



CoastalPlain\_EIS, BLM\_AK &lt;blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov&gt;

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**[EXTERNAL] Re: Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, Alaska**

1 message

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**Ferree, Logan** <Logan.Ferree@mail.house.gov>

Fri, Jun 15, 2018 at 12:38 PM

To: "blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov" &lt;blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_EIS@blm.gov&gt;

In response to the announced Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, Alaska, in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, please see the attached Congressional letter from Congressman Jared Huffman and 100 other members of Congress.

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**Logan H. Ferree**

Legislative Director

Office of Congressman Jared Huffman (CA-02)

Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans

1406 Longworth HOB | Washington DC 20515

**\*PLEASE NOTE THAT WE HAVE MOVED OFFICES TO 1406 LONGWORTH\***(202) 225-5161 | [huffman.house.gov](http://huffman.house.gov)

Keep up-to-date with Rep. Huffman's work:

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.**06.15.18 Zinke DOI Notice of Intent Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.pdf**  
915K

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 15, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write to express our serious concerns in response to the Notice of Intent issued April 20, 2018 to initiate a planning process for oil and gas leasing on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We strongly oppose fossil fuel development on these internationally significant public wildlands. We urge you to halt this rushed approach your department is taking to this environmental review in favor of a measured, science-driven effort that provides for robust public input and full involvement of the American people, including the Alaska Natives who will be significantly and negatively impacted by development. A planning process conducted in accordance with federal law will make clear that drilling on the Coastal Plain will cause irreparable harm to the wildlife, wilderness, recreational opportunities, and subsistence resources the Arctic Refuge was established to protect.

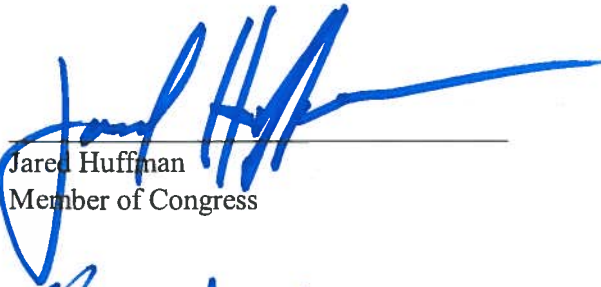
The bipartisan commitment to protecting the Coastal Plain of America's most iconic wildlife refuge has endured for more than half a century. This unparalleled landscape was first protected in 1960 by the Eisenhower administration as the Arctic National Wildlife Range in recognition of its "unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values." In 1980, Congress expanded and re-designated the area as a national wildlife refuge under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Legislative efforts to open the Coastal Plain to oil and gas development were repeatedly defeated for decades with the strong support of the American public, and overwhelming opposition to drilling continues today. Nearly one million public comments were submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the process leading up to the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Conservation Plan, which recommended designating the Coastal Plain Wilderness. A full 96 percent of these comments supported this permanent protection. Moreover, according to recent public opinion research, two out of every three Americans oppose drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Tragically, oil and gas leasing was imprudently included in the budget reconciliation process for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1, Pub. L. 115-97) last year. We opposed the addition of Arctic Refuge drilling to the tax legislation, which occurred behind closed doors bypassing full and fair debate in Congress. Recently, statements by Department of Interior officials indicate they intend to complete the environmental review for exploration and leasing in as little as one year. This rushed process to open the door for leasing is an unfortunate reminder of the equally rushed and ill-conceived reconciliation process. The timeline for this leasing process should be guided by sound science, not a partisan goal of rushing to lease within this current presidential administration. We remind you that analysis of development in the refuge requires thoughtful, inclusive, science-based planning that upholds all congressional mandates. Hasty, cursory decision-making will hinder meaningful participation by the Gwich'in people and the American public, and risks violating federal conservation laws and international treaty obligations.

Oil and gas activities on the fragile Coastal Plain would inevitably jeopardize sensitive species, irreplaceable public lands, and the Gwich'in way of life, a prospect we cannot support. The Coastal Plain is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge, providing essential habitat for imperiled polar bears, musk oxen, and hundreds of species of migratory birds that arrive from all fifty states and six continents. It is the vital calving ground for 200,000 animals that comprise the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which migrates internationally hundreds of miles each year in one of North America's greatest natural spectacles. The Coastal Plain is already experiencing unprecedented impacts from climate change. The indigenous Gwich'in people have relied on the caribou for millennia and consider the Coastal Plain "the sacred place where life begins" because of its importance to the caribou. To the Gwich'in, protecting the caribou means protecting their culture, their spirituality, their food security, and their human rights.

The Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is an exceptional part of our nation's natural heritage. The wildlife, wilderness, recreation, subsistence, and cultural values that it was set aside to protect over fifty years ago remain unmatched today. We stand with the majority of the American public and the Gwich'in Nation in opposing all efforts to sacrifice this special place to oil and gas drilling.

