
From: Hayes, Miriam (Nicole) <mnhayes@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 9:29 AM
To: coastalplainAR; Sean Cottle
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] COMMENTS ON COASTAL PLAIN DEIS - WEBSITE URLs DON'T WORK
Attachments: ANWR LETTER 20190312.doc

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Nicole Hayes

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Ellis-Wouters, Lesli <lellis@blm.gov>
Date: Wed, Mar 13, 2019 at 8:12 AM
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] COMMENTS ON COASTAL PLAIN DEIS - WEBSITE URLs DON'T WORK
To: Hayes, Miriam (Nicole) <mnhayes@blm.gov>

I guess ePlanning was down yesterday.

Lesli J. Ellis-Wouters

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From: <ahm@rof.net>
Date: Tue, Mar 12, 2019 at 4:28 PM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] COMMENTS ON COASTAL PLAIN DEIS - WEBSITE URLs DON'T WORK
To: <lellis@blm.gov>

Dear Lesli,

I hope this finds you well. I have been unable to submit comments via the BLM's ePlanning site for the Coastal Plain DEIS that are due tomorrow, 3/13. I called the Anchorage office and Roberta, the PIO, tried to help but even she could not access that part of the site. So, at this point, it looks like there is no way to submit comments on the DEIS via email.

Roberta gave me your email address and suggested that you could submit my comments to the right person. I have the option of submitting through citizen groups but prefer to send my own comments. I hope you can facilitate that.

Thank you very much.

Amy Hadden Marsh MA
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12 MARCH 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to state my **opposition** to opening up the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and natural gas exploration. In a 2017 survey by Yale University, 70% of American voters oppose drilling in the ANWR. The survey also showed that this opposition is not a partisan issue: 84% of Democrats polled were opposed as were 52% of Republicans. Only 18% of Republicans strongly support the policy, says the survey.

There are several common sense reasons for not drilling in the ANWR. Here are some of them, each as important as the next:

Porcupine Caribou use this area for calving and spring range.

Polar Bear

The polar bear is officially listed as a "threatened" species. The bear population is in dramatic decline. According to National Geographic, "the southern Beaufort Sea population fell 40 percent in the first decade of [the 21st century]. The bears are less healthy, they're having fewer cubs, and more cubs are dying." The demise of the polar bear is tied directly to the effects of global warming. Sea ice is the key habitat for the polar bear providing dens, hunting grounds, and means of travel.

Global warming has more of an effect in the Arctic; water heats up faster than other areas of the world. The sea ice reflects solar radiation. But, warmer temperatures are causing the ice to melt, exposing darker-colored water. The darker water absorbs the solar energy, which increases the temperature of the water, thus speeding up the melting of the ice.

Critically, as sea ice thins in the warming Arctic, more bears will need to den on land in winter. ANWR's coastal plain has the best denning habitat in Alaska. But, what happens when seismic activity begins, crushing dens? Again, according to National Geographic, Steven Amstrup, chief scientist for Polar Bears International and a former chief polar bear researcher for the US Geological Survey, states that sea ice is getting thinner and less stable, forcing more and more bears to den on land. "It's really a double whammy for the bears," Amstrup says. **"Climate change is making it less suitable for them to den on ice, and land-based activities may make it less suitable for denning on land."**

Seismic surveys

Amstrup estimates that a 25 percent probability of one or more dens being crushed by a vehicle during the [seismic] survey, citing particular concern for cubs, less able to escape an oncoming truck or survive winter temperatures outside a crushed den. Do we

really want to be crushing dens of a threatened species in the name of world energy dominance? Some don't care but I do and I say "no".

The US Fish and Wildlife Service states that thumper trucks left 2,500 miles of trails in the tundra from work done 25 years ago that can still be seen today. The new seismic survey could leave another 1,500 miles of scarred earth. The tundra is too fragile for giant trucks, whether it is frozen or not.

Seismic activity poses a huge threat to polar bears, migrating birds, and other animals native to the ANWR. The coastal plain is the biological heart of the ANWR..

Conclusion

Management agencies don't seem to have enough information about the impacts of oil and gas on the coastal plain to protect the wildlife and resources. The rush to lease and drill is not in line with the precautionary principle that should be applied to such an important decision about oil and gas development in one of our most exceptional ecosystems.

It seems to me that we must do everything we can to help the Arctic people, wildlife, and landscape in the face of climate change. Increased oil and natural gas activity is the polar (no pun intended) opposite of that. The Arctic is ground zero for climate change; temperatures in the Arctic are rising at twice the rate of the rest of the planet. Villages are eroding into the sea, permafrost melt is making infrastructure insecure and food sources are disappearing.

Allowing drilling in the Arctic Refuge would worsen climate pollution, harming communities already bearing the brunt of the changing climate as they are forced to adapt. Even though some First Nation people are in favor of drilling in the ANWR, the Gwich'in people have used that area for subsistence hunting for thousands of years and consider the coastal plain "the Sacred Place Where Life Begins." To my mind, drilling in this special place is in blatant disregard of indigenous rights and the American public's views.

Please do not approve this DEIS. Now or ever.

Thank you.

Amy Hadden Marsh