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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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PUBLIC HEARING:  
NORTHEAST NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE - ALASKA  
DRAFT AMENDED INTEGRATED ACTIVITY PLAN/  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- - -

Potomac Overlook Room  
Doubletree Washington  
National Hotel  
300 Army Navy Drive  
Arlington, Virginia  
Thursday, July 1, 2004

The meeting was convened at 7:08 p.m., PETER  
DITTON, Hearing Officer, presiding.

0002

#### P R O C E E D I N G S

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Good evening. My name is Peter Ditton. I am tonight's Hearing Officer. This hearing is being held for the purpose of providing you the opportunity to make oral comments on the Bureau of Land Management's Draft Amendment to the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve Integrated Activity Plan-Environmental Impact Statement.

Unlike an open house, this is a formal hearing, and as such BLM will not be entertaining questions. However, several individuals will be available after the hearing is closed to answer questions, provided time allows.

The Draft Amendment is available on the Internet and a few hard copies are available in the public room in the Federal Building in Anchorage, Alaska. All comments provided to BLM and its contractor will be compiled, analyzed, and considered in preparing the final plan amendment and EIS.

In addition to speaking tonight, comments can be provided through the web site or by mailing them to the Bureau of Land Management. The web site address and the Bureau's mailing address are available along with information on the document and EIS process at the sign-in table. You can pick those up on your way out if you

0003

didn't pick them up on your way in.

The deadline for submitting comments, as Bob stated, is August 23rd. Also as he stated, this is one of several hearings that have been scheduled and have previously been held as well. There have been two previous meetings held, one in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks. Additional meetings are scheduled to be held in Barrow, Nuiqsut, Anaktuvic Pass, Atkasia, and Bethel. So that we accurately record your comments tonight, I will call the names of those who have indicated that they wish to speak and invite each person to come up to the microphone. At that time, please state your name clearly, state the organization you represent, if any, and then make your comment.

I will ask that you limit your oral comments to five minutes. When you get to four minutes, I'll hold up a sign that you have one minute to go. After your five minutes are up, I'll hold up a sign and ask you to summarize.

Before we begin to receive comments, I would like to address the purpose your comments serve regarding the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve Integrated Activity Plan-Environmental Impact Statement. Your comments will serve several purposes. They will tell us if we have correctly identified the resources of the area,

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the uses of these lands, and the potential effects of the different alternatives in the plan-draft EIS.

As we begin now to take comments, I request that the audience be considerate of the speaker and give him or her the courtesy of your attention.

I'll now call the first speaker: Keith McCoy.

I'll also apologize ahead of time if I don't get your name correct.

STATEMENT OF KEITH McCOY

MR. McCOY: Thank you. You got my name correct.

For the record, my name is Keith McCoy. I am Director of Environmental Quality at the National Association of Manufacturers, the NAM. The NAM represents 13,000 members, including 10,000 small and midsized companies, and 350 member associations serving manufacturers and employees in every industrial sector in all 50 states. We are headquartered in Washington, D.C.,

and the NAM has ten additional offices across the country. The NAM's comments reflect the collective thoughts of our member companies and associations. The NAM's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of manufacturing and improve the American living standard by shaping a legislative and regulatory environment conducive to U.S. economic growth.

Up front, please let me state that the NAM

0005

supports Alternative C as presented in the Bureau of Land Management's proposed amendment. Only Alternative C would allow access for development in 100 percent of the high oil and gas potential area in the NPR-A.

Adequate, affordable, and reliable energy supplies are essential to the growth of the U.S. economy and to our quality of life. Today America faces tight energy supplies caused by a fundamental imbalance of supply and demand, particularly for natural gas. Future energy needs far outstrip present levels of production. The NAM supports a comprehensive U.S. energy strategy that balances supply and demand without compromising environmental safeguards or imposing mandatory efficiency standards.

Since the 1970's, U.S. energy use has increased at twice the rate, 30 percent, as U.S. energy production, 14 percent. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that over the next 20 years U.S. oil consumption will rise by 33 percent, natural gas consumption will grow by more than 60 percent, and demand for electricity will rise by 45 percent.

Manufacturers use one-third of the nation's energy, including about one-third of the natural gas and almost 30 percent of its electricity. Since the mid-seventies, energy efficiency has increased by 30 percent

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and there is more that can be done. However, efficiency and conservation alone are not sufficient to support the energy needs of our economy. General population growth, increased natural gas use and electricity generation, and modest economic expansion have strained natural gas supplies, more than doubling wholesale prices during comparable periods over the previous ten years.

Federal restrictions on natural gas production opportunities and permanent obstacles to infrastructure

improvements have made it almost impossible for gas supplies to meet growing demand and jeopardize economic growth. America's dependence on foreign oil is growing. Imports represent 56 percent, up from 39 percent in 1988, and are expected to reach 66 percent by 2010. This is compared to 33 percent during the oil shocks of the 1970's.

Continued volatility of oil and gas prices underscores the danger of overdependence on foreign energy supplies. Oil and gas development of petroleum reserves would benefit the economy by creating increased revenues and employment, while enhancing energy and economic development.

The NPR-A is specifically designated by Congress for the production of energy resources. The Federal Government must pursue policies that would provide

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adequate, affordable, and reliable energy supplies and infrastructure to ensure this country's long-term economic growth.

The NPR-A also has the potential to increase domestic natural gas reserves that can help sustain economic growth once an Alaska gas pipeline is completed. Natural gas supply continues to be a major concern to industry. There is a fundamental imbalance between growing demand and flat supplies of natural gas. Manufacturing was hit hard by the recession and lost jobs for 43 consecutive months until March of this year, totaling 2.8 million net jobs lost. A robust economic recovery will require adequate energy supplies at affordable prices.

Natural gas production has not been keeping up with demand, despite the higher prices since 2000. Demand from a growing population and a recovering economy have been straining available supplies. Compounding demand pressures is the fact that natural gas is increasingly used to generate electricity, a 66 percent increase in the last decade. In early 2003, spot prices for natural gas reached \$19, almost six times the average price from 1991 to 1998. Currently natural gas prices persist above \$6, over twice the average of the 1990's.

Ironically, natural gas prices in Europe,

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Brazil, and China are less than in the United States,

favoring our international competitors and disadvantaging U.S. workers.

According to BLM geologists, the areas currently off-limits for exploration in the National Petroleum Reserve may contain more than two billion gallons of technically recoverable petroleum, oil, and gas to power the nation, grow the economy, and create jobs.

In summary, the oil and gas industry understands that if you want to produce oil and gas you have to drill where there is the oil and gas. Industry has lost many jobs, the economy is struggling to revive itself. There is too much at stake for regulators to put critical oil and gas reserves off-limits. The NAM urges you to adopt Alternative C.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views today.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Ken Leonard.

STATEMENT OF KEN LEONARD

MR. LEONARD: Good evening. Thank you very much. My name is Ken Leonard. I'm Senior Manager for Exploration and Production Issues at the American Petroleum Institute. API is a national trade association for the U.S. oil and natural gas industry, with more than

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400 members, working to meet America's energy needs. Affordable, versatile oil and natural gas provide about 62 percent of energy that Americans consume. They heat and cool our homes, transport us across town and around the world. They provide the raw materials, the petrochemicals, for making everything from computers to diagnostic scanners to shoes. Under any realistic scenario, we will use more of these in the future. Although government and the oil and natural gas industry continue to encourage conservation and to develop and promote alternative forms of energy, including wind, solar, unconventional fuel, fossil fuels, experimental work on hydrogen and fuel cells, oil and natural gas will be indispensable to running our economy and improving our lifestyles for decades to come.

According to the Department of Energy, we'll consume 44 percent more oil, 38 percent more natural gas in 2025 than we did in 2002. That's about 3.2 billion barrels of oil, on top of the 7.3 billion barrels we

consume this year. Over the same period, world demand for oil and gas will increase even more and at a faster rate. Much hangs in the balance in how we proceed from here. Energy is vital to our economic development. It is vital to improving our lives. With demand for oil and gas increasing, new supplies must be brought on line in a

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timely manner. This means looking around the world for new opportunities, which U.S. exploration and production companies are doing. But it also means looking for oil and gas at home, which increases our domestic energy supplies and creates jobs for Americans.

The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska is one of the most promising places to look.

API appreciates BLM's careful work preparing this Draft Amendment to the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve EIS. We support continued leasing and development. Congress has designated oil and gas development as the priority use of the petroleum reserve, and additional leasing is good energy policy because it would increase domestic supplies of oil and natural gas and strengthen our energy security while protecting the environment with stringent mitigation measures.

Alternative C is the best and most flexible of the three alternatives. It would provide greater access to energy resources and do more to help strengthen the nation's energy security. It avoids putting off-limits areas that hold a great deal of promise for oil and gas development. Yet it would require rigorous operating procedures and performance-based stipulations to preserve important natural and cultural values which we support. Opening the region to development would make

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available, according to BLM's estimates, more than 2.1 billion barrels of oil and some 3.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. These are significant resources. If exploration confirms their presence, it could translate to daily peak production between 200 and 300,000 barrels of oil per day, or about equal to what we import daily from our ninth largest supplier country, Angola.

BLM rightly gives attention to the potential environmental impacts of oil and gas development in the reserve. We agree that oil and natural gas development should proceed only when environmental and cultural values

can be protected and we're convinced that that will happen as NPR-A is developed.

Oil and natural companies have tremendous experience on the North Slope. They know the region and they have specialized technology designed to protect Alaska's sensitive areas. BLM's performance-based stipulations and operating procedures offer further protection, ensuring that operations will not proceed until environmental impacts are eliminated or minimized. Moreover, they can be adjusted as development proceeds should new knowledge argue for additional operational changes.

We strongly support Alternative C and look forward to the responsible development of oil and natural

0012

gas from NPR-A that is needed for a stronger and more secure energy future.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Jon Owen.

STATEMENT OF JOHN OWEN

MR. OWEN: My name is Jon Owen. I'm a legislative representative with the Campaign for America's Wilderness, a national conservation organization that works with local individuals and groups to permanently protect significant public wildlands.

I appreciate the opportunity to present comments today on the Draft Integrated Activity Plan-Environmental Impact Statement Amendment for the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, which I will refer to as "the reserve." Given that the reserve is the nation's largest expanse of unprotected wildlands in public ownership, my organization is very concerned with its protection. Although the Campaign has been involved with the reserve since the organization was formed and submitted comments on last year's draft environmental impact statement for the 9 million acre Northwest Planning Area, as a new representative of the Campaign I was personally taken aback that today's hearing is the only public hearing on this issue outside of Alaska and that it is being held the

0013

Thursday evening before the long Fourth of July weekend. A number of Alaska wilderness and wildlife supporters reported back to us that they were interested

in testifying today, but were unable to attend due to the holiday.

The Campaign for America's Wilderness position on the Draft Activity Plan is that the only responsible course of action that is outlined in the plan is Alternative A, the no-action alternative, which retains current protections for the critical fish and wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. As stewards of these wildlands in trust for the American people, I strongly urge the BLM to adopt Alternative A.

