



December 17, 2020

State Director,
Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office,
222 West 7th Avenue, Mailstop 13,
Anchorage, AK 99513-7504.

Submitted via email to: blm_akso_ak932_cpcomments@blm.gov

Dear Interior Secretary Bernhardt and BLM Officials,

Please accept the attached **49,608 comments** from members and online activists of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) opposing your plan to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling and your rush to allow oil companies to request specific parcels of land in the Refuge to be made available for drilling. Beyond its globally-significant status as America's largest and most pristine wildlife refuge, and its disproportionate vulnerability to climate change, the Arctic Refuge is central to the culture and survival of the Gwich'in people, who depend on the Porcupine caribou that give birth to their young in this irreplaceable wildland, and vital source of clean water, clean lands, subsistence practices, and natural open spaces for Indigenous people throughout the region.

Oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge will also worsen our addiction to oil and accelerate the global climate crisis that threatens our planet's future. This dangerous scheme fails to consider the impacts of drilling on the climate, air, and water quality, human health, and sacred cultural sites.

Given the potential impacts, the Bureau of Land Management's rush to lease the Refuge's coastal plain and decision to offer every acre of it at auction, far in advance and far in excess of any congressional direction, is unconscionable. Even if the agency were required to offer parts of the plain to the oil and gas industry—which it certainly is not—there would be no justification for including lease blocks in any polar bear critical habitat of caribou calving, post-calving, and insect relief areas.

NRDC members and online activists urge your agency to withdraw this reckless resource management plan amendment and instead put forth a new plan that will protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and maximize protections for our wilderness, wildlife, and climate. If you have any questions about this filing, please contact me at the email address or phone number below.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,
Josue

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

40 W 20TH STREET | NEW YORK, NY | 10011 | T 212.727.2700 | F 212.727.1773 | NRDC.ORG

JOSUE AGUILAR

*Communications Assistant,
Digital Advocacy & Fundraising*



NRDC & NRDC ACTION FUND

40 W 20TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011

T 646.889.1402

F 212.727.1773

JAGUILAR@NRDC.ORG

NRDC.ORG

NRDCACTIONFUND.ORG

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40 W 20TH STREET | NEW YORK, NY | 10011 | T 212.727.2700 | F 212.727.1773 | NRDC.ORG