



222 Tom Miner Creek Road
Emigrant, MT 59027

BILLINGS MT 591

26 FEB 2019 PM 1 L FOREVER
USA



Barn Swallow

BLM, Alaska State Office
Attn: Coastal Plain EIS
222 West 7th Ave. #13
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

9951387504





COMMENTS ON COASTAL PLAIN LEASING DRAFT EIS

2/25/19

I am a wilderness guide/outfitter and our company, Big Wild Adventures, has been guiding backpack trips throughout western North America since 1979. We've been guiding in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge since 2001. I have personally spent many weeks guiding clients through various areas of the refuge, mostly in the Brooks Range; in other words, despite being from Montana, I know the area well and it is no place for massive scale industrial development!

The Arctic Refuge is one of the most pristine areas remaining on Earth, and is also one of the last remaining large-scale complete ecosystems on the planet. It is almost entirely pristine and ecologically healthy, from boreal forest south of the Brooks Range, across the mountains and down the north slope to the coastal plain and the sea. There simply is nothing like this anywhere else on Earth.

The DEIS fails to recognize and analyze the impacts to this unique wilderness resource landscape. The DEIS fails to adequately assess the impacts on tundra vegetation and upon wildlife, particularly the calving grounds for the migratory caribou herd plus habitat for nesting waterfowl, which all depend upon the coastal plain. Polar bears will also be heavily impacted, and they are already under great stress due to climate warming.

Even if a fair and complete analysis had been done, the only sane conclusion would be to keep the coastal plain pristine and wild, and to reject all oil and gas leasing and development. The value to the world of a completely wild and undeveloped Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, from forest to coast, far surpasses any temporary economic gain to be derived from squeezing oil out of this fragile land.

Wilderness values like those at stake here are simply unsurpassed. In addition, in light of recent studies and related projections on climate change, the only rational thing to do with the oil and gas deposits beneath the refuge is to leave them in the ground. Do not lease a single acre of the Arctic Refuge. Keep it wild. And instead of leasing, recommend all non-designated Wilderness refuge lands, including the coastal plain, for Wilderness designation under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Sincerely,

Howie Wolke
Big Wild Adventures, Inc.
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Emigrant MT 59027