

Attn: Coastal Plain oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

6-19-18

City of Anaktuvuk Pass
P.o. Box 21030
Anaktuvuk Pass, AK 99721

My name is **Justus Mekiana Jr.** and I write to you as a resident of North Slope. When oil and gas was first discovered on the North Slope in the 1960's, most of our young people were still being shipped off the North Slope to attend high school at boarding schools in Sitka and elsewhere. The long-lasting cultural and psychological effects of this practice have been widely studied, but are not my focus today. Now, instead of sending our teenagers to grow up hundreds or thousands of miles away, our children have the opportunity to attend high school at home, to be raised by their parents and grandparents surrounded by their own culture. Some choose to attend boarding school – but it is exactly that, a choice, not a necessity. Future generations of our children deserve to have this same choice, and I see development of the 1002 area as a way to provide them this opportunity.

The educational system in our region has been developed over the past several decades through the oil and gas industry – mostly through property taxes that the North Slope Borough is able to levy on industry. This revenue has allowed the Borough to bring in high quality teachers to teach our students, establish summer programs, sports and extracurricular activities, as well as establish and help to fund Iḷisaḡvik College, which provides an opportunity for our youth to continue their education and training to prepare them for adulthood and the “real world.”

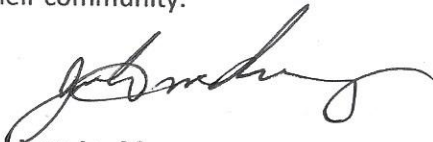
I understand that the scoping stage of this process helps the Bureau of Land Management and cooperating agencies to determine the issues that should be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments and local perspective to this process in to ensure that potential future development is done in a way that is respectful of our culture and environment.

I believe that as you move to create the draft Environmental Impact Statement, the following issues should be of particular focus:

- The BLM should read “In This Place: A Guide for Those Who Would Work in the Country of the Kaktovikmiut” and include recommendations that those who would participate in any lease sales for the Coastal Plain review the document.
- Village Health Assessment should be a part of this process to provide a baseline measure of the health of the community to ensure that the health of Kaktovik is not negatively affected should any development occur.
- Ensure that the Kaktovikmiut are an integral part of this process – their voices should be heard above those who do not live on or near the 1002 area.
- Ensure that any adverse effects to wildlife and subsistence resources are thoroughly studied and protected.
- Indigenous Knowledge from community members should be incorporated into any environmental and/or wildlife studies conducted in the Coastal Plain and the Kaktovikmiut should be consulted in how these studies take place.

- Recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Service to enter into a co-management arrangement with the community of Kaktovik in the management of the Coastal Plain and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge more broadly.
- Require that those who buy leases in the 1002 area attend cultural and environmental seminar given by Kaktovikmiut.
- There should be a thorough review of closed and pending Native allotments – especially those closed with the withdrawal of the military (Public Order 82) from Barter Island.
- Community needs to be provided access, especially All-Terrain Vehicle in the summer and fall months, across land on the Coastal Plain for hunting, fishing, camping, and subsistence use sites.
- Community trails, campsites, and subsistence use sites used by the community of Kaktovik should be identified and protected in the EIS and should not be included in a lease sale.
- Support should be provided to the community, especially Native Village of Kaktovik, to assist in their capacity to participate effectively in this process. This should include, if the community desires, BLM hire of local resident of Kaktovik to facilitate meetings and work to communicate between local entities and the BLM/DOI
- Impact Aid has not been addressed; Kaktovik needs to know that they will receive assistance for their community.

Regards,



Justus Mekiana Jr., Mayor