



Coastal_Plain_Seismic_EA, BLM_AK <blm_ak_coastal_plain_seismic_ea@blm.gov>

[EXTERNAL] Comments re BLM scoping seismic on the Arctic Refuge

1 message

Beth Davidow <bethdavidow@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 13, 2018 at 3:32 PM

To: blm_ak_coastal_plain_seismic_ea@blm.gov

Dear BLM,

I am writing to express my deep concern, for many reasons I'll explain herein, for the reckless manner in which the BLM is rushing the proposal to conduct seismic testing in the Arctic Refuge.

1. Fast-tracking the EIS is nothing short of foolish, short-sighted, and downright unconscionable. In light of the recent 6.4 magnitude earthquake, and it's significant aftershocks that rattled the region from the Arctic all the way south to Fairbanks, I strongly urge the BLM to slow down and take the necessary time to definitively understand how seismic testing will affect the Refuge. Even the Earthquake Center in Fairbanks stated, that "...this region is poorly understood and the behavior of the fault or faults responsible for today's earthquake are not known." We know that a significant rise in earthquakes now occurs in states such as Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Ohio due to seismic & fracking activity. There is just not enough information about the Arctic region to surmise anything different could occur on the Refuge should such activity take place.
2. 3-D seismic testing will have long-term consequences according to research conducted by geophysicist Dr. Matt Nolan and ecologist Dr. Sue Natali. Deep, lasting impressions in the ground causing changes in water flow, as well as ground-warming in an area already warming due to climate disruption, will have consequences on the intricate interdependence of the species that survive, and thrive, on the Refuge. The energy force that the Vibroseis (seismic testing device) exerts on the ground is intense. Only rigorous research can determine if such seismic pounding will harm Refuge species.
3. The Refuge was created (ANILCA, 1980) to protect "nationally significant natural, scenic, historic, archaeological, geological, scientific, wilderness, cultural, recreational, and wildlife values." These are for the "benefit, use, education and inspiration" of present and future generations. The intent of its creation is a public trust. Seismic testing, without understand its potential consequences, and drilling, undermine that trust. A 2018 Yale University study shows that the majority of everyday Alaskans (63%) and US voters (65%) oppose drilling in the Refuge. From those numbers alone it is clear that Democracy must be honored to ensure no drilling takes place in the Refuge. (We travel the world for business and everyone with whom we speak about the Refuge finds it appalling that Refuge drilling is even considered! Citizens of the world see Alaska as the greatest symbol of wilderness and wild values and to them, the act of drilling in the Refuge is like defacing the great cathedrals of the world.)
4. The Refuge was also set up to "provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so." The Gwich'in People depend upon the Porcupine caribou herd for their very sustenance, spirit, & culture. I've just completed a 2-month road trip from Arizona to Montana and am even more appalled at how we treated the Native residents of this continent. Rushing the EIS and potentially opening the Arctic Refuge to drilling is simply another profoundly shameful way that "we" treat Native people. Needless to say, the entire Gwich'in Nation is opposed to drilling in this land held so dear and sacred to them.
5. It is profoundly dishonest for the BLM or anyone else to claim that Alaska Native Corporations speak for the values of Alaska Native Peoples. They do not. The corporations speak for one thing: profit. The Refuge is for life and health: cultural, spiritual, physical and mental. The Refuge is sacred. The Sacred is priceless.

In conclusion, I again urge the BLM to stand strong against the dictatorial onslaught that seems to be forcing them into rushing due process to avoid accountability as an EIS is pushed forward under false pretenses, downright lies, and farcical claims of caring for this world-renowned American treasure.

Although I used to live and work in Alaska, and still consider it my home, I now live in Arizona. Yet, I know how connected my part of the world is to the Refuge and I remain deeply concerned for its future. I firmly believe we must uphold the original purpose of the Refuge in every way, and to honor the People who depend upon it for their cultural & spiritual lives.

Sincerely,

Beth Davidow