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[EXTERNAL] Scoping Comments for Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Leasing Program

1 message

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To whom it may concern:

I am a former resident of Alaska and wish to comment on the scope for the EIS for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Leasing Program . It must consider the following:

- **Climate change.** Air temperatures on the Arctic Refuge have already increased by several degrees and are projected to warm 6° F by 2040, shrinking habitat and food sources. Burning the Refuge's oil and gas reserves would not only increase the potential for increased climate change and must be studied. The effect on climate change for the development activities must also be considered, including any permafrost deterioration.
- **Wildlife.** The effect of development activities on all 700 kinds of plants, 200 species of birds, 47 mammal species and 42 fish species must be analyzed. No other protected area in the entire circumpolar north has such abundant and diverse wildlife.
- **Wilderness.** The effect of development must be considered on the two adjacent Canadian National Parks and the remainder of the Arctic Refuge ecosystem, the largest and wildest protected landscape in North America, and the degradation of the unparalleled opportunities for those seeking the solace of undisturbed areas.
- **No need for Arctic Refuge oil.** The potential need for the oil must be analyzed. There's been declining interest in Arctic Refuge oil exploration in the last decade as fracking technology enabled oil companies to reach previously inaccessible reserves. Coupled with increased offshore drilling, U.S. crude oil reserves doubled between 2008 and 2014 and oil prices are a fraction of what they were a decade ago. At the same time, conservation allowed U.S. oil imports to decline from 12.5 million barrels per day in 2005 to 5 million in 2014. Increased fuel economy standards will save the U.S. more oil than we import from the Persian Gulf and Venezuela combined.
- **Threatening the Gwich'in Way of Life.** The Arctic Refuge is the homeland for the Gwich'in people who have depended on the caribou for their subsistence for thousands of years. The effect of drilling in the Arctic Refuge and its impact on their way of life must be analyzed. The Arctic Refuge's coastal plain is actually so sacred to the Gwich'in that they will not travel there. The coastal plain is the calving grounds for hundreds of thousands of porcupine caribou and the Gwich'in refer to it as "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins."

Thank you.

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