

Website Comment **137486**

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From: JaimePalter

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Comment: August 04, 2004

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Office
Att'n: Northeast NPR-A Planning Team
222 West Seventh Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

Dear Planning Team,

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Basic

As a natural scientist, I have major concerns about the plan to open the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve to drilling. Working in a geology department, I have a unique understanding about the costs and benefits of this type of program. In this reserve, it is clear that the costs of drilling far outway the benefits.

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Please accept these comments on the proposed amendment to the oil and gas leasing plan for the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve Environmental Impact Statement. I am especially concerned about the impact the Bureau of Land Management's proposal would have on the area around Teshekpuk Lake, one of the most unique and important wetlands in the entire Arctic.

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I urge you to adopt Alternative A, the "No Action" alternative, because it would maintain protection for the entire Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area. This extraordinary ecosystem provides critical habitat for molting geese and nesting habitat for Steller's eiders, northern pintails, yellow-billed loons and other species. It also supports a vitally important caribou herd that Alaska natives depend on for their subsistence.

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Eighty-seven percent of the northeastern reserve is already open to oil and gas companies for leasing. In the five years since the original 1998 northeast plan, additional information and analyses have been accumulated that point toward significant impacts on fish and wildlife if more of this sensitive area is opened. It would be a huge mistake to risk the internationally significant ecological resources of Teshekpuk Lake for a short-term supply of energy, especially when we know that the United States cannot drill its way to energy independence.

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Again, I urge you to choose Alternative A, the "No Action" alternative, to protect the reserve's irreplaceable wildlife, wilderness and subsistence values for future generations.

Sincerely,

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Attached: None