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[EXTERNAL] Oppose Oil Exploration and Drilling on Arctic Refuge's Coastal Plain1 message

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The Arctic Refuge in Alaska, home for thousands of years to the Gwich'in people, is no place for oil drilling. The refuge is home to the Porcupine Caribou, which make up a vast majority of the Gwich'in diet. The spiritual life of the Gwich'in is inextricably tied to coastal plain, which they describe as the place where life begins. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of America's last wild places and the coastal plain is its biological heart. It is also the heart of the Gwich'in people.

The coastal plain should not be opened to oil exploration and drilling. Oil drilling or exploration in this precious piece of God's creation will be extremely destructive not only to the wildlife that inhabits this special place, but also to the Gwich'in people who rely upon the land and the caribou that live there for their very physical and spiritual existence.

The faith community has a decades long commitment to protecting the Arctic Refuge, which is inspired by our dedication to defending all of God's creation, including the fundamental rights of the Gwich'in people. As a person of faith, I ask that oil and gas activities not be allowed on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge and that the Administration not rush into leasing. Our stewardship call requires that we do all that we can to safeguard this renowned and sacred wilderness of the Arctic National Refuge for current and future generations.

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