In the future, the BLM should consider a more balanced approach to development and environmental protection in America's western Arctic region that enhances the resource protection in Alternative A by permanently protecting the Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River special areas and strengthening monitoring and lease stipulation requirements.

Less than 5 percent of America's land mass is now permanently protected from the ravages of drilling, mining, logging, rampant off-road vehicle use, and uncontrolled sprawl, despite broad public support for increased wilderness. Nowhere is this crisis more evident

0014

than in Alaska, where the current administration is seeking to open the entire Arctic region to oil drilling and exploration, from not offering protection for a single area in the Northwest area of the reserve to its efforts to put millions of acres of the Beaufort Sea on the market for development, to the administration's continued attempts to authorize drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

These actions independent of one another are irresponsible and short-sighted. Taken together, they are egregious and unacceptable.

A recent National Academy of Sciences report entitled "Cumulative Environmental Effects of Oil and Gas Activities on Alaska's North Slope" -- a report requested by Congress, I might add -- shows the irreversible damage that wide-scale oil and gas drilling causes to fragile and vulnerable Arctic ecosystems. In the last 25 years, the wilderness values of more than 1,000 square miles of the North Slope have been significantly compromised, as pipelines, hundreds of miles of roads, drill pads, processing facilities, gravel mines, and waste and sewage

treatment plants have formed a scarring web of industrial activity across this once-pristine area.

The report also shows that this devastation reaches far beyond the boundaries of the drilling

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complexes.

The Campaign for America's Wilderness is well aware of the western Arctic's history as a petroleum reserve and it is no secret that parts of the western Arctic are available for leasing and development. What's less known, however, is that Congress also recognized the world-class wildlife and wilderness values of the NPR-A when it passed legislation in 1976 to authorize studies of the area's values and to designate special areas to protect significant subsistence, recreation, fish, wildlife, historic, and scenic values.

Now is the time to safeguard these protections, in particular for the Teshekpuk Lake special area.

The Campaign is also very concerned about the weakening of environmental stipulations in the Northeast area. Where development proceeds, it must adhere to strict environmental standards, including those related to operations, cleanup, and restoration. Consequently, we feel BLM's only responsible choice to protect the ecological, wildlife, wilderness, and subsistence resources of this area is to adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative.

On a final note, I want to say a word about the process for developing the final activity plan for the Northwest Planning Area on the reserve, which was released

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in February. During the public comment period on the draft environmental impact statement for oil and gas activity in the Northwest region, more than 100 scientists, along with 90,000 other Americans, spoke out in favor of conserving the wildlife, wilderness, and subsistence resources of this area, as were outlined in Audubon's proposed wildlife habitat alternative for this area.

Yet the result of all this public comment was a plan that did not permanently protect a single acre of the nearly 9 million acre planning area. The administration's disregard for the protection of some of our nation's most outstanding wildlife habitat and wildlife lands -- excuse

me -- and wildlands, as well as for the will of the public, is the equivalent of essentially snubbing their nose at the American people who participated in the process.

I bring this up because I sincerely hope that this will not be a model for future BLM planning processes on Alaska's North Slope. I urge the BLM to heed sound science and the public's call for balance in the western Arctic by adopting Alternative A.

Again, on behalf of the Campaign for America's Wilderness, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft activity plan amendment for the Northeast area of

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the reserve. Thank you.

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(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Kristen Cummings.

STATEMENT OF KRISTEN CUMMINGS

MS. CUMMINGS: Hi. My name is Kristen Cummings and I'm here to speak on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation, the nation's largest member-supported conservation, education, and advocacy group. The National Wildlife Federation is made up in part of an affiliate network of 47 statewide organizations that are responsible for setting individual U.S. conservation policy priorities through an annual resolution process.

At this year's annual meeting in March, these 47 autonomous affiliate groups came together to pass a resolution calling for a balanced approach to the management of the natural resources of America's Arctic. Specifically, the resolution affirmed the Federation's belief that the reserve should be managed to protect the maximum protection of areas with significant wildlife and subsistence values, as was mandated when the reserve was transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1976.

Specifically in the Northeast planning area, NWF has called for the permanent protection of existing special areas, including the Teshekpuk Lake special area,

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protection for which has been reduced by 75 percent under the preferred alternative in this DEIS. Teshekpuk Lake is an ecological wonderland of both national and international biological and cultural significance. This area has been protected since 1976, recognized by

scientists in past administrations as one of the most important wetland complexes in the circumpolar Arctic, providing nesting and molting habitat for untold number of waterfowl, shore birds, and loons, as well as calving grounds for the 45,000-animal Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd. Since the release of the 1998 Northeast plan, there has been an abundance of new information gathered concerning the negative cumulative effects of oil and gas development on Alaska's North Slope, including the administration's own National Academy of Science March 2003 report. In light of this information, any decision to weaken environmental protections and eliminate protected areas in the Northeast planning area would seem to fly in the face of the management priorities that were put in place by Congress to ensure a balance between energy development and conservation of important wildlife.

Furthermore, as documented by the National Academy of Sciences report, the effects of industrial-scale oil development in the Arctic will only be compounded in the future due to climate change, a factor

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that was not adequately considered by the BLM in the new EIS. In the past century, Alaska has seen the largest warming of any state in the United States and the circumpolar Arctic region has already seen significant ecological changes and destructive effects of these rapid climate fluctuations.

The BLM itself has already found that their ability to use certain low-impact technologies, such as ice roads, has been cut almost in half in the past decade due to rapid changes in temperature.

The National Wildlife Federation has over four million members and supporters, including nearly 800,000 hunters and anglers, who believe strongly that this administration's energy policies, including this preferred alternative, are weighed heavily in favor of resource extraction and development at all cost, regardless of the wildlife resources.

NWF strongly believes that the Northeast planning area should be managed to represent a balance of competing extraction and conservation values. At a minimum, we urge that the BLM retain the current protections in place for the Teshekpuk Lake special area from the already existing 1998 Northeast plan.

Furthermore, we recommend that any final management decision regarding the Northeast planning area be made

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only after careful consideration of the comments heard here today and in the upcoming months, as well as the ample evidence of the cumulative effects of oil and gas development on fish and wildlife habitats, subsistence, and the wilderness values in this area.

Ultimately, we request that permanent protections be put in place for the areas of most significant habitat, including Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River special areas, to ensure that the area's critical wildlife will be available for generations to come.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Brian Moore.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN MOORE

MR. MOORE: Hello. Good evening. My name is Brian Moore and tonight I'm here representing the United States Public Interest Research Group, or USPIRG. USPIRG is a national advocacy office for the state public interest research groups. State PIRG's are nonprofit, nonpartisan, public interest advocacy organizations. USPIRG strongly feels that the Bush administration's leasing plan for the Northeast area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is scientifically unsound and grossly unbalanced. As you know, the western

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Arctic's extensive network of wetlands supports world-class populations of golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and other birds of prey, along with millions of migratory water fowl and shore birds. Grizzly bears, wolves, caribou, and moose roam the foothills. Blue whales and spotted seals swim freely in the coastal lagoons.

The western Arctic is an area of untrammeled wilderness and of stunning wilderness value. The weight of scientific evidence points towards significant impacts on the wilderness values if this sensitive area is opened, especially for industrial-scale oil and gas drilling and development. The leasing plan announced by the BLM on June 9th ignores the findings of a recent National Academy of Sciences report, "The Cumulative Effects of Oil and Gas Activities on Alaska's North Slope." This report found

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that oil and gas development on the North Slope has had widespread damaging impacts on the air, water, landscapes, and wildlife of the region and on the health of its people.

This kind of industrial activity could severely damage some of the wilderness values found in the Northeast area of the National Petroleum Reserve. The leasing plan would reduce protections for a unique and critical wetland habitat, Teshekpuk Lake. The lake is one of the single most important tundra wetland complexes in

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the entire circumpolar north, a fact recognized by Secretary Babbitt when he released the original Northeast plan in 1998.

Teshekpuk Lake is heavily used for subsistence purposes, especially its caribou. Brant and other water fowl that use the area are harvested for subsistence and sport in Alaska and throughout the Lower 48.

In addition to harming Teshekpuk Lake, the proposed leasing plan would allow permanent gravel roads for exploration and development and allow gravel extraction, pipelines, and road crossings in sensitive buffer zones in the Northeast area.

It's almost hard to believe that this administration would announce its plans to open almost 100 percent of the region's vast 9 million acre Northwest area for oil and gas drilling and development, even when oil industry companies such as BP and Conoco-Phillips have proposed a reasoned approach to oil and gas drilling, even more so than the Bush administration.

Even if we were able to drill every last acre in Alaska and the Lower 48, we still couldn't drill our way to energy independence. We know that America's proven oil reserves amount to just about 3 percent of the world's oil. We simply do not have the domestic supply to meet our demand. The real solution to our energy needs lies in

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making cars more fuel efficient and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The bottom line is that we need a balanced approach, not a wholesale capitulation to the impulse to drill for oil and gas everywhere and anywhere.

Instead of proceeding with this unscientific and unsound approach, USPIRG urges the BLM to adopt

Alternative A, the no-action alternative, which retains current protections for habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. A more balanced science-based approach to energy development and environmental protection would further enhance the resource protection in Alternative A by permanently protecting Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River special areas and by strengthening the monitoring and lease stipulation requirements.

Finally, USPIRG wishes that the BLM would listen to the American people on this issue. It's outrageous that the only public hearing on the Northeast plan is being held on a week night two days before the Fourth of July holiday. One has to seriously question the Bush administration's regard for public opinion, especially when you consider that the BLM ignored the concerns of more than 90,000 people who submitted comments in favor of a wildlife habitat alternative, which in combination with appropriate wilderness and wild and scenic river

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designations would have protected the region's most biologically rich and recognized wildlife and subsistence values. This alternative would have allowed drilling in the less sensitive areas.

Nonetheless, I thank you for your time and the opportunity to address this important issue.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Paul Cicio.

STATEMENT OF PAUL CICIO

MR. CICIO: Thank you. My name is Paul Cicio and I am here in behalf of the Industrial Energy Consumers of America. Our members are exclusively consumers and manufacturers. They include a diverse group of companies from industries such as paper, steel, plastics, food processing, cement, pharmaceuticals, home insulation, fertilizer, glass, to mention a few.

We support Alternative C. Alternative C will result in increased supplies of needed energy that will reduce dependence on foreign supplies, encourage lower prices that consumers would welcome, and preserve the wildlife and the environment.

We are confident in the ability of our federal and state officials to actively monitor the development and production activities to ensure all laws are carefully enforced. NPR-A is specifically designated by Congress

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for the production of energy resources. By design, the BLM will institute performance-based operating procedures that will ensure integrity of the E and P process.

The gap between supply and demand for crude oil and natural gas continues to grow at an alarming rate. While we strongly support improving energy efficiency across all sectors of the economy, it is impossible to conserve ourselves to affordable prices. We are particularly concerned about the affordability of crude oil and natural gas, which impacts our manufacturing competitiveness. Competitiveness means jobs and it means economic growth.

