
From: Hayes, Miriam (Nicole) <mnhayes@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 8:01 AM
To: coastalplainAR; Sean Cottle
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program - Public Comment

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Nicole Hayes

Project Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
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From: **Jason P Loghry** <jason.loghry@students.tamuk.edu>
Date: Mon, Feb 25, 2019 at 5:18 PM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program - Public Comment
To: mnhayes@blm.gov <mnhayes@blm.gov>

February 25, 2019
Ms. Nicole Hayes
Project Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7504

Dear Ms. Nicole Hayes:

Recently, your agency released its draft environmental impact statement (EIS) in preparation for an oil and gas lease sale in 2019 within the ecologically sensitive area known as the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I wholeheartedly oppose the proposed leasing program, and respectfully urge you not to move forward with this program. This process must first include an independent well-founded study of the impacts that oil and gas development will have on wildlife and habitat in the refuge, especially in an ecologically sensitive area such as the Coastal Plain.

As you and many other Americans know, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge supports an incredible array of wildlife. It's easily considered the United States' premier wilderness refuge. The Coastal Plain of the refuge is home to nearly 200 species of birds and includes nesting grounds for millions of birds that not only migrate to all 50 states, but to some six continents. Many of these bird species, including American Golden Plovers, Tundra Swans, Northern Pintail, and Sandhill Cranes, are contingent upon this habitat for nesting and survival. Studies on several breeding shorebird species have already warned that any human alteration of habitat is likely to contribute even more negative consequences for many of these already declining species. The Coastal Plain area also contains land

denning habitat vital for Polar Bears and summering habitat for the herd of more than 200,000 Porcupine Caribou. It's an area not only important for calving for this species, but also considered sacred by the indigenous Gwich'in people, who still rely upon the herd for subsistence and culture. Grizzly bears and wolves are also ecologically dependent on the Coastal Plain of the refuge.

With this kind of operation, the magnitude of fragmentation must be thoroughly investigated in order to better understand its effect on the ecosystem. We should consider how the building of roads, dumps, gravel pits, pads, pipelines, and other infrastructure, will affect the quality of habitat for species. We should also understand how an operation as such will increase levels of dust, thaw permafrost, accumulate roadside snow, and how the operation will even alter the hydrology of the area.

In 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower made the wise choice of setting this entire Arctic ecosystem aside in order to conserve wildlife and habitat and preserve America's long-lived wilderness and recreational values. The opening of the Coastal Plain for a drilling operation is inconsistent with our late President's wisdom. There is quite a lot to consider, and limitations that have been set on environmental and ecological review appear shortsighted and unfair to our wildlife and our refuge system. Safeguards to protect our land and wildlife should be set at the highest standards. This land is valuable to the American people, and valuable for our future generations. It holds a value beyond monetary worth. Robust scientific data about this ecosystem and the impacts of drilling in this area must be gathered, analyzed, and shared openly. After this robust data is collected, local communities and stakeholders should then be included in a meaningful discussion as to how this drilling operation will affect them and the refuge.

It is our responsibility as Americans to do the right thing. With proper science, we can certainly achieve more. Again, I respectfully urge you to halt this process and take necessary steps to evaluate the impact that a drilling operation will have on this land and its wildlife. As stated by the National Audubon Society, "the Arctic Refuge is an ecosystem that is becoming more – not less – vital for birds and wildlife as development and a changing climate chip away at their habitat." I urge you to reconsider this current process.

Thank you very much for your time. I'm looking forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Jason P. Loghry