

Please accept my comment in strong opposition to holding a lease sale for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. There are many reasons not to allow drilling in the Refuge. Here are three: 1) Indigenous rights: The Arctic Refuge has sustained the Gwich'in people for thousands of years. The Refuge's coastal plain provides vital habitat for the porcupine caribou herd, which use the area to bear and rear their young. The Gwich'in people call the coastal plain "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins." Protecting the caribou is a matter of basic human rights for the Gwich'in. 2) Biodiversity: The Arctic Refuge is home to a vast and unique biodiversity of wildlife: porcupine caribou, musk oxen, wolves, polar bears, and nearly 200 species of migratory birds that migrate to six continents and all 50 states. Management agencies don't have enough information about the impacts of oil and gas on the coastal plain to protect the wildlife and resources. The rush to lease and drill is not in line with the precautionary principle that should be applied to such an important decision about oil and gas development in one of our most exceptional ecosystems. 3) Climate change: The Arctic is ground zero for climate change; temperatures there are rising at twice the rate of the rest of the world. Villages are being eroded into the sea, permafrost melt is making infrastructure insecure, and food sources are disappearing. More oil drilling will compound the devastating impacts already being felt from climate change throughout the Arctic. Thank you for considering my comment. I urge you to listen to the majority of Americans, not to oil companies, and decide to not allow oil and gas lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The current residents and future generations are looking to you to make the right decision.