In fact, in our view we are already in a natural gas crisis. When prices of natural gas rose significantly in June of 2000, it began to impact manufacturing jobs immediately and still is today. Manufacturing employment fell for 42 consecutive months. Since July 2000, the number of factory jobs are still down by approximately three million.

From June of 2002 to June of 2004, the wholesale price of natural gas has gone from \$3.37 per million Btu to \$6.04 per million Btu. That is a 78 percent increase.

In our view, the U.S. economy will unlikely fully recover with a sustainable growth pattern without globally competitive energy.

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For the natural gas that we will be producing as a result of Alternative C, we of course do assume that there will be an Alaskan natural gas pipeline to deliver that gas to the Lower 48. The natural gas crisis alone has cost consumers, all consumers, \$130 billion and we have the highest priced natural gas of any industrialized country in the world. This \$130 billion is paid for by homeowners, the farm community, and businesses, and is nothing short of a tax on every consumer.

Given that the U.S. has significant unproduced reserves, every penny of that \$130 billion could have been avoided.

We encourage the Bureau of Land Management, on behalf of all U.S. consumers of energy, who quite frankly own these reserves, to act quickly to expedite approval and speed of development of these needed crude oil and natural gas reserves. Every day that we do not take

action to increase supply increases the already huge supply gap that exists and is increasing at an alarming rate.

As consumers of energy, we are dependent upon crude oil and natural gas to operate manufacturing facilities, of course. But we also use crude oil derivatives and natural gas as feedstock. Feedstock are essential raw materials necessary to make the many

0027

products that we all rely upon daily, such as plastics for computers, telephones, plastic bottles, food packaging, appliances, cushioning for seating, automobile, plastics for bumpers, chemicals for fertilizer to grow crops, carpet, paint coatings, laundry detergents, pharmaceutical products, and so forth.

While crude oil and motor gasoline has received most of the recent press, we cannot ignore our emphasis of gas. In 2002, the U.S. received 32 percent of our natural gas from crude oil production. Thus, drilling for crude oil does indeed increase our natural gas supplies.

The Energy Information Administration says that the U.S. import dependence is forecasted to increase from 21 percent in 2002, to increase to 33 percent by 2015. In less than 13 years, our dependence on imported natural gas would increase by 57 percent.

In short, in our view Alaska can play an important role in filling this significant supply gap.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Randy Moorman.

STATEMENT OF RANDY MOORMAN

MR. MOORMAN: Good evening. My name is Randy Moorman and I am legislative research associate for Earth Justice, a nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to protecting the magnificent places, natural resources, and

0028

wildlife of this Earth, and to defending the rights of all people to a healthy environment.

I want to raise serious concern about new oil leasing in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, also known as the western Arctic, as proposed in the draft amended IAP-EIS for the Northeast planning area. But before I do that, I want to express my dissatisfaction with the process for this public hearing. The decision the BLM is about to undertake regarding the NPR-A and the

western Arctic affects all Americans. This is their Arctic. Yet the BLM appears to want to limit citizen involvement in this decision to a minimum.

It's ridiculous that this is the only public hearing in the Lower 48 States and it is occurring tonight, right before the July 4th weekend. As a result, many people would like to be here to participate in this process but are excluded because they cannot travel the great distance while beginning their July 4th activities and travel plans.

The plan proposes to open 96 percent of the Northeast planning area to oil and gas development and reduce protections for critical wildlife habitat of Teshekpuk Lake by 75 percent. This is a complete reversal of Bureau of Land Management's plan under the 1998 Northeast IAP-EIS, where 87 percent of the planning area

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is open to leasing and 600,000 acres are off-limits around Teshekpuk Lake to protect important habitat for caribou and water fowl, as well as subsistence use.

The majority of scientific evidence indicates that significant impacts could occur on fish and wildlife if more of this area is opened to oil development.

Teshekpuk Lake is a vital tundra wetland complex in the circumpolar Arctic, home to thousands of water fowl and caribou. Tens of thousands of birds, including brant, greater white-fronted goose, Canada and snow goose, gather in the Teshekpuk wetlands system to molt their flight feathers. While they are molting, they are flightless and therefore extremely vulnerable to human disturbances.

Such oil development could displace them from an area of high-quality forage and few predators to an area of lower quality, causing goose populations to decline.

Additionally, thousands of birds come to this area to nest, including the threatened speckled eider under the Endangered Species Act, as well as the yellow-billed loon, the red-throated loon, the long-tailed duck, the king eider, and the buff-breasted sandpiper. These species will also suffer from industrial-scale oil and gas development and the increased number of predators, such as gulls, ravens, and foxes, that are attracted to oil fields.

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Also, the 45,000-animal Teshekpuk Lake caribou

herd will be threatened by such development. The herd comes to the Teshekpuk Lake area to calve and escape from insects. If they are forced to expend excessive energy and reduced feeding time for moving to less desirable habitats, calving numbers could decline, reducing the population. Many Alaska natives depend on the caribou herd as a subsistence resource and would be greatly impacted by such animal reductions.

A recent study commissioned by Congress and released in March 2003 by the National Academy of Sciences clearly states that oil development in the Arctic is proceeding haphazardly, without a prior assessment of cumulative impacts. The past 35 years of oil development on Alaska's North Slope have had serious environmental impacts on the wildlife, vegetation, and subsistence activities. The NAS report found that the ecological integrity of the North Slope is at serious risk from piecemeal and damaging development.

The NAS report also confirms the fact that the North Slope's most fragile, ecologically rich areas should be off-limits to oil development. The NAS further points out that oil development has already caused serious impact to the fragile Arctic environment. Habitat for migratory birds has been degraded and displaced caribou from the

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central Arctic herd have suffered a reduction of reproductive output.

Despite the failure to identify areas needing permanent protection and the lack of scientific evidence that the proposed plan to open up more of the Northeast area to oil and gas development would be minimal, this draft amended IAP-EIS is a rush to approve additional leasing in the western Arctic. The BLM should go back and consider another alternative that protects all the Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River special areas and strengthens monitoring and lease stipulation requirements. At a very minimum, the BLM should adopt a Alternative A, the no-action alternative, which retains current protections for fish and wildlife habitat around Teshekpuk Lake.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: John Garder.

088  
Alternatives

STATEMENT OF JOHN GARDER

MR. GARDER: Hi. My name is John Garder, G-a-r-d-e-r. I'm here from Bennington, Vermont, and I'm speaking on my own behalf.

I'd like to start by saying again that I find it an outrage that this is the only public hearing in the

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Lower 48 States, again before the holiday weekend. It seems to me that the administration is trying to prevent public comments and that would not be the first time that that has happened.

Again, Teshekpuk Lake is a critical area for wildlife, as we all know, for the 45,000 caribou that use it and are critical to the native peoples of that area. I think it's an affront to those people that this plan would even be considered.

Not to mention the numerous bird species that use Teshekpuk Lake, and many of those birds of course migrate down here. I think the BLM has failed to consider just the economic value alone of those bird species. I have some old numbers here, 1991, Fish and Wildlife study, that found that there are 24 million birders in the U.S. who contribute at least \$14.4 billion to the economy. And a 1996 study by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Census Bureau that found over 3 million hunters of migrating birds and associated billions of dollars from their hunting activities. Now, those again are old numbers and I'm sure it's much higher now.

Already, 87 percent of the Northeast area of the NPR-A is open to oil and gas leasing. Again, in 1976 Congress recognized the unique wilderness values of some of the areas of the Northeast planning area, and those

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areas should be preserved as Congress intended.

This is a complete reversal of the BLM's 1998 plan. Secretary Babbitt at the time recognized the unique wilderness values of the Teshekpuk Lake region and that it should be protected.

There's no need for this oil. Already the oil and gas industry neglects to use all of the leases that they are offered. This past year they only used 70 percent of the leases that were available to them. The oil that would come from there would not be available for years and the amount would be negligible. Anyone who

argues otherwise is using some very unsound science. An incremental increase in fuel efficiency standards alone would eliminate our dependence on at least 60 percent of Persian Gulf oil.

I've already discussed that Teshekpuk Lake is a critical area for wildlife and the current preferred alternative would reduce protection by 75 percent. Considering what has happened over the last 35 years with oil development on the North Slope, it is safe to say that there would be significant impacts on the wildlife in that area.

I think that this, this policy, is as filthy as the mouth of the man who conceived this administration's energy policy and equally as offensive. I think that the

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BLM should at the least adopt Alternative A -- (Applause.)

-- at the minimum should adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative that retains the current protections for fish and wildlife in the Teshekpuk Lake region. But moreover, they should go much further than that, and provide permanent protection for Teshekpuk Lake, Colville River, and other sensitive areas in the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Marie-Laure Cuitt.

STATEMENT OF MARIE-LAURE CUITT

MS. CUITT: Hi. My name is actually "Marie-Laure Cuitt" and I'm from Connecticut.

First I'd like to say that the Thursday before a holiday weekend is a very inappropriate time for this public hearing, especially since this is the only public hearing for the whole Lower 48 States. My friends from Connecticut actually wanted to be here to speak against this new plan, but were unable to do so because of the poor timing.

Opening 96 percent of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska to oil and gas development not only goes against the 1998 plan by the Bureau of Land Management, it goes against science and common sense. Rather than

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drilling and destroying this important habitat for an energy source that will run out in a matter of months, Congress needs to fund scientific research for alternative

sources of clean and renewable energy. Independence from foreign oil will not be achieved by consuming American oil and devastating our Alaskan wildlife. It will be achieved when our government realizes the need for scientific innovation.

The BLM should develop a new alternative that protects important wildlife and subsistence areas like the Teshekpuk Lake and the Colville River special areas. At the very least, they should adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative that retains current protections for these areas.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Gregory Hebertson.

STATEMENT OF GREGORY HEBERTSON

MR. HEBERTSON: Good evening. My name is Gregory Hebertson. I'm the Exploration Manager of Alaska and Canada Frontier Exploration for Anadarko Petroleum. Anadarko is one of the largest independent exploration and production companies in the world, has been a major participant in the exploration, development, and

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production of oil and gas on the North Slope of Alaska for over ten years. Anadarko is a proven operator on the North Slope and an active drilling partner with Conoco-Phillips in the Alpine field, the largest onshore domestic oil discovery in over a decade.

With Conoco-Phillips and others, Anadarko is continuing to pursue additional exploration projects across the North Slope.

The National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is one of the few remaining areas in North America for the discover of large conventional oil and gas resources. Congress has designated oil and gas development as the priority use of this petroleum reserve. All areas with potential resources should be available for leasing, with adequate mitigation measures to address site-specific concerns. In order to meet our nation's energy needs, we need these resources available for leasing and meaningful exploration activity.

