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[EXTERNAL] Comments for Coastal Plain EIS

1 message

Jan Bronson <bronson@gci.net>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Tue, Jun 5, 2018 at 11:34 PM

The coastal plain is one of the last intact birthing grounds of Serengeti-like gatherings of animals on earth: the Porcupine caribou herd. The caribou population is still healthy in this way partly because the Gwich'in people have a sacred, protective, and reciprocal relationship with the caribou. (This is in contrast to, say, the settlers of the American West who decimated the great herds of buffalo.) The Gwich'in people in northeast Alaska and northwest Canada have lived with and interacted with the Porcupine caribou herd for thousands of years, and have a relationship with the caribou that goes beyond food. They describe an inter-dependent web that links the land, the caribou, and the people through both space and time, created by intentional right actions as well as ecological processes over thousands of years.

Gwich'in people are telling us that drilling in the calving grounds will do harm to the caribou that cannot be mitigated.

Their opposition to oil and gas development on the Coastal Plain, which is the Porcupine caribou h

2 attachments

 **BLM Arctic Refuge comments 6518.doc**
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Gwich'in people are telling us that drilling in the calving grounds will do harm to the caribou that cannot be mitigated. Believe them.

Their opposition to oil and gas development on the Coastal Plain, the Porcupine Caribou Herd's calving ground and nursery, is consistent with *Gwich'in Niintsyaa 2012, Resolution to Protect the Birthplace and Nursery Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd*. This resolution declared The Gwich'in Nation's intention to continue to defend the calving grounds and nursery of the Herd.

Gwich'in people have a right to subsistence. Article 1 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (signed by the US in 1977 and ratified in 1992) reads in part: "...In no case may a People be deprived of their own means of subsistence." The rest of Article 1 stresses that all peoples have the "right of self-determination," which includes "economic, social, and cultural development." Subsistence means more than just having caribou available for food. As I understand it, the Gwich'in Nation sees it as part of their life responsibility to protect the Herd, and they have acted consistently in this regard for millennia. As I understand it, protecting the herd is part of their right of self-determination, and of their economic, social, and cultural development, and is therefore protected under Article 1 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.

I ask that you address this in the EIS.

Thank you.