



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

1 message

Margi Dashevsky <margueritedashevsky@gmail.com>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Wed, May 16, 2018 at 11:39 AM

Dear Ms. Hayes and Ms. Mouritsen,

I am concerned that the scoping process is fundamentally flawed and cannot establish the necessary criteria to guide the EIS development because the people who will be most affected by oil exploration and development in the Arctic Refuge currently have the least say in this process, which is unjust and corrupts what should be a democratic processes to steward our federal land. I respectfully submit the following Comments on the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, Alaska.

My three primary concerns are: First, P.L. 115-97 legalizes drilling in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge and does not permit a "no-action alternative," which should be an option in any EIS scoping process. Second, it aggressively requires two lease sales within ten years, which recklessly rushes this process that cannot be effectively conducted in such a short timeframe. Third, at the very minimum, all materials pertaining to the leasing of and drilling decisions within the Coastal Plain must be translated into at least Gwich'in and Inupiaq languages and translators should be present at all scoping meetings.

In addition to the practicalities of communication, the U.S. Government must translate languages out of respect for indigenous peoples. This respect must acknowledge wrongs to many tribes whose children were forbidden to speak their first languages in schools in abusive projects of colonization and cultural "assimilation." We must not continue those abuses, but all the more make efforts to honor the sovereignty and cultural heritages of Native Nations.

Just a few weeks ago, the Alaska Senate voted unanimously to declare a "linguistic emergency" for our 20 officially recognized Alaska Native languages: Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax^, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, H?n, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian, alongside English. The process and product of the EIS should respond to this emergency and support Alaska Native languages.

Finally, P.L. 115-97 should be replaced with a wilderness area designation.

Sincerely,
Margi Dashevsky