Anadarko commends the BLM's initiative to increase leasing in the Northeast planning area and to develop performance-based measures to protect important

surface resources. We support a common set of petroleum reserve stipulations and operating procedures based on those in the Northwest planning area. This would make compliance and oversight more efficient for both industry

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and the BLM.

Anadarko supports Alternative C. We believe this option allows the BLM to balance its land management responsibilities, helping to meet the energy needs of our nation while protecting the environment. Alternative C makes all areas of high oil and gas potential along the Barrow Arch available for leasing, while at the same time protecting cultural resources and sensitive environmental areas through mitigation measures.

Anadarko, however, recognizes that there are areas within the ten townships identified in Alternative B that will likely require special consideration, including sensitive biological resources such as molting bird habitat and caribou migration, in and around Teshekpuk Lake. However, categorical restrictions are not the answer. To make all ten townships off-limits would preclude the much-needed exploration and possible development of important resources.

We firmly believe these resources can be safely developed while minimizing impacts. Any proscriptive restrictions in the Northeast petroleum reserve must be founded upon a balance between resource development and cultural and environmental concerns.

Anadarko stresses that this NEPA process will not be the final opportunity for identification of

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sensitive environments, cultural and subsistence resources, as well as methods for avoiding or minimizing impacts in the Northeast planning area. Alternative C requires each individual project, whether exploration or development, to be subjected to extensive federal, state and local permitting processes where site-specific issues will be addressed. Alternative C also limits surface activities and requires consultation with local residents and coordinated scientific studies to protect wildlife habitat, subsistence areas, and other resources.

Anadarko values the relationship that we have forged with the people of the North Slope and we look forward to working together to address any concerns that

may arise.

Anadarko acknowledges the potential need for setbacks to streams and rivers. However, we request that the BLM review and address some of the extensive stream setbacks in the area. In our opinion, the current 3-mile setback is unnecessary and doubles the 1.5 miles originally recommended in 1998.

Finally, we recognize that our ability to maintain a sustainable business in Alaska is directly linked to our ability to operate in an efficient and environmentally sensitive manner. Anadarko has demonstrated that it can and will operate using

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technologies that are protective of North Slope environmental resources and subsistence activities subsistence activities. Anadarko is confident that we can continue to mitigate impacts through technology and proper stewardship. We are committed to continuing a collaborative effort between industry, native organizations, and government agencies to find the best solutions.

Alaska's oil and gas resources are critical to helping meet our nation's energy needs. Anadarko represents that Alternative C be adopted. We believe it provides adequate environmental protections, requires input from affected users, and is the most conducive to maximize ultimate recovery of oil and gas resources in the area.

Thank you very much for your time and allowing us the opportunity to express our comments.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Dana Rudd.

STATEMENT OF DANA RUDD

MS. RUDD: Good evening. My name is Dana Rudd and I'm the Manager of Federal Affairs for Conoco-Phillips. Conoco-Phillips is the largest producer of oil and gas and the most active explorer in Alaska. Our company has a proven track record of high-quality environmental performance on Alaska's North Slope and in

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the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. Conoco-Phillips is a leader in innovative solutions that protect the environment, such as the minimum footprint in the Alpine production facilities. Conoco-Phillips has participated in 15 exploration wells in the petroleum reserve, all

without environmental incident.

In 2001 Conoco-Phillips and our partner Anadarko Petroleum announced several discoveries in the petroleum reserve. Since that time, an EIS process has begun for new satellite field developments in both the National Petroleum Reserve and on state and native corporation lands near the Alpine oil field. These new developments confirm the strategic potential for oil and gas in the petroleum reserve.

As the draft plan points out, much has been learned since the record of decision for the Northeast area was first issued in 1998. Most importantly, Conoco-Phillips endorses continued leasing opportunities in the Northeast portion of the National Petroleum Reserve and the opening of the Teshekpuk Lake by the BLM. This will allow access to some of the most prospective areas, which are located near the crest of the Barrow Arch.

Conoco-Phillips believes that the most sensitive areas north of the Teshekpuk Lake, such as the lakes with the highest use by molting geese as identified in the

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draft plan, should remain off-limits. We also acknowledge that there should be a buffer zone around these lakes as a further measure for protection of these species.

However, we are concerned in general that the BLM has recommended the blanket exclusion from leasing of the 350 square miles of additional prospective acreage north of Teshekpuk Lake. We are also concerned that BLM has not addressed some of the extensive stream setbacks in the area. In our opinion, the current 3-mile setback is unnecessary and is double the 1.5 miles originally recommended in 1998.

Conoco-Phillips supports the BLM-proposed performance-based stipulations and required operating procedures for the Northeast NPR-A. These revised stipulations would provide a framework to make compliance efforts more efficient, wherein we can continue to operate in a safe and environmentally sound manner while respecting the important subsistence uses of the area.

Conoco-Phillips remains committed to environmental excellence and responsible development. Exploration activities in the proposed Northeast environmentally sensitive areas would take place with minimum impact, using ice roads and ice pads to access

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prospects during the Arctic winter. With continued exploration success, future developments would move

forward using modern technology and mitigation measures. These measures include everything from consultation with local residents on subsistence issues to our constant vigilance to reduce the size of our footprints. We believe that further environmental concerns and important sensitive habitat areas can be adequately addressed during the permitting process during the NEPA review.

Finally, future oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve will have economic benefits for Alaska, the native people and the nation. For more than 30 years, oil and gas development has been the economic engine that provides jobs and tax revenues for the state of Alaska. In 2003 the state of Alaska received more than \$1 billion from the oil industry in taxes and royalties. The three previously lease sales in the National Petroleum Reserve have generated more than \$222 million in bonus payments split between the state and federal governments. Clearly, continued investment in the North Slope benefits everyone who lives in Alaska through moneys for state and local governments that result in better services and better schools.

In conclusion, continued lease sales in the National Petroleum Reserve will enhance the nation's energy and economic security. Now is the time for leasing

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because our nation needs to secure its energy future. In addition to my comments today, Conoco-Phillips plans to submit written comments for the draft plan review process.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Ed Mulrennin.

STATEMENT OF ED MULRENNIN

MR. MULRENNIN: It's "Mul-REN-nin."

Hi. I'm Ed Mulrennin. I'm an attorney in D.C., but I'm here representing myself. I want to apologize in advance for not having any prepared notes, but if anyone's interested in these comments that I'll say tonight I'll get them typed up and send them to you by way of the Internet.

As I said, I'm here representing myself. I'm not representing any environmental group. I'm not representing any industry group. I'm not representing the state of Alaska. But I am representing somebody who is an American, who has backpacked extensively in the area around the Brooks Range, who has heard cries of the loons in the evenings over the lakes, who has felt my pulse rapidly increase as I see a grizzly come into my area, who has seen the geese forming to take their thousand-mile journeys wherever they go, and who has had to gather up a

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couple of German shepherd puppies so they wouldn't go after a wolf who wandered into my campsite one night. But I'm also a person who has driven from that white-domed building that many of you can see across the river there, the 5,888 miles from here to the end of the road literally in the continental United States, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. In fact, I'm probably the only one in this room who has done that, if not the only one in the country, and I've done it twice.

So I know the kind of area that we're talking about. And in fact, let me just mention in that regard a couple of preliminary comments. One is in that great distance of 5,888 miles I saw America, I saw Canada, and I saw things that were just extraordinarily beautiful. In fact, my test for determining whether or not a scene was really a top scene was when I would say, and stop the car, oh my God, because I couldn't drive.

But when I and a National Geographic photographer who was with me came to Prudhoe Bay, our comment was: Let's get the hell out of here. I mean, it was so just terribly ugly. It was the worst eyesore.

Now, I can hear all the concerns that are being expressed by individuals regarding the protections that will be afforded. But you can make promises, but the people who are on the firing line, the people who are

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drilling the oil, the people who are there, who have to do the dirty work to get that oil and gas from the ground, they can't make the promises and they don't feel obligated to it.

I have seen the eyesore that can be created. I have seen the damage that can be created. In fact, if you want a test, use this as a test. Of the 3,000 photographs

that the National Geographic photographer took of me, several of which appeared in the National Geographic, not a single one was taken in Prudhoe Bay. There's the test. Another preliminary comment. Unfortunately, the name is not at issue here, but I have to say this, that the name "National Petroleum Reserve" does nothing to me, because when I was at my campsite overlooking that National Petroleum Reserve in the distance and when I returned one year later to that same site I remember looking out at that beautiful, beautiful, beautiful panorama and feeling closer to God than I have ever felt in my entire life, than I have ever felt in any entire church. In fact, I felt more American than I feel by looking out at the sight out there. So to me it's not the National Petroleum Reserve; it's God's country. I am impressed, I will say, and I do appreciate the opportunity for this, for this hearing. And I am

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impressed, though, that the BLM is seeking comments to the extent that it is a harried schedule. I trust that they will take into consideration the comments that are made by the Americans.

I also am impressed of the sensitivity that I hear the BLM talking about in terms of the environmental protections. I have to say this: I am quite impressed with that, and I do hope that they carry out their promises to be sensitive to that. But as I indicated before, I am aware that the BLM is not going to be the ones who are actually on the ground, who are actually doing the work that will be doing the damage that is sure to take place to the environment.

I have heard the numbers by many people tonight and I do not disagree with a single number regarding the situation that we are in in America. But that's why I am proposing Alternative A, since that is the least damaging proposal, although, like several of the comments, I would prefer something that goes much further and provides much greater protection.

But because this is a litmus test -- this is a litmus test for the BLM and for others to do what they can do in order to show restraint, to do what they can do to let others find the options that we have to find as a country, that we have to find as citizens of the world.

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The numbers that I've heard tonight would just increase the challenge for me if I were in your position. Finally, I would ask you to do what is right, to do what is right for America, to do what is right for the environment, to do what is right for future generations. But I do know this, that if I were in your position I would want to select the option that, if it turned out that we made a mistake, that we had the fewest regrets, and I know that is option A.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Julie Marie Burns.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Julie Marie Burns.

Julie?

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: We will move on.

Timothy Stephany.

STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY STEPHANY

MR. STEPHANY: Thank you. My name is Timothy Stephany again and I'll be speaking for myself.

I just have a few comments. First of all, I'd like to say that I do not agree with the proposed changes made on June 9th by the Bureau of Land Management to the 1998 plan. Moreover, I'm concerned with the strength of

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the move to oil development in the regions pertaining in that plan, and also the loud voice that they have. I would remind you that these are public lands we're talking about and as such they belong to the public, and so it's the public comments, the comments of individual citizens like myself, that really matter in this hearing.

Certainly among the choices, Alternative A might be very well the best, but if you are in the process of reconsidering the 1998 plan I would certainly consider that you revise it to reduce the number of lands that are open to leasing rather than increasing them.

Now, my comments, I have three of them. The first one is a more general statement that I think should be kept in mind by the Bureau in making the decision and that is, based upon a long study and understanding of human history that we've gained in recent years from

science and archaeology, which has gone on to show that any resources will be exploited by human beings until the point at which they are expended.

