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[EXTERNAL] PLEASE PROTECT ANWR

1 message

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To: "blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov" <blm_ak_coastalplain_eis@blm.gov>

The Arctic Refuge was set aside for protection in 1960. The Wilderness Act of 1964 designated the highest level of land protection on the area. Then in 1980 Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act which expanded the area that became the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

When a place is designated for protection, I think that means forever, not "unless we find natural gas and/or oil there or gold, or molybdenum, etc." It means we are setting aside pristine wilderness for the future. A place where our children and their children can benefit knowing that the refuge exists in the condition it always has. Bob Marshal stated, "In Alaska alone can the emotional values of the frontier be preserved."

ANWR is one of the few places on Earth where polar, brown (grizzly), and black bears can be found coexisting.

The USFWS says the Arctic Refuge is the only national conservation area where polar bears regularly den and the most consistently used polar bear land denning area in Alaska. The refuge is critical habitat for these animals, particularly as concerns mount over species loss due to the reduction of sea ice due to climate change.

More than 200 species of birds utilize the Arctic Refuge. They migrate from the Arctic Refuge to every state and territory in the United States, and some even venture to other continents. If something happens to their breeding grounds, it will impact the rest of the planet.

Hundreds of thousands of caribou roam the Arctic Refuge. The Porcupine Caribou Herd, the largest within the Arctic Refuge, returns to the refuge's Coastal Plain each spring to calve and raise their young.

The Arctic Refuge is not only a haven for wildlife – it's home to people, too. The Gwich'in are spiritually and physical linked to this landscape and its wildlife, and depend on a **permanently** protected Arctic Refuge for their very survival.

The Gwich'in rely on the Porcupine Caribou Herd for subsistence. Without the caribou the Gwich'in could not survive in this remote environment. The herd's calving grounds on the Coastal Plain, referred to by the Gwich'in as "the sacred place where life begins," could be completely and irreversibly damaged by drilling equipment and infrastructure should it be permitted in the Arctic Refuge.

Studies have determined that oil and gas development in this area would permanently and irreversibly disrupt the ecological integrity of the refuge. We can't let this happen.

It's not "the" Arctic Refuge, it's "OUR" Arctic Refuge. We must protect it. For everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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