

## STATEMENT OF GEORGE AND FRANCES ALDERSON

At a hearing on proposed oil leasing in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Washington DC,  
February 13, 2019

I am George Alderson, of 112 Hilton Avenue, Catonsville, Maryland 21228. These comments are on behalf of my wife and myself. Two of my mentors were Olaus J. Murie and Margaret E. Murie, who were leaders in proposing the Arctic Wildlife Range back in the 1950s. Their proposal found favor with the Eisenhower administration, and Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton designated the Arctic Wildlife Range on December 6, 1960, in Public Land Order 2214.

I visited the Arctic coast of Alaska in a work assignment in February 1981. We visited exploratory oil drilling in National Petroleum Reserve A (NPRA) and saw the great wildlife habitat of that area. We also flew over the Prudhoe Bay oil development to see the impacts of active oil development.

We are strongly opposed to oil leasing in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and to any exploratory drilling or seismic surveys within the Refuge. We urge the Interior Department to:

1. withdraw the leasing proposal,
2. support the bill introduced by Representative Jared Huffman to restore the statutory protection for the ANWR, and
3. support legislation to give wilderness designation to the coastal plain, so there will be absolutely no doubt in the future about the protection of this area.

The Arctic Refuge is one of the very few untouched landscapes anywhere in the world. It is home ground to more than 200 species of birds, including the Tundra Swan, which winters near us in Maryland and adjoining states. The Cornell University's "All About Birds" website describes Tundra Swan winter range: "Those breeding in eastern Alaska (east of Point Hope) winter in the eastern Great Lakes and all along the East Coast, with the majority wintering in the coastal mid-Atlantic." (Source: [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tundra\\_Swan/maps-range](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tundra_Swan/maps-range)) The refuge also provides habitat for 37 species of land mammals, 8 marine mammals, and 42 fish species.

The coastal plain is the calving grounds for the Porcupine Caribou herd. The caribou are an essential resource for the Gwich'in people, both as a main source of subsistence and as a spiritual and cultural treasure.

I saw the impacts of oil development at Prudhoe Bay. That kind of damage should never be allowed in the Arctic Refuge. It is time to realize that the legislative language in Public Law 115-97 opening the coastal plain to oil leasing and drilling was a big mistake. The first step in correcting that mistake is to withdraw this leasing proposal.

Thank you for considering our comments.