Sincerely,



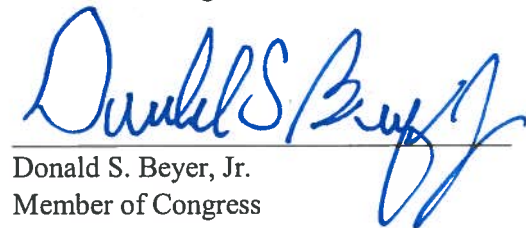
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Member of Congress



Raul M. Grijalva  
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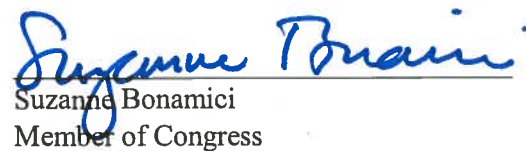
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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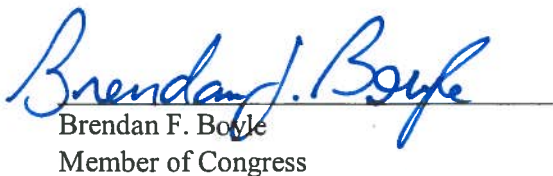
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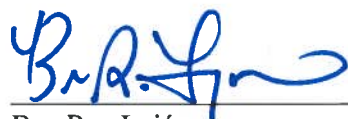
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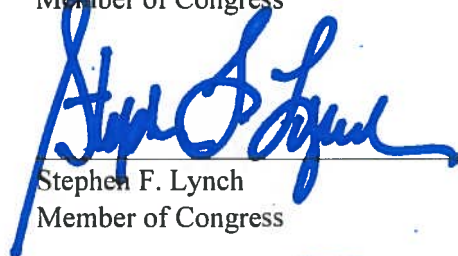
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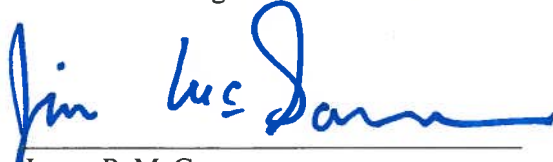
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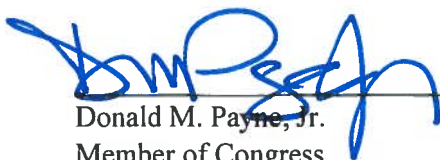
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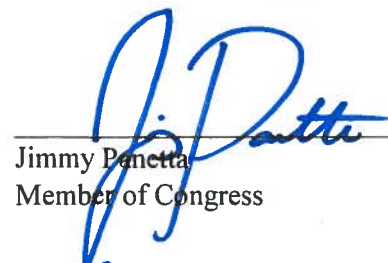
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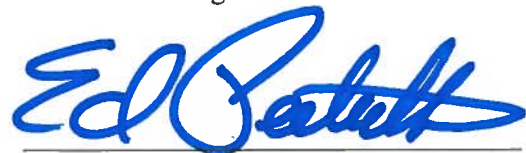
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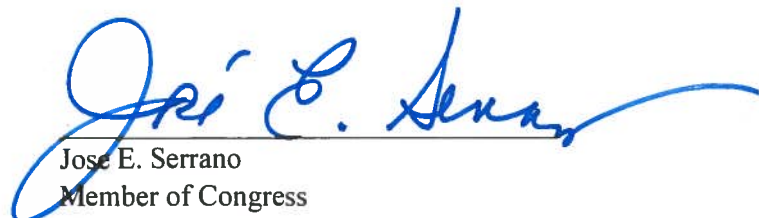
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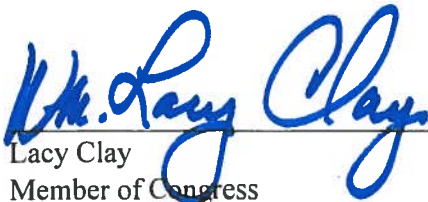
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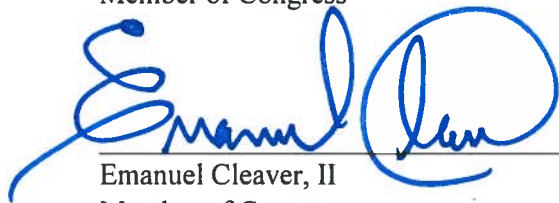
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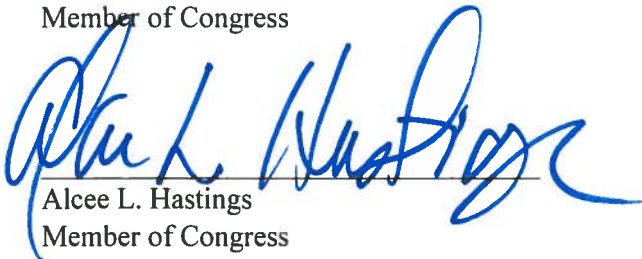
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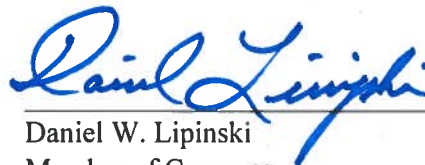
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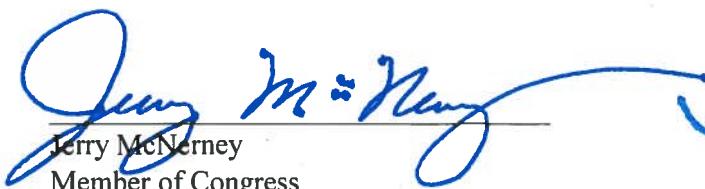
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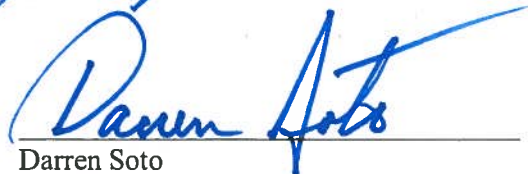
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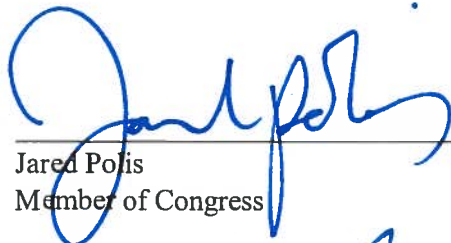
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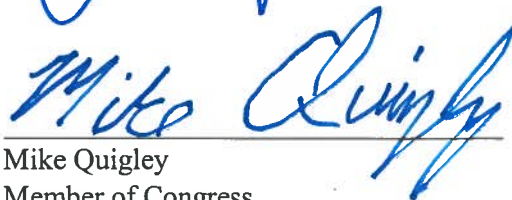
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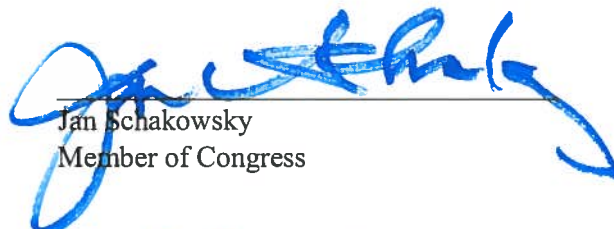
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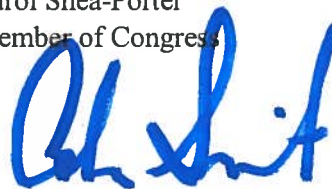
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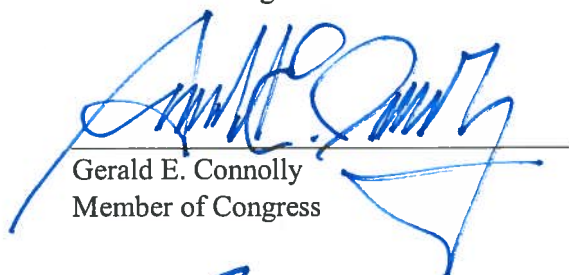
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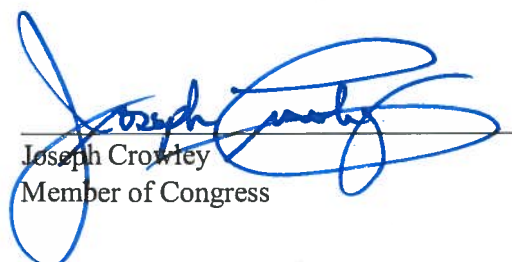
  
