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[EXTERNAL] Repeal P.L. 115-97

1 message

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To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov, jessica girard <jessicagirard11@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern:

Section 1003 of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act designated 8 million acres surrounding the Coastal Plain wilderness and created the larger, 19.6 million acre Arctic Refuge, prohibiting oil and gas leasing and development unless authorized by an act of Congress. When Congress passed P.L. 115-97 authorizing drilling in the Coastal Plain, they did so legally. They did not, however, do it out in the open, democratically.

Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chair of the US Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, arranged to attach the drilling legislation to a bill that could not be filibustered and would require only 50 votes. The \$1.1 billion federal share of Coastal lease sales projected over the coming decade thus became a budgetary line item appended to the 2018 tax bill. The senator admits she did this quietly to avoid triggering opposition.

In passing this law, Congress slyly disregarded the Gwich'in Nation. Along with that morally and democratically unacceptable disregard, Congress also ignored the wills of seventy percent of registered U.S. voters who are against Refuge drilling (including a majority of Republicans), according to October 2017 research conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

At the very least, in addition to more public scoping meetings across Alaska to give Alaska Natives and other Alaskans voice, open democracy demands scheduling more public meetings nationwide.

Ultimately, P.L. 115-97, though legal, does not represent the will of the Gwich'in Nation and other Alaska Native sovereign tribes who would be most affected by drilling nor the will of most Americans. This law must be repealed. I call on Congress to quickly advance measures to repeal P.L. 115-97, and to replace it with legislation e.g., wilderness area designation that would defend the Coastal Plain against commodification and extraction and for its sacred, ecological, and cultural values.

Sincerely,

Phoebe Rohrbacher