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[EXTERNAL] Comment on scoping for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

1 message

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As a concerned citizen and Reform Jew, I write in response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, Alaska.

One of my fundamental values as a Reform Jew is to be a good steward of our planet. In Biblical commentary, God implores, "Do not destroy my world, for if you do, there will be nobody after you to make it right again." The Coastal Plain is an extremely delicate and unique ecosystem. The EIS must consider how drilling and the related activity to enable it, including on any production and support facilities, impacts the land and ecosystems of the Coastal Plain and the adjacent wilderness area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The same Jewish environmental ethic drives my deep concern about our changing climate. Oil and gas extraction continues our dependence on fossil fuels and further enables the dangerous and unethical release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Any EIS must assess the climate impacts of both the extraction and eventual use of any oil and gas from the Coastal Plain.

My Jewish tradition also teaches "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). I understand the importance of having deep connections to a cultural and spiritual heritage, and the importance of preserving those connections. Given the significance of the Coastal Plain to the Gwich'in people, who call the Coastal Plain "the sacred place where life begins," any EIS must examine the effect of drilling on the Gwich'in people and their way of life. Special attention should be given to the porcupine caribou that play an important role for the Gwich'in people and calve in the Coastal Plain where drilling might take place.

The EIS must examine the full range of impacts of drilling in the Coastal Plain on the ecosystem of the full Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, climate change, and the Gwich'in people. As a person of faith, I ask that oil and gas activities not be allowed on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge and that the Administration not rush into leasing.

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