources to achieve "energy dominance", the decision to do so in this area would not make sense. As I understand it, the oil and gas industry has a massive surplus of oil and gas leases and permits. Less than half of these leases are currently producing.

Most importantly, the attempts to extract oil in this area cannot be done without causing irrevocable damage to one of the most sensitive places on the planet, affecting caribou, polar bears, and more than 200 species of birds. As the Sierra Club says, "if this place isn't too special to be protected from the danger of oil and gas drilling, nowhere is safe". In addition, this place is sacred to the Gwich'in Nation, who depend on the caribou to provide 80% of their diet.

Finally, the world is shifting towards clean energy sources, as concerns regarding climate change become ever more apparent. Energy companies are beginning to understand this as well, and will likely be focusing on development of clean, renewable energy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Janet Welle
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