There has never been a situation in our history when this has not been the case. It's just recently we've run into the situation where less and less of the planet is available for exploitation.

As regarding previous comments that there's an

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energy shortage, I would argue that this is in fact not the case. The case is in fact that oil prices are kept at a certain level, a low price, in order to prevent other energy sources from being exploited, including such things as oil sand, where oil is extracted from sand and therefore it requires more processing and therefore is more expensive.

There is a great deal of energy like that, even beyond alternative sources. The only real advantage to opening up this area to oil exploration is to the profits that the companies that will obtain the leases hope to gain from it.

The second comment I wish to make is about general land management policy, that I believe that certain lands should be set aside specifically for the sake of the safety and wellbeing of the species that we have in this nation, and that these areas have to be set aside and protected; once we decide that they're essential for the survival of these species, that we set them aside and make sure that they're safe into the future. We can make that determination, and we don't want certainly to create a large number of small zoos, small areas of land where animals live in a precarious balance. We want to give them enough range that they can prosper on their own. And in addition to that, there's an increased

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danger in oil development of oil spills occurring, which in other sorts of development might not be an issue. As we know, this is an ecological disaster when it occurs. I'd like to go on to continue by saying that these sorts of issues, in addition to the concerns of the First Nations, are not typically high on the priority list in previous decisions, especially because they don't have an obvious dollar value. But scientists point to the major impact that increased exploitation would have. I

call your attention to the National Academy of Science report of 2003 for information on that impact.

Finally, I would like to say that we certainly cannot assure that responsible development will take place, and we need a means for public control of the situation when it occurs in order to keep it open, to have constant monitoring to assure that the agreements made are fulfilled, for, as you know, things that are made as reasonable proposals can often lead to unreasonable actions because people use those reasonable proposals as loopholes in which to attain something that was never intended when the original decision was made.

And that's the end of my comments. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Sam Frank.

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STATEMENT OF SAM FRANK

MR. FRANK: Thank you. My name is Sam Frank.

I'm here representing my own opinion today.

I grew up in an area that granted me ample access to wilderness. I appreciate the complexity and intricacy I observed in unspoiled natural areas and the solace it grants me when I find myself physically immersed in it. I've been to many beautiful natural areas throughout the U.S. and hope to visit many more.

An area that I have not experienced is Alaska.

The environments in Alaska vary from old growth rain forest to the highest mountains in the U.S. to coastal plains where great animal herds, such as caribou, still exist. I'm sure there are many more people throughout the world who would also like to experience such amazing and primeval environments.

To sacrifice the proposed Northeast area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska for short-term oil gain seems poorly thought out and highly influenced by monetary gain for only a few. So much that is irreplaceable will be lost. Future generations will sit in their solar-powered homes, driving their hydrogen-powered cars, wondering how their precursors, us, could have been so short-sighted and environmentally reckless.

Finally, a piece of that land is mine. It may

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be one one-billionth, but it's mine. If one day I have

children they too will own a billionth, and I would rather they have and myself have, as some advocate would say, a bleak desolate piece of land, rather than a puddle of oil to play in.

I urge the BLM to adopt Alternative A and exemplify environmental stewardship for ourselves and those to come.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Dr. Mark Young.

STATEMENT OF MARK YOUNG

DR. YOUNG: Good evening. I'm Dr. Mark Young from Alexandria, Virginia, and I'm here representing myself as a private citizen.

Of the alternatives that were laid out this evening, I would support Alternative A. I strongly oppose opening public lands for development in ecologically sensitive areas. I believe that such development puts at risk these public lands and it is really a shortsighted attempt to address our energy needs.

We certainly need to do more to increase conservation and renewable energy sources. I believe strongly that we owe it to future generations to protect

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these beautiful pristine lands.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Peter Guerrero.

STATEMENT OF PETER GUERRERO

MR. GUERRERO: I'm Peter Guerrero. I live in Arlington and I'm representing myself as a citizen.

The first point I want to make is that I, like other speakers have mentioned before me, I want to urge the Bureau of Land Management to hold additional hearings in the Lower 48 States for the millions of Americans who deeply care about preserving our diminishing wildlife habitat in the United States.

I strongly support Alternative A. In 1998 we had the wisdom to set aside the environmentally sensitive portions of the National Petroleum Reserve for wildlife. These almost 600,000 acres, a small portion of the National Petroleum Reserve, should continue to be off-limits to oil and gas leasing.

Today you heard from almost all witnesses, whether for or against this proposed amendment, that our Nation is heavily dependent on foreign oil. The U.S. imports over half its oil, consuming 25 of the world's oil. This is not a sustainable situation, and if we ignore this fact we will pay dearly in decreased national

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security, environmental harm, wildlife destruction, and the adverse effects of climate change.

Increasing the fuel efficiency of cars and buildings can significantly decrease our dependence on OPEC and the Persian Gulf oil by the end of this decade. It can also create jobs, increase our economic prosperity, and preserve our environment. America cannot drill its way to energy independence, nor should it try to do so at the expense of despoiling the national heritage of our children and future generations.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Jonathan Guerrero.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN GUERRERO

MR. JONATHAN GUERRERO: Hi. My name is Jonathan Guerrero and I'm not really representing any organization, but I'm representing the future generations that are going to be living with the decisions that you guys make on this upcoming plan.

I thank you guys for holding the hearings and giving me a chance to talk. But basically I'm strongly in support of Alternative A. I think that opening up, cracking into it, without looking at the evidence that shows that we need to take care of the environment there and there's going to be a lot of consequences and

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repercussions to what happens if we were to open up all of it to oil leases, I think that it's a short-term solution and it needs more thought and it needs more time to basically come to a solution that's going to benefit not only the current situation, but the future generations that will be dealing with everything that you guys decide. I think that I heard a lot from the oil corporations and the different people that are drilling up there that there's a huge demand for oil and not enough supply. And I hear all these problems with the whole situation with the oil. But it sounds to me that we need

a new course of action, and I don't think that devoting ourselves to oil is going to be a profitable venture for the future.

Thank you for your time.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Michael Woodbridge.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL WOODBRIDGE

MR. WOODBRIDGE: My name is Michael Woodbridge and I'm here just representing myself as a voting U.S. citizen.

I can't tell you about what the animals are like up in this area in NPR-A because I've never been there, but I want to go there, and I'm just hoping it's going to be there when I get a chance to actually make it up into

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the area. So that's one of the reasons I'm here today to talk about it.

The proposed alternatives opening additional acres in the NPR-A to oil and gas drilling would result in irrevocable damage to sensitive wildland or wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. Considering that 87 percent of the Northeast area's 4.6 million acres are already open to oil and gas leasing under the current plan developed in 1998, the Department of the Interior's preferred alternative making 96 percent of the area available appears to be an extreme one-sided approach with a business-centric agenda.

I can't help but see this proposal as a backup plan to satisfy those interests that have pushed so hard to open ANWR only a few miles away, where elected officials in Congress prevented new oil and gas activity. I believe the wildlife and natural ecosystem are critically important and valuable and therefore I strongly support the no-action alternative. Also, I do want to register my disappointment with the timing of this meeting and the fact that it's the only one happening outside of Alaska.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Leslie Catherwood.

0057

STATEMENT OF LESLIE CATHERWOOD

MS. CATHERWOOD: My name is Leslie Catherwood and I'm here this evening representing the Wilderness

Society, which is a national environmental organization with 250,000 members across the nation. We work specifically to protect our nation's federal public lands. The Wilderness Society believes the BLM's NPRA proposal continues an unbalanced approach to America's Arctic. Simultaneously pushing to lease 100 percent of the Northwest area, 100 percent of the Beaufort Sea, renewing calls to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and now proposing to lease almost the entire Northeast planning area continues a disturbing pattern of being willing to sell our national heritage to the highest bidder.

Even if we were to drill every last acre in Alaska and the Lower 48, we still could not drill our way to energy independence. We know that America's proven oil reserves amount to just 3 percent of the world's oil, but the U.S. is responsible for 25 percent of the world's consumption each year.

The real solution to our energy needs lies in making cars more energy efficient, conserving more, and investing in clean, sustainable new source of energy.

In the NPR-A, decisions about Teshekpuk Lake are

0058

especially critical as this is one of the single most important tundra wetland complexes in the entire circumpolar Arctic. Teshekpuk Lake is heavily used for subsistence purposes, especially its caribou. Brant and other water fowl that use the area are harvested for subsistence and sport in Alaska and throughout the Lower 48 States.

Teshekpuk Lake is critically important habitat for tens of thousands of geese, uncounted numbers of nesting birds, and the 45,000-animal Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd. Oil development in the sensitive wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake would irrevocably harm the migratory birds, particularly molting geese, and caribou that call this place home.

At a minimum, the BLM should adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative, which retains current protections for the critical fish and wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. We need a more balanced, science-based approach to energy development and environmental protection, and only Alternative A preserves areas of ecological and cultural value by permanently protecting

Teshkepuk Lake and Colville River special areas and strengthening monitoring and lease stipulation requirements.

Thank you.

0059

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Natalie Brandon.

STATEMENT OF NATALIE BRANDON

MS. BRANDON: Good evening. My name is Natalie Brandon and I work for the Alaska Wilderness League. Alaska Wilderness League is a Washington, D.C.-based organization that works to protect wilderness values in Alaska.

In addition to my work for the League, I have spent much of my personal and professional life as an advocate for the environment, in my local community as well as in national and international capacities.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight, but I must express my disappointment that the only public hearing outside of Alaska is being held on a Thursday night before a holiday weekend, making it extremely difficult for concerned citizens to attend. This kind of scheduling undermines the voice of the American people and I hope future hearings will be more sensitive to that fact.

I know that I don't have to tell you that Alaska's North Slope is a special place, home to cultures that date back centuries and to a breathtaking array of wildlife. And the fact that the administration would

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propose such an unbalanced and exploitative new plan for the NPR-A is deeply disturbing. The new plan would open 96 percent of the entire Northeast planning area to oil and gas development and, unbelievably, would allow all environmental regulations to be waived for what are referred to as economic reasons.

This level of environmental and cultural disregard in our government's resource planning and land management is shameful.

I'm especially concerned about the decision to reduce protections for Teshkepuk Lake and its surrounding land by 75 percent. Teshkepuk Lake is an incredibly sensitive area of the western Arctic. Not only is it one

of the most important goose molting habitats in the world and biologically significant to millions of migratory birds, it is also home to the Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd, which is vital for several North Slope communities, including Barrow and Nuiqsut, who rely on these caribou to feed their families.

Not only would the new proposed leasing plan for the Northeast area decrease protections for Teshekpuk Lake by 75 percent, it would allow also permanent gravel roads for exploration and development, allow gravel extraction, pipelines and road crossings in sensitive buffer zones.

How can this be considered balance?

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There is solid scientific evidence indicating that this area could be significantly impacted by oil and gas development. I will again call your attention to the 2003 National Academy of Science report entitled "Cumulative Effects of Oil and Gas Activities on Alaska's North Slope," which found extensive collective damage to the environment, including harmful health effects to people, from oil and gas activities on the North Slope.

