



CoastalPlain\_EIS, BLM\_AK <blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov>

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## [EXTERNAL] Proposal for Arctic Development

1 message

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**Chels** <chels@capitolcreek.com>  
To: blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov


Wed, May 9, 2018 at 4:19 PM

Please deliver this letter to Secretary Zinke.

Thank you.

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### 2 attachments

 **Zinke ltr 5-18 Artic.docx**  
143K

 **ATT00001**  
10K

May 9, 2018

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I am writing to you today regarding DOI's intent to begin selling leases for oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) - as I view such actions to be irresponsible and unacceptable.

Did you know that the Area 1002 proposed for development was set aside under the Alaska Native Lands Conservation Act which protected 1.5 million acres? Did you know that the protection of the Arctic Wilderness has enjoyed deep bi-partisan support for all this time, and that every one of more than 50 attempts to open the Area for oil and gas drilling has failed?

And do you know why? Because Americans LOVE the Arctic Wilderness. Like your own wild lands in Montana, the Arctic is part of America's last best places. And Americans can see past politics and short-term greed to understand that some places - like Montana Wilderness, like the Arctic - are just TOO SPECIAL to drill.

Today polling by Yale University's Climate Communications groups shows **70% of Americans are opposed to drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic**. This is because the last big wild places are important AND because it is well understood across this country the uniformed or "alternative" pronouncements by the Trump Administration that climate change is real, and it is significantly aggravated by humans burning fossil fuels. The majority of people in the country you serve want to protect the last best places, and want to move on to renewable energy, the jobs inherent in that sector, and the commitment to hold off the worst of climate change.

I am disappointed that this Administration is putting politics above protection of one of our most treasured public lands. Rushing into leasing is not what the Refuge deserves nor what the law requires. The Administration is required to comply with all the important legal protections that are in place to protect caribou, water, subsistence, and other sensitive resources of the Coastal Plain. The Arctic Refuge is no place for oil and gas drilling and oil and gas activities should not be allowed on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge. If they were to be allowed, it would be the single most destructive attack on the wilderness, wildlife, and subsistence resources of a national wildlife refuge in modern history.

The Coastal Plain is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge and provides important habitat for polar bears, caribou, muskoxen, and hundreds of species of migratory birds that travel from all 50 states and 6 continents. Oil and gas would harm the most important onshore denning habitat for threatened polar bears in the United States, further placing this imperiled species at risk. Oil and gas activities would also further exacerbate climate change, which is already causing temperatures in the Arctic to rise at twice the rate of the rest of the country. Oil and gas activities are

completely at odds with the protection of the wildlife and other values in the Refuge and with the urgent need to address climate change.

Further, the Coastal Plain is the calving and post-calving ground for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, an important subsistence resource for the Gwich'in Nation. The Gwich'in people have relied on the caribou for millennia and consider the Coastal Plain to be "the sacred place where life begins." Protecting the caribou and its habitats is a matter of basic human rights for the Gwich'in. Protection of the herd and its habitats along its migration route is one of the original reasons why the Arctic Refuge was set aside.

DOI needs to consider the impacts from all stages of oil and gas, including seismic activities, leasing, exploration drilling, and development, as well as any related infrastructure or other activities. The environmental impacts from oil and gas will extend well beyond the footprint of any actual development sites and will harm the wildlife, water, subsistence, and other values the Arctic Refuge was set aside to protect.

I urge you to think about how the wild country, the promise of open wild lands has influenced you as a Montanan. I ask you to think about what you KNOW about climate change, the impacts of oil and gas, the opportunities for renewables and how AMERICANS FEEL ABOUT THE ARCTIC. Then I hope you will reverse course and abandon any consideration of oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Congdon Brundige

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