
[EXTERNAL] RFI: Special Areas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska

From Anna Sofia <desertabeja@everyactioncustom.com>

Date Fri 9/6/2024 1:15 PM

To BLM_NPRA_SpecialAreas <BLM_NPRA_SpecialAreas@blm.gov>

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Dear Bureau of Land Management Special Areas in the National Petroleum Reserve,

I urge the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to designate all of Alaska's Western Arctic Reserve as a special area, which will help protect it from new oil and gas development. With climate change already harming the people and wildlife who live in this incredibly vulnerable place, there's no time to lose.

Fossil fuels are killing the planet, warming it beyond what many ecosystems can handle. Science shows that if we don't work to significantly and rapidly reduce emissions, warming will soon exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius, resulting in catastrophic global damages — like coastal erosion, destructive hurricanes and wildfires, and intense heatwaves, droughts, and floods — that will destroy biodiversity, weaken the economy, and threaten people's health, safety, and livelihoods.

Actually, much of that is already happening. The United States has a chance to combat the climate crisis by transitioning from an extractive economy to a regenerative, inclusive one — but to do it successfully, government agencies like the Bureau of Land Management must stop permitting new oil and gas projects and phase out existing projects in the Arctic and elsewhere as soon as possible.

More than 11.8 million acres in the Western Arctic Reserve are vulnerable to oil and gas development. Fossil fuel activities in the area could release hundreds of millions more metric tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The Willow project **alone** could result in more than 260 million metric tons of climate-killing greenhouse gas emissions — and the construction of roads, pipelines, and other infrastructure that will permanently scar the Arctic.

The Western Arctic Reserve is full of biodiversity. It contains some of the most ecologically important areas in the Arctic — like Teshekpuk Lake — and is home to awe-inspiring wildlife, including polar bears, migratory birds, and large herds of caribou. Oil and gas development in this fragile place would destroy essential habitat for these animals, tear up sensitive ecosystems, and increase the toxic air pollution and oil spills that threaten people and animals living on Alaska's North Slope.

Don't sacrifice the Arctic to the oil industry. I urge you to act now and direct the Bureau of Land Management to designate the entire Western Arctic Reserve as a special area. Anything less risks the

permanent destruction of its surface resources and existing special areas.

Sincerely,
Anna Sofia
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