I grew up in Texas, a state of extraordinary beauty and bounty, as is Alaska. Texas is also a state that has seen what happens when natural resources are poorly managed and the oil and gas industry is allowed to run roughshod over the environment. There are parts of Texas where the stench and fumes from oil refineries is nauseating as you drive by. There are beaches managed by the federal government where children are warned not to touch the large blocks of tar that stain the sand from the offshore rigs. These are examples of poor management, a lack of balancing oil and gas development with the need to protect our environment.

This lack of balance is hurting our country. I have seen too much of it in Texas and I know we do not need more of it in Alaska.

In my family we were taught that our natural environment is a blessing, a fragile gift that we must

0062

respect and protect. My family is probably not that different from families in Alaska and all over our great country. Environmental Stewardship is truly an American value and as a proud American and on behalf of 10,000 members of the Alaska Wilderness League I call on BLM to

reject this irresponsible and unbalanced leasing plan for the Northeast area of the NPR-A and to instead adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative.

Thank you for your time tonight.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Margaret Pardue.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET PARDUE

MS. PARDUE: Hello. My name is Margaret Pardue and I live in Nuiqsut, Alaska. My parents are Samuel Simmons and Martha Anupkana Simmons. My father was a Presbyterian minister and my mother was a housewife. My dad's grandfather was a white whaler from Boston, Massachusetts, and my mom's father was an Inupiak whaling captain. I was born in a tent in Barrow.

I now work for Kuukpik Corporation and serve as a tribal judge. I am also a council member for the native village of Nuiqsut.

Just to give you an idea of how different life is in the North Slope of Alaska, when I first started

0063

kindergarten our home was the only house with electricity since we lived near the church. The only other places that had electricity were the hospital and the school. The rest of the houses used kerosene lanterns for lighting and coal stoves for heat. There were many mornings that we woke up to a very cold house. Good thing there were warm schools.

Nuiqsut is an Inupiak village along the Colville River on the North Slope of Alaska. It is primarily a subsistence community based on strong traditional and cultural values of the original descendants from Nuiqsut. Most people don't realize that the entire community was uprooted after the social reform of 1944 forced many people in Nuiqsut to move to Barrow, so that school-aged children would go to general schooling centers.

There was a tremendous hardship on the culture and community. Families had to struggle to remain together in Nuiqsut at the time, when most people had to move 120 miles away to Barrow to be closer to schools for their children.

Later, in the 1970's people moved back to Nuiqsut to reestablish the community. In fact, for the first year people had to live in tents since the community

had been abandoned for so long. Even today, Nuiqsut is still in the process of rebuilding.

0064

I grew up going out to summer camp in the NPR-A area. One of our main camps was in the Teshekpuk Lake area. The caribou have migrated through this area since time immemorial. The caribou migration would be in the hundreds. The river had plenty of fish to be netted. My parents used this area for subsistence hunting until they were too old to go out on their own.

I am very worried that if the oil development goes into the area the caribou migration routes will be disturbed. In fact, they already have been. Not too long ago a herd went outside of their migration route and ended up starving to death on an island near Kaktovik. The route has been used by the Teshekpuk Lake caribou for hundreds of years and it's very important to them.

If the caribou have to change their migration routes because of oil development or if the subsistence hunters have to go somewhere else to hunt, it will create a huge problem. The people that hunt the caribou near Nuiqsut have been hunting in that area for generations. If they have to leave because oil development moves the caribou, it means another hardship for the community because they have to relearn their subsistence way of life.

I went to high school at Monichkama Island in southeast Alaska. I would go to that school for nine

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months and spend the summer in Barrow. It was a hardship in not learning about the subsistence way of life.

Leaving the North Slope when I was a teenager deprived my mother and I of learning my mother's way of living in the Arctic. My parents sacrificed a lot to get five of their children to this school 1200 miles away. The rest of the children were able to finish high school in our village.

I know how it is to feel like you are missing out on part of your culture. It's like a hole in your identity. I do not want others in Nuiqsut to experience the same loss of oil development in the NPR-A.

I asked a couple of people working for Kuukpik Corporation and the native village of Nuiqsut on their opinions of NPR-A. Kuukpik Corporation has stressed that balance is needed between subsistence and oil development.

Here is the statement from the native village of Nuiqsut:  
Native village of Nuiqsut has concerns on  
development of NPR-A. Stipulations that were inputted as  
buffer zones need to be followed and implemented. These  
stipulations are assurances for the village to continue  
their traditions of subsistence activities despite  
development. Traditional routes need utmost protection.  
Pipeline height is essential to be seven feet or more.  
More protections of subsistence representatives and  
community monitors to continue to oversee the progress of

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development.

I am in agreement with Kuukpik Corporation and  
the native village of Nuiqsut comments.

There needs to be a balance on subsistence and  
development. We also need the monitor the progress of oil  
development. Our area is delicate and care needs to be  
taken when working on snow. Any damage done on tundra  
produces a pond in the summer. This pond is the  
permafrost melting which had been protected by the tundra.  
It takes years for such damage to be repaired by nature.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Please wrap up.

MS. PARDUE: Many in the community feel like BLM  
does not listen to the concerns of the people who are most  
affected by their actions. I hope that BLM listens to my  
concerns and uses a balanced approach in the NPR-A.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Danielle Lavery.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Daniel?

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Melinda Pierce.

STATEMENT OF MELINDA PIERCE

MS. PIERCE: I know Dan Lavery isn't here. He

0067

had to leave, given the long nature of these proceedings.  
My name's Melinda Pierce. I live in Washington,  
D.C., and, though I'm not likely to travel to the NPR-A, I  
certainly care about protecting our nation's public lands,  
especially those in Alaska, where I have been fortunate to  
travel and to bird.

I offer my comments today because I am alarmed

by the aggressive expansion of oil and gas leasing and development in Alaska, especially across the North Slope and in the waters offshore of the Arctic. I want to urge BLM and certainly the broader administration to pursue greater balance, as Margaret offered, in the oil and gas leasing and production of public lands. I believe any development of our public lands, which belong to all of us, must first be scrutinized to ensure full assessment of the wildlife, biological, wilderness, recreational, and other values, and that those values must be protected. I'm concerned that the choices presented to us today, though carefully crafted, I acknowledge, fail to adequately protect the biological resources of the Northeast planning area of the NPR-A, given the sheer acreage that will be offered up for leasing and development. Of the 4.6 million acres in the area, Alternative C would leave us with 100 percent of the area offered for leasing and development, Alternative B 97

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percent, and even Alternative A 87 percent would be opened for oil and gas leasing and development.

Alternative A is characterized as a no-action alternative, but for accuracy it should be identified as a no additional action, given that fully 80 percent will be open to leasing and development.

Therefore, it is with reluctance that I urge BLM to adopt Alternative A, the no additional action alternative. I say "reluctantly" because allowing leasing and development in 87 percent of the Northeast planning area is not balance, and I urge BLM not to sacrifice another acre of this northern landscape that Margaret so eloquently called delicate.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Erica Stanley.

STATEMENT OF ERICA STANLEY

MS. STANLEY: Hi. My name is Erica Stanley.

I'm from a small town in North Carolina.

I'm here today to stand up and speak out for protection of the Northeast planning area of the western Arctic. While I've only seen Alaska's pristine special wild places through photographs, I do hope to visit some day and hope this national treasure will be safeguarded

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for me, my children, and theirs.

Drilling for oil recklessly, without regard for the environmental repercussions, is not the answer to fixing our current energy crisis. Sound science has told us that. I hope the BLM will consider the wildlife habitat, subsistence hunting, and our public lands legacy, which will all be affected if this area is developed, and therefore I hope they would -- I urge them to adopt Alternative A.

I am very disappointed at the outcome of the Northwest planning area hearing, where over 90,000 public comments in favor of protection were ignored.

I'm also disappointed that the only hearing outside of Alaska is on Thursday evening, late evening, before a holiday weekend.

I was recently at a speech where a former administration official spoke about how he believed the current administration is being falsely labeled as bad for the environment. While I disagree with him and think this administration's actions have certainly earned them such a title, today I'm asking you to prove me wrong. Don't go forward with oil and gas development in the special pristine wild areas of the Northeast planning area of the western Arctic. Do what's right for Americans of today and, more importantly, what's right for the Americans of

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tomorrow.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Jeanne Watson.

STATEMENT OF JEANNE WATSON

MS. WATSON: I wonder, how many of you remember the lorax? Raise your hand.

(A show of hands.)

VOICE: Our children do.

MS. WATSON: That's right, that's right.

The lorax, for those who don't know, was a Dr. Seuss character who spoke for the trees. And I hope that we will be -- take the legacy of Dr. Lorax and speak for the wildlife in this area and really take it to heart.

I think of the government as having broken promises, broken promises to American Indians, broken

promises to the animals. The BLM in the Southwest United States is hunting down horses and burros that they've promised to take care of. I don't think that -- I don't think the government is very believable. I'm hoping that we will encourage Detroit to look for different energy alternatives and more energy efficient cars, automobiles. And I want to thank you.

0071

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Rachel Bocchino.

STATEMENT OF RACHEL BOCCHINO

MS. BOCCHINO: You were close. It's "Rachel Bocchino," and I am from Connecticut.

I'd first like to start by expressing my disappointment with the fact that there is only one public hearing outside of Alaska and it's the evening before a holiday weekend. I think the western Arctic deserves more, and I would urge the BLM to adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative.

While I've never been to Alaska, I would like to know that it will be there when I have the opportunity. I have seen pictures of the magnificent western Arctic and believe Teshekpuk Lake and the surrounding areas are true gems. We should protect the massive wildlife that call this place home because we want the western Arctic to be a place for future generations to experience, not simply a memory.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Keren Murphy.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Keren?

(No response.)

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HEARING OFFICER DITTON: I'm really having a hard time reading this one. Cal Learza.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Number 30.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Well, if I haven't pronounced it correct, it is difficult to read. There will be an opportunity after we get through the list for anyone that does want to stand up and speak.

Tayleah Surratt.

STATEMENT OF TAYLEAH SURRATT

MS. SURRATT: Close, very close. For the record, it's "Tayleah Surratt." Thank you, a valiant attempt.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment as well and for recognizing the public's right to comment. I am from Maryland. I'm a citizen, a taxpayer, a voter, a democratic participant, and a public landholder.

For the record, I would like to point out that the rights of citizens and representatives of citizens should not be trumped by the desires and interests of corporations. The NPR-A is not just an oil reserve; it is by fortunate coincidence, perhaps providence, a reserve of unique and fragile wilderness. It is not a sustainable source of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels simply are not

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sustainable. They run out. The exploit the reserve will not further, will not produce a substantial number of long-term jobs, nor decrease consumer costs significantly, nor improve our overall quality of life.

While oil development was the initial intent of the reserve, intentions change, as American history shows with regards to the development of women's rights, civil rights, and the conservation movement itself. We have the choice, the opportunity, and the duty to preserve this unique treasure as it stands today. No additional leasing should be allowed.

