



CoastalPlain\_EIS, BLM\_AK &lt;blm\_ak\_coastalplain\_eis@blm.gov&gt;

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**[EXTERNAL] Don't drill in the Arctic**

1 message

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**Paul Larson** <citrus92001@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jun 19, 2018 at 6:31 PM

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to express my grave concern about the possibility of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and to discuss issues that must be addressed in the draft EIS.

I am a wildlife biologist, backcountry guide, avid hunter and a permanent Alaska resident. To me, my community, and many others, the importance of leaving the coastal plain undrilled cannot be overstated for multiple reasons, including human rights, the unique and rich biodiversity of the region, and climate change.

The Gwich'in Nation considers the coastal plain of the Refuge "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins," due to the 40,000 caribou calves that are born there annually. The Gwich'in identities, livelihoods, subsistence, and culture are intricately linked to the land and wildlife in ANWR. Thus I request that the draft EIS address all potential fallout to the food security, subsistence rights, economic, and sociocultural effects on the Gwich'in and other people who depend on the land and wildlife of ANWR. How will these potential impacts be mitigated? I also urge that all public documents be made available and accessible to people in Native languages and that they are given ample time to provide comments.

Drilling ANWR can have incredible impact on the ecology and biological diversity of this area. The Porcupine Caribou herd must have this last protected area of the Alaska coastal plain for their migratory movements and nursery habitat. They are the only caribou herd in the Arctic that is not currently declining (unlike all others in areas that are being drilled, such as in the National Petroleum Reserve), so protecting their critical habitat is essential to the herd's persistence. The caribou life cycle provides nutrients to the Arctic ecosystem that cannot be replicated if they were to be displaced by development. In addition, ANWR supports millions of migratory birds from over 200 species. If development were allowed to proceed, the ripple effects of constructing roads, incipient and persistent oil spills, invasive species, erosion, and hydrological impacts over at least a 50 year period should be addressed in the draft EIS.

All impacts to wilderness character, an original purpose of the Arctic Refuge, must also be addressed, including air quality, ecological integrity, visual, and recreational impacts. From a subsistence and sport hunting perspective, what will the impacts be to hunter access and subsistence use of the area, and how will those impacts be mitigated? Where is the water for this proposed development going to come from? How will this plan comply with all other federal regulations, including ANILCA, the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, etc.?

Climate change is a fact of life in Alaska; any Alaskan will tell you this. Drilling in ANWR will exacerbate problems that are already occurring, including temperatures that are rising at twice the rate of the rest of the country, coastal erosion already moving communities, and thawing permafrost causing extensive infrastructure damage. The draft EIS should analyze all impacts to climate change, including cradle-to-grave impact analysis of oil, all transportation costs and impacts, and how exacerbated climate change would impact the coastal plain itself.

Thank you for your consideration. The narrative that drilling the Arctic Refuge is "what Alaskans want" is absolutely false and I hope that the BLM looks beyond that story in their public scoping process.

Best regards,

Paul Larson  
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