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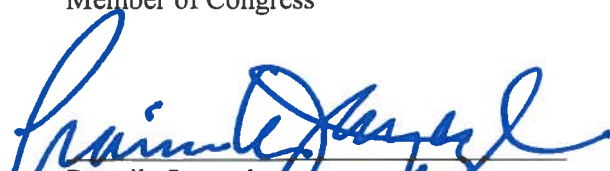
  
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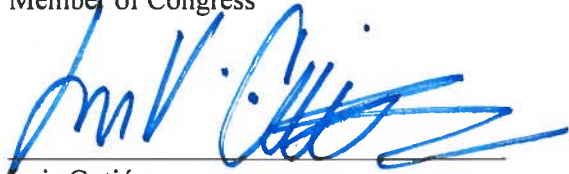
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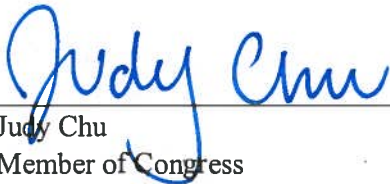
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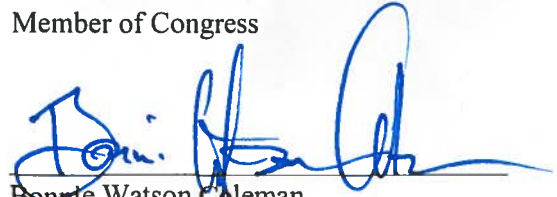
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