Study after study has shown that the impacts of oil and gas development have been underestimated. Mitigation is not protection, conservation or preservation. Mitigation does not protect the wildlife or the indigenous people of the area. The reserve is a source of immense biological wealth that cannot be replaced or, once destroyed, repaired. It is priceless. We should not trade in the incredible richness of this natural wonder in order to benefit the few and encourage the continuing dependence on a misdirected and outdated energy policy. I urge you not to destroy this treasure in exchange for a quick jolt of oil that will be quickly consumed and just as quickly forgotten. I urge you to recognize the science, the common sense, and the

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pure wonder that shows how crucial the integrity of this

place is to the global environment and to the citizens of the United States exactly as it is today.

I urge you to adopt Alternative A to maintain the integrity and wholeness of the reserve, and I also urge you to understand that other voters, taxpayers, citizens, democratic participants, and public landholders will be pushing Congress to protect the reserve permanently.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be heard.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Douglas Jaslow.

STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS JASLOW

MR. JASLOW: My name is Douglas Jaslow and I'm from Arlington, Virginia, and I represent myself.

I strongly support Alternative A, even though I agree with some of the previous speakers that that's even pretty pathetic. But my first comment is I'm pretty sure there's a finite amount of oil on this planet and I'm kind of worried about where -- what are we going to do when the oil runs out. I feel like this administration has fought all attempts by Congress and the Senate to raise the CAFE standards, therefore requiring less fuel to run our automobiles.

I also feel like Dick Cheney's energy policy

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task force has done nothing to encourage fuel efficiency and smaller vehicles, even though that whole task force thing is secret and we'll never know what was said there. I also wonder why Alaska? Why do we need to go to Alaska to get oil? We just spent billions and billions and billions of dollars and sacrificed the lives of many men to have oil resources from Iraq. So this whole thing about, you know, we need to do it here -- well, we just fought a whole war to get oil from overseas, which I didn't support and I think the majority of Americans didn't.

The last but not least, what is this administration and Gale Norton and her Department of Interior really doing to educate society on how to conserve energy resources?

So therefore, I guess I support Alternative A because that's the least of the evils.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Beth Porterfield.

STATEMENT OF BETH PORTERFIELD

MS. PORTERFIELD: Hi. My name is Beth Porterfield and I live in Arlington, Virginia. I'm here representing myself, and thank you very much for the opportunity to testify. It means a great deal to me.

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I am supporting at a minimum adopting Alternative A. I have three main concerns. I'm concerned about wildlife in the area, the threat to subsistence communities, and also the process of having more and more development in our public lands that are publicly held. I do live in Arlington, Virginia, now, but I lived for four years in Alaska. While I was there I had two very meaningful jobs to me. The first was working with a community of homeless native Alaskans through a project of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program. All of my clients were native Alaskans that grew up in a subsistence lifestyle in subsistence communities, that had their subsistence lifestyle interrupted by development coming in and changing their whole cultural lifestyle. The people that I worked with -- I was a case manager -- were not able to ever really repair that damage in their lifestyles.

I learned in that experience how very crucial subsistence is to their way of life. Many of my clients were from this area. I'm concerned that there are threats to subsistence rights for people that are still living in that area.

The other job that I had in Alaska that was also very meaningful is I worked as a membership director for the largest environmental advocacy group in the state,

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Alaska Center for the Environment. In my experience there, we had approximately 10,000 active members and a mailing list of 20,000 Alaskans, all of whom were very much in support of conservation, very much in support of subsistence rights, and overwhelmingly felt that their concerns were not acknowledged by their state and national representatives.

There was an overwhelming understanding that all Alaskans want to drill in areas that would threaten wildlife and that in my experience, hearing directly from people day after day at Alaska Center for the Environment,

is just simply not true.

The other points I wanted to bring out very quickly are: I am very concerned that we are pursuing this line instead of dealing with conservation issues, especially as it pertains to fuel standards and mileage standards.

The other brief point I wanted to make is related to that. The organization that I work for now in Washington, D.C., is called Coop America and they have approximately 65,000 members that are in support of sustainable energy. Our organization just attended the shareholder meeting for Exxon Mobil where, among other resolutions, there was a resolution introduced to address climate change and shareholders overwhelmingly called for

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Exxon Mobil to address this issue. That is a trend that will continue to grow and grow and grow.

I truly wish that the BLM could pursue alternatives that are more sustainable. The 30,000-foot view of this issue is that as we continue to explore more and more oil we do face larger threats to climate change.

The last point I wanted to make is just a personal point. When I was in Alaska I was stepparent to four children whose father made his living exclusively from and depended on the tourism industry and commercial fishing. Many, many people that grew up there, were born and raised in Alaska, depend on pristine wildlife and the tourism issue that is dependent on that. This is another chunk in that wall that I am very concerned about, and having recognized and seen families struggling to live in Alaska, enjoy Alaska, and protect the wilderness value there, this concerns me as well.

Thank you very much for the time to present my testimony.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Matt Frattali.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW FRATTALI

MR. FRATTALI: My name is Matthew Frattali. I represent myself as an American citizen.

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Based on what I've heard tonight, I feel like the environmental risks of drilling aren't worth the economic benefits of drilling. Therefore I support

Alternative A.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

Heather Rorer.

STATEMENT OF HEATHER RORER

MS. RORER: My name is Heather Rorer and I'm from Heartland, Michigan.

To start, I think it's ridiculous that there is only one hearing outside Alaska and that it is held right before a holiday weekend.

I am here today to urge the BLM to adopt Alternative A, the no-action alternative, which would retain current protections for the critical fish and wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. This land around Teshekpuk Lake is critical habitat for many animals and birds. The value of protecting this important land is much higher than the value of the small amount of oil that is estimated to be beneath this important habitat. Any oil development in these sensitive areas will cause irrevocable damage to this ecosystem.

I am also concerned with the plan's allowing

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environmental regulations to be waived for economic reasons, allowing permanent gravel roads for exploration and development, and allowing gravel extraction, pipelines, and road crossings in sensitive buffer zones. There is no way this is extending environmental protections.

I am tired of watching the government approve plans that will result in minimal short-term benefit, but have harmful long-term consequences, as this plan will. It is time to stop this destructive pattern of behavior and create a balanced science-based plan that actually protects critically important environmental areas for wildlife and future generations.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Sara Williams.

STATEMENT OF SARA WILLIAMS

MS. RORER: Sara had to leave and so she asked me to read her statement on behalf of her:

"As a graduate student in environmental policy

at the University of Michigan, I am committed to the protection of our federal lands. I understand the need for a balanced approach to managing our natural resources, including oil and mineral resources. But I also

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fundamentally believe that certain federal lands were never meant to be touched. Instead, we should protect these areas for their inherent value, for the wildlife species that are dependent on the health of these lands, for future generations, and for, most of all, their existence value.

"What is at stake in this debate is Teshekpuk Lake and this is what I want to focus on in my comments. BLM's preferred alternative reduces protections for Teshekpuk Lake's surface protection area by 75 percent. Although this move would facilitate access to additional energy resources, 87 percent of the northeastern reserve is open to leasing and about 1.4 million acres are already leased and being explored. Why do we need to open up more? Where is the balance in this management approach?

"The Arctic coastal plain has the largest expanse of Arctic fens, mineral-rich wetlands with an abundance of wildlife that depends on this ecosystem. Further disruptions to this system through mineral leasing and exploration will have negative impacts on the wildlife whose dependence makes this place one of the most special in our country. Where else can we go to see thousands of caribou calving or geese molting? We have few gems like this left.

"The National Academy of Sciences has confirmed

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that nesting birds, including spectacled eiders, threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, will suffer from disturbance and the increased numbers of predators inevitably attracted to oil fields. The 45,000-animal Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd, which calves south, north, and east of the lake and then moves to seek relief from insects to the east, north, and west of the lake, are extremely sensitive to disturbance during calving. Most caribou biologists predict that pregnant cows and cows with newborn calves will avoid areas of oil field infrastructure. This herd is especially critical to many Alaskan natives who rely on caribou as a subsistence resource.

"Finally, the National Resources Council believes that it is unlikely that most disturbed habitat on the North Slope will ever be restored because of the region's permafrost and climate. The council also states that engineering designs for the infrastructure might have to be reconsidered if North Slope climates warm, as predicted, in the 21st century.

"Taking into consideration all these points, which are based on sound science, I would like to enter into the record that I support Alternative A, the no-action alternative.

"Thank you for your time and your hard work in

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helping to keep this valuable resource protected the way it was meant to be."

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Dan Ende.

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Dan?

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Paul Baicich.

STATEMENT OF PAUL BAICICH

MR. BAICICH: Thank you. My name is Paul Baicich from Oxon Hill, Maryland. I apologize for not having a detailed commentary, but I just came back from Alaska yesterday, from Nome and the Seward Peninsula. I speak as an individual, although I am a bird author, editor, and a dedicated bird conservationist and a birder. Quite simply put, Alternative A is best, flawed but best. Under the 1998 compromise, BLM designated 857,000 acres of the Teshekpuk Lake surface protection area. Of this area, a modest 588,000 acres were closed to oil and gas leasing in order to protect caribou, geese such as greater white-fronted geese, and black brant, and other resources.

Under the 1998 plan -- why did I call this modest, by the way? It's because 87 percent of the 4.6 million acre Northeast planning area were opened for

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leasing. To date, 1.3 million acres have been leased. Already, the 1998 plan is a compromise, balancing different needs. Indeed, it isn't like the NPR-A is closed to drilling.

While other folks behind me have spoken today on

multiple reasons why Alternative A should be embraced, let me just focus on three species of birds not necessarily mentioned to date, three sea ducks, three eiders: spectacled eider, Stellar's eider, and king eider.

The first two are threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act and the reserve and the adjacent native-owned lands provide today the most important nesting remaining habitat for these species in Alaska. As far as the spectacled eider goes, far south to the NPR-A in the Yukon Koskaqin Delta, 96 percent of the spectacled eiders have been reduced between the 1970's and the 1990's, from 42,000 pairs to 2,500 pairs, and we don't know why. The numbers in the last decade have gone up a bit, but we still don't know why.

In the NPR-A area, indeed in the broader North Slope area, there are about 5,000 pairs of this species and they are in trouble.

The Stellar's eider, although not in as deep trouble as spectacled eider, has been reduced 20 to 90 percent in one or another area of Alaska, including the

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NPR-A area. The numbers are currently stable, but we don't know why.

The third species is king eiders. In Alaska they're found in the reserve nesting in the highest density numbers for the entire state. Unfortunately, the fall migrants passing nearby Point Barrow have declined by 56 percent over the last 20 years, and we don't know why.

Let me just say that Americans need to keep species off the endangered species list and not engage in activities that make listing more likely. It borders on the reckless to play with this habitat without further information. Therefore, at a minimum BLM should embrace Alternative A, the alternative which retains the current protection for critical habitats around Teshekpuk Lake. A more balanced science-based approach to energy development and environmental protection would further enhance the resource protection of Alternative A by permanently protecting Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River special areas and strengthening monitoring and lease stipulation requirements.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: James Weiffenbach.

