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**[EXTERNAL] Arctic Refuge EIS**

1 message

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

I am an Alaskan that believes that some places-like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge- are too special to drill and deserve to be protected from development. I'm in agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2015, after an extensive analysis, that recommended wilderness protection for the coastal plain to Congress.

I had the privilege to visit the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge four times. The first time was a walk in from the Dalton Hwy. Another time was a week long hike through the Brooks Range to the middle of the Kongakut River. Then there was the rafting trip from the middle of the Kongakut River to the Arctic ocean, and the last was a visit to Kaktovik to see the polar bears. I was blessed with memories of wilderness, beauty, gorgeous sunset, wide open area with mountains close by, auffs, many caribou (2500), caribou being chased by wolves, Arctic fox den, musk ox, many birds, grizzly bear, and polar bears. Many wilderness trek companies bring guests to the coastal plain for hiking and rafting trips. If oil drilling was allowed there, the land would be like private land and nobody could travel there for security reasons. Why would one go there anyhow to see wilderness if it is disrupted by oil wells. I went to the Arctic Refuge with a dream to have the experience like President Jimmy Carter of waking up in my tent surrounded by caribou. I want the future generation to have similar dreams and experiences. To allow oil drilling will forever mar this coastal plain. The Arctic Refuge coastal plain is too special and deserves to be protected from development.

The Alaska congressional delegation often speaks as if all Alaskans want drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. On the contrary; many Alaskans want to see the Refuge protected.

Senator Murkowski claims that the physical footprint of drilling would be small. Her claims are misleading, as the 2,000 acres needed for development she often references would not be contiguous. Well pads, gravel roads, airstrips, pipelines for transportation, and other components of industrial sprawl would be built spreading across the narrow coastal plain, locking up this area as private land and preventing access to this area except for oilfield personnel.

Development would wreak havoc on wildlife that live in the Refuge. Recent caribou population studies of the Central Arctic herd show they have decreased 70% in 6 years in the oilfield area. The Porcupine Caribou Herd that calves on the coastal plain would be similarly impacted. Polar bears, already stressed by melting ice pack, that den on the coast will be affected. The Arctic Refuge and the wildlife that depend on the coastal plain need to be protected. The coastal plain is extremely important and globally significant habitat for caribou, migratory bird breeding, wolves, and denning polar bears as well as other Arctic and Alaskan species. Oil and gas drilling would have devastating impacts on this fragile coastal ecosystem due to the massive and polluting infrastructure needed to explore, produce and transport the oil. The narrow coastal plain will compound the effects on wildlife because there is not enough room to shift away from the oil infrastructure.

Drilling in the Arctic Refuge is a humans rights issue. Drilling will have a direct effect on the Porcupine caribou herd, the food security, and ultimately the culture and livelihood of the Gwich'in people, not only in the United States but Canada. The U.S. and Canada have a 1987 treaty to protect the Porcupine Caribou herd and these treaty's obligations need to be honored. New oil and gas development purpose of the Arctic Refuge conflicts with the other purposes of the refuge. Oil development will degrade subsistence resources and access to those resources including wildlife, plants, water, and air quality, etc. Oil production will produce greenhouse gases and black carbon which will further harm the Arctic, currently warming twice the ratio of most other parts of the planet.

The Environmental Impact Statement must not be rushed. Procedural and scientific integrity, not political expediency, should drive the timeline. The EIS must utilize best available scientific information and traditional and local knowledge. Given the major impacts a lease sale will have on wildlife, the Gwich'in people, and others with connections to the Arctic Refuge- in combination with the lack of public debate on the tax law- I request a 60 day extension to the comment period.

Drilling will adversely affect jobs. Many wilderness trek companies bring guests to the coastal plain for hiking and rafting trips. If oil drilling was allowed there, the land would be like private land and nobody could travel there for security reasons. Why would one go there anyhow to see wilderness if it is disrupted by oil wells. To allow oil drilling will forever mar this area and not allow future generations to enjoy the area as I.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - [EXTERNAL] Arctic Refuge EIS

Alaska is one of the few states to be totally dependent on oil revenue to run its government. Alaska needs to transition from a petroleum-based economy to a renewable energy economy to a more sustainable future for all Alaskans. Drilling in the Arctic Refuge is not a solution to national debt or the Alaskan oil dependent economy . We can not in good conscience stand by and let our leaders sacrifice the Arctic Refuge, a national treasure, for profit, while Canada has stood by and protected its portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I would like to once again repeat that I DON'T FAVOR OIL DRILLING IN THE COASTAL PLAIN OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

Sincerely,

Dana Durham