



CoastalPlain_EIS, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

2 messages

Adrienne Hollis <adrienne@weact.org>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 1:25 PM

Dear Ms. Hayes;

Please find attached a comment letter from the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on the EIS Plans for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you,

Adrienne L. Hollis
Dr. Adrienne L. Hollis, Esq.
Director of Federal Policy
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
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**EJ Letter to DOI- Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain Oil and Gas EIS Scoping 6-6-2018 (1).pdf**

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Adrienne Hollis <adrienne@weact.org>
To: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 2:00 PM

Ms. Hayes;

Please find a revised letter attached, adding an additional group in support. For your records, I was unable, after numerous tries, to post the comment letter to the website.

Adrienne Hollis

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Environmental Justice Leadership Forum

CLIMATE CHANGE

June 19, 2018

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Nicole Hayes, Project Leader
BLM Alaska State Office, Attn: Coastal Plain EIS
222 W. 7th Ave, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599
Sent via: blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@BLM.gov

RE: Public Comment on Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We, the undersigned leaders and organizations working for environmental justice for indigenous peoples, low income communities and people of color stand in support of the Gwich'in people and the importance of protecting their way of life. ¹

We rise in opposition to the BLM's proposed oil and gas leasing program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain. This issue is about environmental justice. If there is oil and gas, it will harm the Coastal Plain, the area the Gwich'in define as Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit, The Sacred Place Where the Life Begins. It is also a threat to all of our public interest lands and refuges. The air and water in our communities are disproportionately harmed by fossil fuel pollution.

Environmental Justice means that there is adequate time to hear all voices and access for all to the public process. That is not the case now with the Coastal Plain Leasing EIS, and it did not happen last December when Congress opened the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas development for the first time in a rider to the Tax Act that favored rich Americans and corporations over our communities. There were no hearings on that bill.

¹ Since 1991, we have worked to implement many principles of Environmental Justice, including <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>, that need to be addressed and incorporated into the EIS review of oil and gas impacts.

We oppose the Interior Department's extremely rushed process for scoping of the environmental impact statement. We request an extension of the public comment period for another 120 days.

Once the oil industry gets into the Arctic NWR coastal plain, public interest land that belongs to all Americans, then the precedent will move for access to everyone's backyard, and there will be no control of access to industry for extraction. It is important to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, for Gwich'in, and it will also protect every backyard across the Nation. Whether you are rich or not, this issue will still affect your backyard, as there are Refuges in every part of the country. This is an environmental justice issue that disproportionately impacts health and communities. It concerns pollution from oil and gas extraction in our backyards - across the nation as well as in the Arctic - and it also needs to be addressed as we have a stake in the public lands that belong to all of us.

The BLM's proposed leasing program will launch fossil fuel seismic exploration, development, production, pipeline, roads and other operations that will harm its ecological unity, affect the interdependence of the Gwich'in with the caribou that give birth and nurse their young here, impact Gwich'in health and community, and pollute clean air and clean water. The Gwich'in have the right to be free from environmental destruction of this sacred land and its consequences to the caribou at the heart of their culture. There is no reason to sacrifice the Arctic Refuge so that oil and gas industries continue business as usual with fossil fuel development that impacts climate change. Climate change is real, and environmental injustice is real. Climate change is real in the Arctic and will affect all Americans where they live. It is everyone's backyard. We will be the first ones to be affected by the combination of climate change and fossil fuel exposure. Burning the fossil fuels extracted from the refuge will not only add to climate change in the Arctic, but everywhere.

We stand in support of the human rights of the Gwich'in and speak about the importance of considering the environmental justice consequences in the oil and gas EIS and also emphasize how the cumulative impacts of climate change will affect Americans across the nation, as well as the disproportionate adverse health impacts on people in our communities.

Sincerely,

Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy

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Hartford, CT 06106

Deep South Center for Environmental Justice

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Jesus People Against Pollution
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Low Country Alliance for Model Communities
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