STATEMENT OF JAMES WEIFFENBACH

MR. WEIFFENBACH: My name is Jim Weiffenbach. I

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am a resident of Bethesda, Maryland, and come to these hearings to speak in my own behalf.

I am concerned that the protections that the testifiers here today have asked for be afforded to this area and that the area not be sacrificed for what I truly believe to be a temporary advantage of oil and money.

Thank you very much for your time.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Jennifer Schmidt.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER SCHMIDT

MS. SCHMIDT: Hi. My name is Jennifer Schmidt.

I am 27 years old. I'm a member of the Alaska Wilderness League and I live in New York City.

I was sort of struck by the comments from the gentleman from Arco, who just left the room, who said that drilling in this area should proceed wherever possible.

However, I would contend that just because something can be done doesn't necessarily mean that it should be done.

The people here with the oil companies are here to promote their companies' interests and obviously it's their job to do so. But here I also see -- I know some people have left, but this is still a pretty packed room. I've probably seen at least 50 volunteers who have given up their evening the Thursday before the Fourth of July holiday to be here because they care about the future of

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their public lands and they want to have a hand in how their public lands are managed. And that's really what our country is all about.

I mean, seeing this room, it really makes me proud. It really makes me proud to be an American and proud that we do have the freedom to come and tell the government what we think about the way that they are managing our public resources.

I mean, the thing is these are public lands and we can't forget that, even if it has a name like "National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska," for example, that these lands do belong to the American people and not just to Arco or Exxon or Conoco or any other oil company. And we have not only a right but a responsibility to speak up for them, and I think our government has a responsibility to take

our concerns into consideration.

I think the BLM -- the BLM really has the honor of being charged with managing this area on behalf of the American people. I think that's a wonderful thing.

Another wonderful thing is that Congress and three presidential administrations have recognized the values of protecting the wildlife, wilderness, and subsistence resources of this region, in particular the Teshekpuk Lake special area. That's why the option that the BLM outlined in their draft activity plan amendment

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for the Northeast area -- of those options, I think the only, the only, responsible option is Alternative A.

I agree with many of the people here today who have said that, well, since the BLM is amending their 1998 plan for the Northeast region, it would be great to see more areas protected permanently for future generations, for birds and wildlife, and for subsistence.

I live in New York City, but I crave wilderness.

I feel like it's something that I need and that we need.

Wilderness is something that shaped our nation. It's had an impact on all of us, even in ways that we don't even realize. That's why in a way it makes me angry that the BLM has dealt with some of our public lands in the western Arctic the way they have. Just in February, we learned that 9 million acres in the Northwest planning area were opened to oil leasing. And now in their preferred alternative for the Northeast area amendment the BLM is proposing to open even more acres, even to go into -- even to go into the fragile Teshekpuk Lake area, which they must agree is sort of the crown jewel of this region.

I urge the BLM to protect the lonely call of the loon, the thundering hooves of the Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd, and respect the desires of the American people by at the very least adopting their no-action alternative.

And thank you very much for this opportunity to

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speak.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Mikaila Milton.

STATEMENT OF MIKAILA MILTON

MS. MILTON: Hello. I'm here representing myself and my friends and family and hundreds of other

people who couldn't be here today.

I think there are several points --

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Would you please state your name for the record.

MS. MILTON: Mikaila Milton.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

MS. MILTON: The cumulative impact of all the oil and gas drilling I think needs to be considered. I don't think that's been fully addressed. It's not just the area that is currently at stake, but it's also the whole wider area. I think more drilling and exploration can't possibly occur without impact. There is no such thing as completely clean oil drilling.

Number three, I think we need to consider the economics of keeping intact ecosystems. Intact ecosystems provide true economic benefits for Alaskans and for all Americans. They protect clean water, they filter pollutants, recreational value and tourism value. Those

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are real long-term, sustainable economic benefits that we gain from keeping ecosystems intact.

The long-term sustainability, we really need to keep that in mind instead of just grabbing a little bit of oil that's there now. I think the sooner this country switches to a renewable fuel economy, the better situated we will be for facing the reality that is rapidly approaching.

The economic benefits of an intact ecosystem will last in perpetuity.

Thank you. Mr. Chairman

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: David Drasin.

STATEMENT OF DAVID DRASIN

MR. DRASIN: My name is David Drasin. I'm a mathematics professor living in Arlington, Virginia.

I want to say it's very inspiring listening to the comments of all the people in the audience. There is one comment I bring you as a mathematician, that through the years when you would read apologists for the development of Alaska you will often read comments saying: We're only going to take 3 percent of the area, 5 percent of the area, whatever it is, for development.

Any mathematics person who has graduated through

0091

the third year of undergraduate mathematics would be able to explain that you can have a network of roads whose area in terms of the whole picture is extremely small, but yet is very close and has an impact nearly on every area. In other words, if you just look on a piece of paper that has vertical and horizontal lines, the area that the lines take up, the percentage of the area can be quite small, and yet every point on the plane, on the piece of paper, is very near something.

It's pretty clear from lots of reports that I have read through the years that the damage has been quite extensive in many cases. And of course there are spills and things of this sort.

The only thing I'd like to add in the end -- I'm not an expert at this -- is a little more than a year ago there were the Oscars and Michael Moore stood up and made a comment about a fictitious war for a fictitious this. And I hope, in view of the audience participation, it's true there's only one hearing, but this does not become a fictitious hearing.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

That concludes the individuals on my list. Do we have another list? Thank you.

0092

Adam Colton.

STATEMENT OF ADAM COLTON

MR. COLTON: Hi. My name is Adam Colton.

I grew up in a small town in north Jersey, Westfield, New Jersey, and I now live in Bethesda, Maryland. Like a lot of people, I came to Washington, D.C., with great hope that you could make a difference and a lot of faith that politicians and people in government would ultimately look at the facts and do the right thing. And unfortunately, I have to say, maybe like a lot of people who spend some time in this town, I'm getting a little bit more cynical.

I looked at the BLM and I had a chance to meet some of the professionals there and I have to say there are some great people at this agency who have the best of intentions. But I just don't think you guys are doing your job here. I mean, how can you within a period of

just a few years so dramatically reverse course? You had made a judgment to leave Teshekpuk Lake alone and now that judgment appears to have gone out the window.

The only conclusion that I can draw is that this is from the top down. This is about an energy policy that puts drilling first and everything else second -- (Applause.)

0093

MR. COLTON: -- actually not even second. This

is a big mistake.

I wish Secretary Norton was here to listen to this, but the fact is she made up her mind from day one.

There was never an open mind in this administration to listen to the facts and the information.

You know, we have heard -- and I have worked on the issue of defending the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I have listened to people even from this Interior Department talk about, well, no, the wildlife value is over in the National Petroleum Reserve, that the Arctic is where the oil is. Well, now all of a sudden we need to drill 100 percent of the National Petroleum Reserve? This is unbelievable.

What part of the American Arctic are we going to leave alone? You know, we ought to take a time out, given all that we're learning right now about the impacts of global climate change in the Arctic. Can we just take a pause for just a minute and just take a hold of what we have up there? These are irreplaceable resources. And there's so much rhetoric and so much misinformation in this town and I'm a little tired of it as a citizen listening to this, about ice roads -- and then we find out, well, no, we can't build ice roads because of global warming and we're going to put permanent roads in, and all this stuff, I mean all these changes.

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It can be a little disillusioning. But I guess I want to leave on a hopeful note, on an optimistic note, that I do believe that there are people at the BLM, at the Interior Department, who still pay a little bit of attention to science and do have the best of intentions, and I'm hopeful that, despite what's clearly the intention of the President and the Secretary of the Interior, that you'll look at the facts and you'll do the right thing; you'll stand up for what the American people really want,

you'll stand up for good energy policy, and you'll protect Teshekpuk Lake especially, you'll go for the no-action alternative.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: That concludes my names on the list. Are there any other speakers in the audience?

VOICE: I have a question. I have a question.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: The hearing is not about questions. The BLM is not taking any questions. You're welcome to ask those questions after we close the hearing to some of the BLM participants in the back.

Any other speakers?

MS. SCHOEPKE: I'd like to.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Please come forward.

0095

Please come forward and state your name. I'll ask that you spell it.

STATEMENT OF TARA SCHOEPKE

MS. SCHOEPKE: You'll need it to be spelled. My name is Tara Schoepke and that's T-a-r-a S-c-h-o-e-p-k-e. And I'm from Mclean, Virginia, and I'm sort of informal here because I hadn't planned to speak, but I have some things that I'd like to say.

I find it interesting that the one or three or four businesses that came here to speak of course obviously are interested in Alternative C and they like to indicate how much it will benefit people in terms of costs and jobs. But yet, contrast that with everyone else, the environmental organizations that represent hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, as well as the individual citizens who have no partisan axe to grind -- really, they're here to talk about what they want personally. And not a single one of the individuals has said that, I prefer Alternative B or Alternative C.

The people want Alternative A. And at what point -- and therefore the people -- the government is for the people and supposedly by the people, not for the corporations and by the corporations. So it seems to me that what people are saying today as ordinary citizens needs to take priority over what the few businesses here

0096

have said.

What I would also like to point out is, people have talked about how we have a responsibility to conserve and that could go a long way. I'd just like to quote a statistic that is on a web site, the Union of Concerned Scientists, [www.ucusa.org](http://www.ucusa.org). And they state that if fuel economy were increased to 40 miles per gallon by 2012, which automakers say they can do without sacrificing safety and performance -- and of course they don't want to for obvious cost reasons -- we would save 1.9 million barrels of oil a day, which is more oil than we currently import from Saudi Arabia.

That seems to me to be a very strong case for how we can avoid destroying all of our natural places in our country by conserving and forming policies that are going to give us alternatives that do not require this kind of devastation. In addition, we would get away from having to be in bed with places like Saudi Arabia, which clearly we're just involved with for convenience because we need their oil.

In addition, the Union of Concerned Scientists also state that federal fuel efficiency standards increased new car and truck fuel economy by 70 percent between 1975 and 1988. This saved Americans \$92 billion. So I would reply to the businesses that want us to save

0097

money as citizens that this has proven to save us money in the past. It kept 720 million tons of global warming pollution out of our atmosphere and reduced our oil use by 60 billion gallons of gasoline.

60 billion gallons of gasoline. As I put it into perspective, we use 1.9 million barrels a day from Saudi Arabia, just to put that into perspective.

So clearly, I'm in favor of Alternative A as the least of the three evils and I hope that the government and the BLM will seriously listen to the citizens as opposed to the corporations that stand to gain from the development in Alaska.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: Are there any other speakers?

(No response.)

HEARING OFFICER DITTON: With that, I will

officially close the hearing. I'd like to thank everyone for their participation. Good evening.  
(Whereupon, at 9:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.)